



COVID-19: SITUATION REPORT

17 JUNE 2020



60M

programme participants oriented on COVID-19



100,000+

workers on the ground covering 64 districts



17,840

families received food packages



1.7M

hygiene products distributed



350,000

families received cash support

Make empathy go viral

BRAC has provided 350,000 families with cash support, including households living in ultra-poverty, those living in remote *haor* areas (wetlands) and *char* (riverine islands) areas, host communities in Cox's Bazar district, and indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and northern districts in Bangladesh.

Much more is needed, though. Stand beside a family today: <https://www.brac.net/covid19/donate/>



BRAC has reached **all of the targeted 350,000 families**

FROM THE FRONTLINE

Rain in the desert

Nazma's* family of six was left with no income to support the household when the lockdown was announced.

Her husband lost his job at a local restaurant in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar - one of Bangladesh's poorest and most vulnerable areas. 17% of people live below the extreme poverty line, compared to the national average of 12.9%. Their family had already been struggling with the meagre amount her husband was earning.

They survived for the first few days of the lockdown with the little amount of money they had saved. They had no other means of income or savings to buy food for the family.

Nazma had already been a member of BRAC's local *polli shomaj* (women-led democratic institution), and was soon identified and enlisted as a member living in poverty. She received BDT 1,500 (USD 17) as cash support, which allowed Nazma and her family to buy food to survive for a few weeks.

*Names have been changed to protect privacy



COVID-19 timeline in Bangladesh

98,489

Cumulative confirmed cases

Cumulative deaths



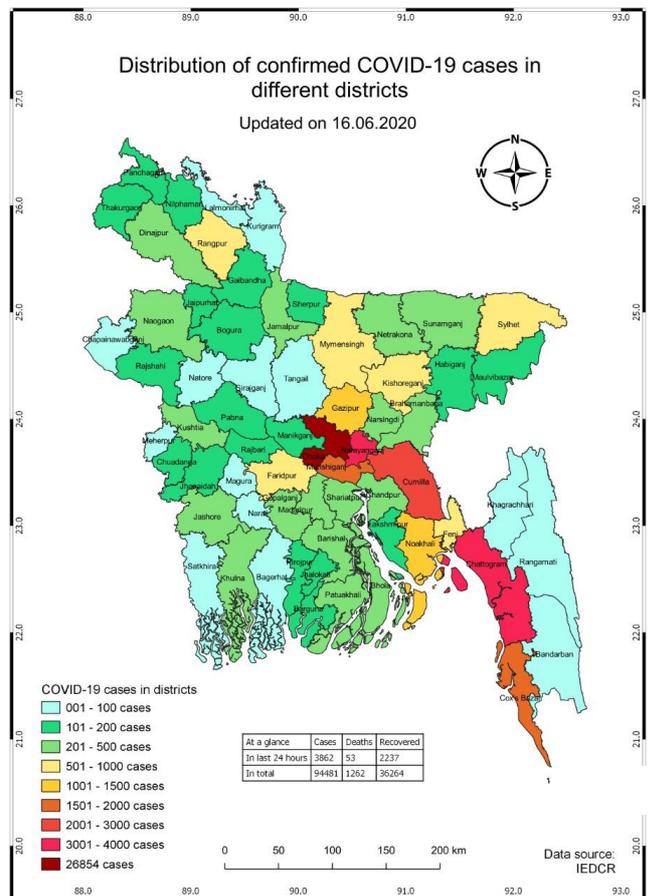
1,305

05 JUN

17 JUN

Situation overview

- **Bangladesh has 98,489 confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of 17 June 2020.** 4,008 cases were confirmed in the last 24 hours. The disease has claimed 1,305 lives, 43 of which were reported in the last 24 hours (updated: 17 June 2020).
- **The government has finalised a total of 45 areas in Dhaka under the red zone,** according to recommendations by the national technical committee formed to tackle the spread of COVID-19. A zone will be declared red if 60 or more people per 100,000 in a city test positive in the last 14 days. Outside of Dhaka, the **three-colored zones** are now applicable down to union-level administrative locations.
- **More than 90% of the cases in South Asia are from Bangladesh, Pakistan and India.** South Asian nations now account for more than **7%** of the total number of COVID-19 cases in the world. This could make the region the next global hotspot.
- **The government has taken initiatives to ensure that hospitals treating COVID-19 patients have liquid oxygen tanks and central oxygen supply.** All district hospitals will be ensured the necessary facilities to provide an adequate supply of oxygen, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.
- **39 judicial employees have tested positive for COVID-19.** The list includes 13 judges and the other court employees. Two committees were formed in order to take necessary measures to ensure treatment of judges of all courts across the country.
- **The budget for FY 2020-21 was proposed to the parliament on 11 June, and is the largest in the country's history with the most ambitious goals.** The government has kept a provision of a block allocation of BDT 100 billion for emergency healthcare requirements for COVID-19. See page 11 for a detailed reflection of the budget.
- **A 2% tax has been imposed on everyday essentials for the first time ever in Bangladesh,** such as rice, pulses, oil and corn. Poverty rates have jumped from 19% to over 40% and economists fear that an increase in the cost of living will adversely impact employment and the manufacturing sector.
- **All education institutions will remain closed at least until 6 August.** The education sector has received a **lower allocation** than expected in the budget for the FY 2020-21, and does not reflect any investment in establishing digital mechanisms to address the digital divide, with students from rural areas unable to access online education.
- **95% of people have said their household incomes have fallen by 76%** due to the pandemic, according to a rapid assessment survey conducted by BRAC. See page 6 for a detailed feature on the report.





