



COVID-19: SITUATION REPORT

8 JULY 2020



73 million

people oriented on COVID-19



100,000+

workers on the ground covering 64 districts



17,840

families received food packages



2 million

hygiene products distributed