Emerging risks and challenges

- **Delays in implementing [red zones](#) are causing confusion and panic among residents.** This may lead to lack of compliance among the general public on whom the restrictions will be targeted.
- **The pandemic is deepening the [disparities](#) in equitable access to education.** Experts fear the risks of drop-outs from students of low-income households in remote areas such as riverine islands and wetlands - to whom TV- and online-based education initiatives are [inaccessible](#). 72% of teachers expressed that they are not well-oriented with devices and technology platforms for the lessons.
- **Both private and public hospitals are [denying](#) basic health services** to patients, especially those showing non-COVID-19 symptoms. The government ordered all hospital authorities to ensure treatment for all patients, by separating COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 units. Hospitals are reporting lack of resources and manpower to treat patients.
- **Current demand for masks [rose](#) up to 50 to 60 million per month**, whereas the domestic production capacity of this vital commodity is currently at 6 million per month. Previously, local companies produced masks aiming to only provide supplies to healthcare institutions. Local businesses are starting to produce and sell masks at a small scale, but there is a big knowledge gap on production protocols.
- **Migration experts fear a [surge](#) of return of migrant workers in upcoming months.** Many will lose their jobs as economies of destination countries, mostly in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, are taking a hit. Returnees should be equipped with technical skills on business, management and marketing, on top of the loan schemes developed by the government.



BRAC's overall response to COVID-19

BRAC's immediate short-term focus was prevention, through community engagement, behaviour change and mass campaigning. This has included creating a world-standard course on COVID-19, using it to train staff and volunteers, equipping them with personal protective equipment and then sending them to millions of households armed with information and sanitation products.

In parallel, we are strengthening systems, through providing information, volunteers and resources to government and civil society organisations. This includes supporting community support teams which include a BRAC healthcare worker at the ward level to support case detection and verification, setting up sample collection booths, running a pharmacy surveillance pilot to get additional community data to identify hotspots, and developing testing kiosks for additional sample collection.

After the recent shutdown, BRAC is focusing on ensuring short-term relief to low-income earners and those living in poverty in cities and rural villages. Treating it as a humanitarian crisis, BRAC has done emergency cash transfers to 350,000 households. Public-private partnerships have also been created, as well as mobilising funding from institutional and individual funders.

As we realise that the economic impacts of the pandemic will be protracted, we are beginning to focus on livelihoods, developing a mid to long-term strategy for economic revitalisation of those living in extreme poverty. Amidst an extremely fluid situation, BRAC is focusing on remaining adaptive and agile, and keeping pace with changing needs, particularly the needs of the people in the most vulnerable situations. We are also undertaking rapid needs assessment and evidence generation for mid to long-term response.



Khichuri Index: June 2020

The 'Khichuri Index' reflects the weighted average cost of a bowl of *khichuri* — a popular all-day meal in most Bangladeshi homes, and the minimum meal which a family would need to survive during the current pandemic. This index is similar to the Financial Times' 'Breakfast Index', which is constructed by using the weighted average of the cost of a 'continental breakfast'. In Bangladesh, the idea was first floated on [this blog](#).

The previous version of the Khichuri Index, published in May 2020, was based on two types of khichuri (basic and with egg) and two occupations (agricultural labourer and rickshaw puller). The June 2020 Index uses three varieties of khichuri (basic, with vegetables and with vegetables and egg) and three occupations (agricultural labourer, rickshaw puller and construction worker).

The vegetables are recommended in the prescribed diet given by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the eggs contain important micronutrients. All ingredients are readily available in local markets.

The agricultural labourer gives an insight into rural areas, the rickshaw puller gives an insight into urban areas and the construction worker gives an insight into an occupation which exists in both areas.

The incomes of rickshaw pullers and construction workers is directly influenced by the economic activities in a town. Construction is also linked with consumer confidence, as it is an investment for the future. The prices of ingredients have been taken from primary sources (BRAC District Coordinators) this time.

Selection of districts:

Several districts have been selected based on their level of vulnerability. Prices taken are from the respective *Sadar* (city) markets.

- Dhaka and Chottogram: These two areas represent large urban cities
- Bogura, Kurigram and Dinajpur: These districts represent the impoverished northern region
- Sunamganj and Bramhanbaria: These districts represent the haor areas
- Gaibandha and Jamalpur: These districts represent the char areas
- Bandarban and Khagrachari: These districts are from Chottogram Hill Tracts, some of the hardest to reach areas in the country
- Bhola, Patuakhali and Satkhira: These districts represent the cyclone-prone coastal areas

The khichuris:

- **Basic:** Coarse rice (800gm¹), red lentil (300gm), imported onion (150gm), soybean oil (40ml), salt (100mg) and green chilli (10g)
- **Vegetable:** Coarse rice (800gm), red lentil (300gm), potato (100gm), imported onion (150 gm), soybean oil (40ml), salt (100mg), green chilli (10 gm) and pumpkin (150gm)
- **Vegetable and protein platter:** Coarse rice (800gm), red lentil (300gm), potato (100gm), imported onion (150 gm), soybean oil (40ml), salt (100mg), 2 farm eggs, green chilli (10gm) and pumpkin (150gm)



Per day requirement per person per day as per FAO: 270-450g rice, 100g pulse, 100g leafy and 200g non-leafy veg, 30g fat, 1 teaspoon salt. As the platter only take eggs as a protein source, amount of lentils have been adjusted and was set higher than the FAO guideline.

The occupational groups:

- Agricultural labourers
- Rickshaw pullers
- Construction workers

Major findings

Non-agricultural wages picked up in May:

Following the sharp decline in late March and April, non-agricultural labour wages started to pick up in May, in most of the districts, as the lockdown eased. On average, the increase was 31% for rickshaw pullers and 15% for construction workers. Construction workers' wages were higher in May than April in urban areas of Dhaka (BDT 500 in May compared to BDT 300 in April), Chattogram (BDT 500 in May compared to BDT 400 in April) and in Brahmanbaria, Bogura, Dinajpur and Jamalpur. The wages declined only in Sunamganj (by 25%). Wages remained unchanged in the rest of the districts.

For agricultural labourers, wages in Chattogram, Brahmanbaria and Kurigram fell by 6%-20%. Wages of agricultural labourers started to improve in northern districts in May. Jamalpur showed the highest rise, of 83%.

Prices of essential commodities declined as demand dried up:

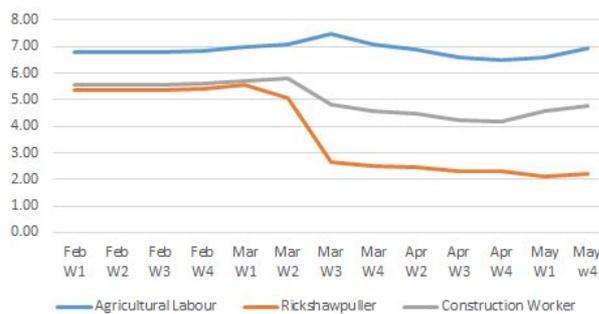
The cost of a plate of khichuri (both with vegetables and egg and basic) showed an upward trend until April and then started falling in May. One possible reason behind this could be the change in demand in the market, which started to fall as people in the previous weeks hoarded excess amounts and consequently bought less in subsequent months. *Ramadan* also brought prices of rice and lentils down, which still is continuing.

In the fourth week of May, the average costs of the khichuri plates in the selected districts stood at BDT 67.81 for basic khichuri, BDT 73.35 for khichuri with vegetables and BDT 88.74 for khichuri with vegetables and egg. The cost for all decreased during May (from the first week to the fourth week), by 7%, 5% and 4% respectively. Prices in Khagrachari dropped the highest among all selected districts (12% for khichuri with vegetables and egg and 19% for plain khichuri) from the first to the fourth week of May. The highest cost per plate was seen in Patuakhali (BDT 100.15 for khichuri with vegetables and egg), owing to a high price of red lentils, followed by Dhaka (BDT 97.68 for khichuri with vegetables and egg).

Affordability is slowly improving:

As wages start to improve in most of the districts and the prices of khichuri plates decline, affordability is slowly improving. The average affordability of khichuri with vegetables and egg now stands at 6.35 per plate for agricultural labourers, compared to 5.89 in April.

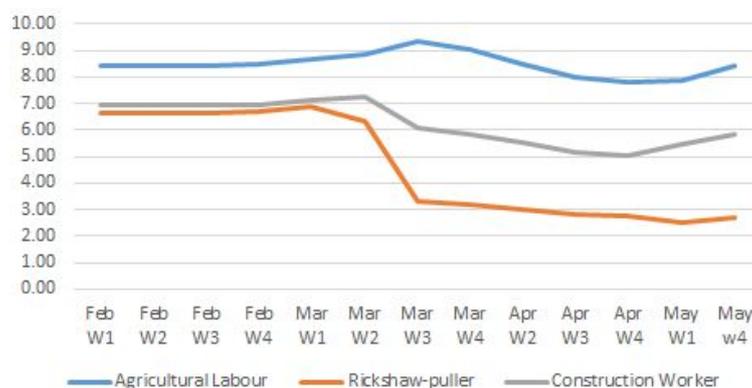
Khichuri index (with veg and egg)



Khichuri index (plain khichuri)

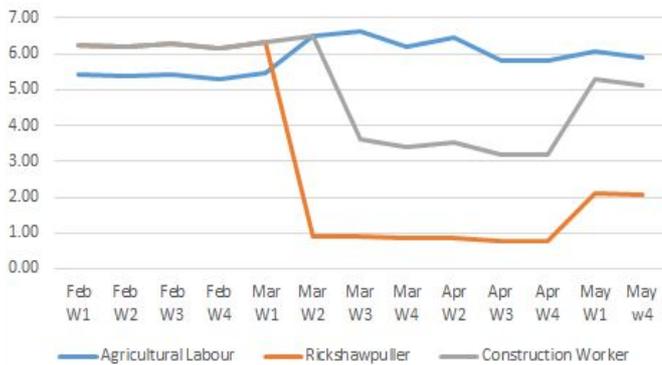


Khichuri index (veg khichuri)

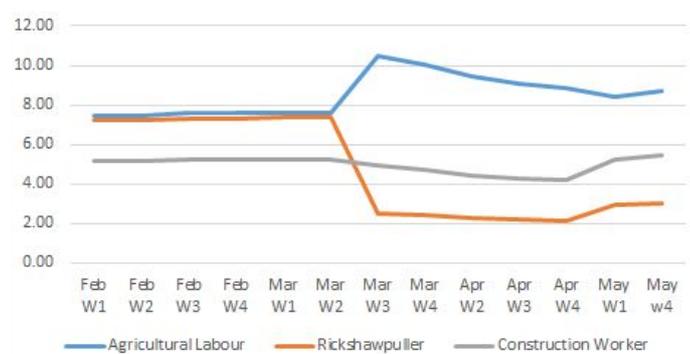


For rickshaw pullers, affordability has increased significantly since May. A rickshaw puller in Dhaka can now afford two plates on average. In April, they could afford less than one plate. Affordability is still far below the pre-pandemic levels though, when they could afford more than six meals on average. The situation is similar in Chattogram, where their affordability is increasing, but still yet to reach normal levels.

Khichuri index Dhaka (with veg and egg)

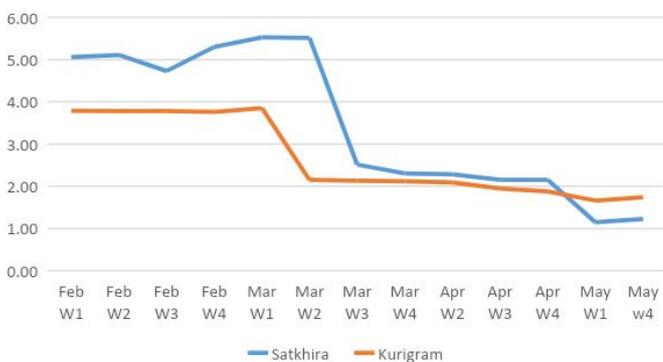


Khichuri index Chattogram (with veg and egg)

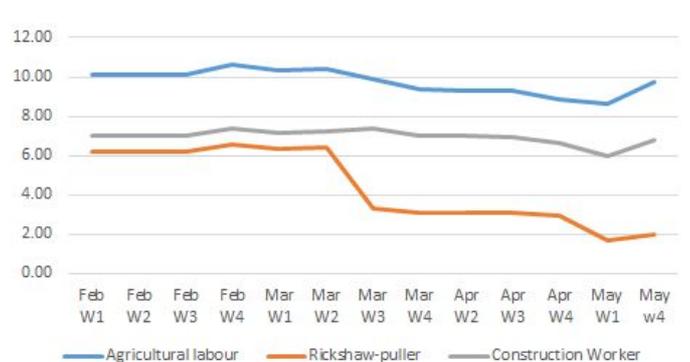


Rickshaw pullers are still struggling in districts like Satkhira, Dinajpur and Kurigram. Their daily income has dropped by 44%, 20% and 14% respectively. Affordability is still below two plates for Kurigram and Satkhira, owing to the reduced income. For Dinajpur, it is slightly above two plates per day.

Affordability of rickshaw-pullers



Khichuri index (Khagrachari)



The reduction in costs of khichuri could not improve the affordability for rickshaw pullers in Khagrachari during May, as their daily income fell by 35% from April-May and now stands at BDT 130. Their affordability is now below two meals a day (1.95 meals of khichuri with vegetables and egg in the fourth week of May) which was almost three in April. The wages of the agricultural sector remain unchanged in May compared to April. The wages of construction workers did not show any variation during the pandemic time and was the same over the last three months.

[1]Per day requirement per person per day as per FAO: 270-450g rice, 100g pulse, 100g leafy and 200g non-leafy veg, 30g fat, 1 teaspoon salt. As the plate only uses eggs as a protein source, the amount of lentils has been adjusted and set higher than the FAO guideline.



Snapshot: A rapid perception survey on the economic impact of COVID-19

BRAC published a rapid perception survey on the economic impact of the pandemic among low-income communities in Bangladesh in early April 2020. A follow-up survey was conducted to understand how the economic stress on those communities has evolved. This survey did not re-interview the same respondents covered in the survey carried out in April 2020.

Data from 2,317 families of different socio-economic backgrounds were collected both through phone interviews (79%) and face-to-face interviews (21%) using a structured questionnaire by BRAC staff. 36.5% of respondents were men, and 63.5% were women. Mean age of the respondents was 37 years (40 years for male, 36 years for female).

Awareness of the virus and its treatment

- **The majority of the respondents have basic awareness of how COVID-19 spreads.** In addition, 55% of women are fully aware, as well as 67% of men. Slightly more of the urban population (64%) were fully aware compared to people in rural areas (58%).
- **The majority of respondents believe that they are protected.** 78% of respondents expressed an inner feeling that they have no or very little chance of getting infected with the virus. Women (81%) compared to men (72%), and respondents from rural areas (81%) compared to urban areas (71%) expressed more confidence about not getting infected.
- **Respondents were confused about treatment options.** 11% of the respondents selected 'getting tested immediately' as the right option if one shows COVID-19 symptoms, 43% chose 'home quarantine/isolation' and 26% of respondents believed that there is no treatment.

Impact on livelihood and food security

- **The pandemic has caused a sharp fall in household income and may set the country decades back in terms of poverty alleviation.** Overall, 95% of respondents experienced a fall in household income (average reduction in household income was 76%) during the lockdown. Since the survey respondents are mostly from the low and lower-middle-income group, this sharp fall in income does not reflect the whole country, but paints a worrying picture of the economic vulnerability of the lower echelon.

59% of the respondents were found to be economically vulnerable before the pandemic (already living in poverty and those who were not living in poverty but living marginally above the poverty line and hence were vulnerable to this economic shock) and almost all of them have fallen below the poverty line due to reduced household income. With an average monthly household per capita income of BDT. 2,391 (pre-COVID), these vulnerable households in the sample reflect the bottom 32% of households of the country. As the economy begins to reopen, many of the daily wage earners and informal sector workers who lost their earning opportunities will regain their livelihood to some extent, except those who suffered any structural change caused by this economic shock (e.g. those who had to sell their income-generating assets to survive the shock).

- **36% of respondents lost their job or work opportunities.** The percentage of job (or earning opportunity) loss is alarmingly high among women (50%) and those living in urban areas (55%). This percentage is 62% among low-income daily wage earners.
- **On average, 16% of respondents reported that they had only 1-3 days' worth of food to survive.** 3% of the households did not have any food during the survey time. 22% of the respondents said that they had 30 days' or more worth of food in their home.
- **69% of the respondents did not receive any support from the government.** This percentage is higher in rural areas compared to urban areas. Although the majority of the respondents opined that overall measures taken by the government to handle the situation are adequate or somewhat adequate, some dissatisfaction over food/cash assistance was observed. Overall, 91% of the respondents expressed their satisfaction over the role of law and order agencies.
- **If the crisis continues for a longer period,** 19% of the respondents reported that they would not be able to continue to bear their living expenses for more than seven days. One-fourth of the responses said that they will have to withdraw money from savings or sell assets to cope with the financial setback.
- **The economic stress disproportionately affected women.** 57% of households headed by women do not have any income, compared to 49% of those headed by men. Women are also disproportionately deprived in receiving government support and 21% said they will not be able to manage living expenses beyond one week.

Violence against women during COVID 19 pandemic

- **81.6% of respondents said that violence against women has remained unchanged.** Those who feel the incidence of violence has increased believe that poverty is the main reason behind the rise. More men (12%) said there is an increase of violence during lockdown, compared to women (10%). It may be noted that several recent reports, including from BRAC, revealed that, many women, especially in rural areas, think that during any crisis, increased violence against women is normal and therefore not worth mentioning.

Policy recommendations

- The recovery and rehabilitation plans need to be reviewed and implemented using a 'pro-poor' lens. Special focus should be given to the households with greater vulnerability, such as women-headed households.
- Public-private partnerships can strengthen the targeting process and block leakages in social safety net programmes. Non-government organisations and community-based organisations could be engaged to monitor the list of beneficiaries.
- New job-creating schemes can be undertaken by the government through engaging unemployed persons in food distribution/cash transfer and COVID-19 response plan.
- Medium-term measures (three to six months) can be taken to relocate people living in urban slums, Bihari camps, etc, where there is a high risk of infection spread.
- A COVID-19-responsive revenue model should also be introduced in the national budget of FY2020-21. Income tax cuts for all the businesses affected by COVID-19 could help them recover some of the losses incurred.



NATIONAL BUDGET 2020-2021

Bangladesh's National Budget for 2020-21 (FY21) is the largest and most ambitious in the country's history

The country is facing an unprecedented situation and expectations ran high for its upcoming budget. Most economists point that the proposed budget is very ambitious, indicating a 5.2% and 8.2% growth rate for these two financial years. Private investment, which the revised budget estimated to be 12.7% of GDP, is projected to grow up to 25.3%. All proposed targets may be difficult to achieve unless both the local and global economy experiences a V-shaped recovery (a sharp rise back to a previous peak after a sharp decline) very soon.

- **Priority strategies focus on health, agriculture, social safety net and creation of jobs and rural development, but provide no roadmap for implementation.** The budget prioritised programmes that facilitate economic recovery and protect lives and livelihoods from the pandemic. Health, agriculture and employment creation were prioritised in resource allocations for the Annual Development Programme.
- **The budget speech has not delved into strategic priorities for the health sector.** Allocations for health stand at BDT 292.47 billion (USD 3.44 billion) which was BDT 236.92 billion (USD 2.78 billion) in the revised budget of FY 2019-20 (FY20). The finance minister admitted, in his speech, that the pandemic exposed many weaknesses in the health sector, but stopped short of identifying weaknesses or specific measures to overcome them. There is a paltry block allocation of **BDT 100 billion (USD 1.17 billion) to combat the pandemic**, but experts point that lack of resources was only part of the larger problem, which also includes governance and capacity issues. One positive aspect is the allocation of BDT 1 billion for an Integrated Health-Science Research and Development Fund, to be managed by a multi-sectoral committee, and can be viewed as a step towards improving accountability.
- **Social safety net programmes (SSNP), with record allocation of 3.01% of GDP, probably the best feature of the budget, may continue to suffer from poor targeting.** The FY21 SSNP budget projects a 16.06% rise in the total number of beneficiaries to 661.1 million from 569.6 million in FY20. However, much of the increase will finance recent 'incentive' packages and are transitory. 43% of the total SSNP budget targets vulnerable populations living in poverty. The rest includes interest subsidy and pensions of government employees. Among traditional programmes, the gratuitous relief (GR) programme saw a six-time increase, and the work for money (WfM) programme with nearly a two-fold increase. Experts criticise the GR programme for difficulties in ensuring governance, and praise WfM programme for its self-targeting nature. A new proposed programme aims to tackle poverty induced by the pandemic by targeting senior citizens, widows and women deserted by their husbands in 100 sub-districts, and may be considered 'a pilot' of geographic targeting. Most of the SSNP allocation is for traditional programmes that serve the rural population. There is no particular programme for the 'new poor'. The budget speech has no direction on how to address the high rate of inclusion and exclusion errors as reported in the mid-term review of National Social Security Strategy (NSSS).



- **The education budget is at 2.5% of the GDP - lower than the Seventh Five Year Plan (7FYP) target of 2.09%.** The four stipend programmes received an overall allocation of BDT 40.9 billion - almost double of the original FY20 allocation. The budget, however, proposed no measures for the education sector in the 'new normal' scenario. The finance minister mentioned that work is underway to establish interactive classrooms in 503 schools and internet connectivity in all primary schools. The budget contains no plans or allocation for it.
- **A marginal increase was proposed for the agricultural sector,** from BDT 214.84 billion in FY20 to BDT 224.89 billion in FY21 - which many considered insufficient in view of the losses the sector has suffered due to the pandemic. The allocation proposed BDT 95 billion for agriculture subsidy and BDT 2 billion incentives for farm mechanisation - schemes that have performed poorly in the past. The target for government procurement and distribution of rice and paddy increased by 200,000 metric tons in FY21. This additional allocation and other administrative measures have already improved the situation in the field, according to BRAC's field staff. On a positive note, the proposed reduction in tax for importing farm machinery will support the mechanisation of the agricultural sector, and tax exemption on imported poultry feed will help to lower the prices which increased recently. The budget document states no measures to improve marketing, distribution and supply chain development.
- **Employment generation was declared as a critical strategy.** The budget proposed BDT 1 billion for the rural social services programme, which is often criticised for difficulty in targeting. A subsidised credit programme for unemployed young people worth BDT 20 billion was also proposed to help them start small businesses or get engaged in agriculture. Considering past performance, a new strategy is needed for such a programme to have the desired impact.
- **Most studies identify the informal sector as the worst affected by COVID-19, but no schemes were proposed for low-paid workers.** The only intervention in the budget explicitly targeting cottage micro small and medium entrepreneurs is a BDT 30 billion earmarked fund within the more significant allocation of BDT 200 billion subsidised credit for CMSMEs and duty reductions in the light engineering sector. It is not clear whether the proposed incentive will prove effective for entrepreneurs without a credit guarantee scheme.
- **A 9% increase in the gender budget was proposed,** with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs getting a higher allocation. The creation of the Department of Children and establishing children's complexes in all districts and child daycare centres in all sub-districts were proposed. The National Forensic DNA Profiling Laboratory Management Directorate will be set up to expedite justice for women and children survivors of violence. Nothing was mentioned for women who may lose jobs in formal and informal sectors.
- **Allocations related to climate as a percentage of the total budget declined to 7.52% (7.55% in revised budget FY20).** It is unclear why environmental protection and climate change mitigation were ignored even though the lockdown, among other things, recently brought them in the fore of public discourse.
- **Stipulating a revenue receipt of BDT 3,780 billion against the revised target of BDT 3,480.69 billion might prove to be too ambitious.** The National Bureau of Revenue (NBR) has been tasked to collect revenue of BDT 3,300 billion. The non-NBR revenue collection target is BDT 150 billion, non-tax revenue collection target is BDT 330 billion, and BDT 40.13 billion will come from foreign grants. **The reliance on VAT, the direct and regressive/anti-poor form of tax, will increase.** The VAT target and percentage share in the revenue mix for FY21 increased to BDT 1,251.62 billion and 38.78% from revised FY20 target of BDT 1,098.46 billion and 36.11% respectively. **International grants and external borrowing, and domestic sources, especially borrowing from local banks, are set to become the single most important source for financing the planned deficit and any other deficits from internal revenue.** Though the finance minister stated increasing money supply keeping "a delicate balance" to keep possible inflationary pressure under control, the planned borrowing is expected to be a crowd-out opportunity for other forms of credit.



Orientation, safety and safeguarding

- **60 million programme participants across the country** have been oriented on COVID-19 through awareness activities by BRAC's frontline staff.
- **134,599 BRAC staff and volunteers have been oriented on COVID-19** through BRAC's online orientation sessions with healthcare experts and training modules.
- **More than 1.7 million units of hygiene products** have been distributed to staff and communities.
- **876,000 protective wear items** such as face masks, hand gloves, surgical caps, coverall and safety glasses have been distributed.
- **1,168 people have received counselling through BRAC's tele-counselling platform 'Mon er Jotno Mobile-e'** (phone-based emotional support) since its launch in April. The platform has seen a 27% increase in callers seeking mental health support over the last month. 31% of callers were from Dhaka and 26% were women. Ages ranged from 14 to 84. 85% of the callers said that they found the counselling to be very helpful. Anxiety and stress related to COVID-19 was the most common concern. Substance abuse, suicidal tendencies, family conflicts and domestic violence were reported.



Prevention

- **1,385 suspected cases of COVID-19 patients have been identified** by BRAC's community health workers, which they have referred to local authorities for testing.



Strengthening of systems

- **53 kiosks for sample collection have been set up in Dhaka, Gazipur, Savar, Narayanganj and Chattogram districts.** All kiosks are fully functional with capacity to collect 50 samples per day. 40,049 samples have been collected until now. BRAC will set up 100 walk-in kiosks in total across the country's risky zones to support the government's initiative of scaling up access to testing.
- **40 lab technicians and 45 paramedics have been deployed by BRAC, with support from the Directorate General of Health Services, to operate the kiosks.**
- **20 dedicated doctors from BRAC supported the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) hotline for COVID-19.** They have received 53,602 calls, accounting for 31% of the total number of calls received on this support line. The hotlines receive an average of 893 calls on a daily basis.
- **BRAC is supporting government hospitals to meet demands for equipment, protective wear and hygiene products.** So far, 10 non-invasive ventilators, 10 patient monitors, 60 coveralls, 2,500 masks, 1,500 gloves and 400 sanitisers have been provided to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital and National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases.



Food security, and social and economic recovery

- **A total of 350,000 low-income families have been reached by BRAC under its cash support of BDT 1,500.** The support has prioritised those with no income in Cox's Bazar's host community (especially women-headed households); those who are underskilled with no earning opportunities; people at high risk, needing health support, including lactating mothers, pregnant women, elderly and chronically ill family members; persons with disabilities; low-income families who are struggling to send children to school, vulnerable households in urban areas; indigenous communities in northern districts; areas prone to floods and riverbank erosion; survivors of domestic and gender-based violence; and families living in ultra-poverty who have not been reached in the first three rounds of BRAC's cash support or other organisations.
- **17,840 households living in urban and rural poverty have been provided with essential food support.** Out of 17,840 households, 7,500 were supported by DFAT, 5,000 Standard Chartered Bank, 3,700 PEPSICO and 1,640 households were covered by the Urban Development Programme fund of BRAC.
- **BRAC is providing cash support to 10,600 families affected by Cyclone Amphan.** Out of 10,600 families, 6,000 are being supported from BRAC's own funds and 4,600 by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Each family will be receiving BDT 5,000 to repair damaged houses to ensure that they are able to return to their own homes, and installation of tippy water taps (a simple device for handwashing with running water) to ensure safe methods for hand washing and maintaining basic hygiene practices to prevent the contraction of COVID-19.



Partnerships

- **GIZ has partnered with BRAC** to enhance the COVID-19 response measures and ensure access to justice for vulnerable populations.
- **Bata Shoe Company** is collaborating with BRAC to provide 75,000 pairs of footwear to women who are in need of assistance or are working in the frontline of the ongoing COVID-19 emergency response.
- **The LEGO Foundation**, through a grant made through BRAC USA, is working with BRAC University's Institute of Educational Development to deliver remote playful learning experiences to children ages 3-8 and their families.
- **Coca-Cola (Internal Beverages Private Limited) has donated to BRAC** to support our work in expanding sample collection and testing in Bangladesh.
- **USAID Bangladesh has partnered with BRAC to enhance the COVID-19 response** by rapidly strengthening the digital space to provide reliable information for the general public.
- **Procter & Gamble (P&G) has donated 17,150 packets of sanitary napkins to BRAC.** The partnership aims to reach out to daily wage earning women living below the poverty line and support meeting basic needs during this difficult shutdown.
- **Medtronic Foundation has donated to BRAC through BRAC USA** for a non-communicable disease prevention and control project. The objective of the partnership is to improve health outcomes for people with chronic illness and to respond to COVID-19 crisis.
- **BRAC has joined UNESCO's COVID-19 Global Education Coalition.** The coalition aims to help countries mobilise resources and implement innovative and context-appropriate solutions to provide education remotely, seek equitable solutions and universal access, ensure coordinated responses and avoid overlapping efforts.
- **Unilever has partnered with BRAC to raise awareness among 10 million people** in low-income households with low levels of literacy, to tackle information gaps and stigma surrounding COVID-19.
- **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has partnered with BRAC** to implement a cash stipend intervention for 11,000 families, primarily in the host communities of Cox's Bazar.
- **The VF Fund through GlobalGiving has partnered with BRAC** to donate to a cash support initiative to support people affected by COVID-19.
- **A portion of Global Affairs Canada's ongoing project with BRAC will go into supporting BRAC's COVID-19 response.** The funding will be used for providing cash stipends to 15,000 families, raising awareness in communities and procuring supplies for community health workers and volunteers.
- **Reckitt Benckiser (Bangladesh) Limited has contributed to BRAC's emergency cash support initiative.** BRAC will also distribute 200,000 units of Reckitt Benckiser hygiene products through this partnership.
- **Australian Government's Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade partnered with BRAC to reduce the risks of COVID-19.** Under this partnership, BRAC has been providing food and cash assistance to families in vulnerable conditions, raising awareness on protection measures, conducted an assessment of the COVID-19 situation in Bangladesh and established a distance learning platform for students through live television broadcasts.
- **The UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID)** is comprehensively supporting BRAC's immediate response plan, including providing support to government health facilities and stakeholders.
- **Global Affairs Canada and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** are providing support for the COVID-19 response in Cox's Bazar, for both Rohingya and host communities, through BRAC's humanitarian crisis management programme.
- **UNICEF is supporting BRAC, with a particular focus on sustaining children's learning and wellbeing.**
- **PEPSICO in Bangladesh, along with the global food and beverage company's philanthropic arm, the PepsiCo Foundation, has partnered with BRAC** to provide over 1.4 million meals to support families with low incomes and who are living in ultra-poverty.
- **BRAC has completed multiple stages of food and cash distribution** with support from local government partners, including Dhaka's North and South City Corporations, Sylhet City Corporation, Rajshahi City Corporation, Faridpur Municipality, Savar Municipality and Satkhira Municipality.
- **Standard Chartered Bank has partnered with BRAC for its emergency response** to provide food support for a week to 5,000 households (22,500 people) to address the concern of food insecurity.

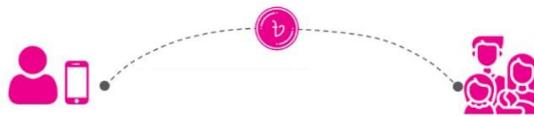




Snapshot: Cox's Bazar

- **The infection rate is increasing exponentially.** The total number of COVID-19 positive cases in the district of Cox's Bazar stands at 1,608 as of 16 June 2020. 320 of the confirmed cases were detected in the last seven days. 28 deaths have been recorded from the virus so far.
- **Cox's Bazar municipality is now under the second phase of strict lockdown** until 21 June. Most parts in Ukhiya and Teknaf sub-districts will remain under lockdown until 23 June.
- **38 positive cases have been identified in the Rohingya camps as of 16 June.** Among them, 25 are men and 13 are women. A total of 16 Rohingyas are in facility-based quarantine in the camps as of 16 June. Two people have recovered to date. (WHO, Bangladesh; 16 June)
- **9,241 households were provided with food assistance by the General Food Assistance (GFA) team** in the camps. Additionally, 936 households were provided food assistance through in-kind support between 11-17 June.
- **1,038 households of Cox's Bazar Sadar and Ramu sub-districts were provided with food assistance** under the 'GFA-Host community support for COVID-19 response' project.
- **1,018 community-based interpersonal sessions and 159 talim (religious education) sessions have** been conducted in the camps to orient Rohingyas on COVID-19 prevention. Engaging religious leaders is known to be an effective method of raising awareness in the conservative communities living in camps.

Raised: BDT48M



Goal: BDT200M



BRAC's appeal is providing those in the most vulnerable situations in Bangladesh with emergency relief. Support a family today: <https://www.brac.net/covid19/donate/>

Partners



This is the 18th edition of BRAC's external COVID-19 situation report. Find previous reports at <https://www.brac.net/covid19/sitrep.html>

Contact us: covid19response@brac.net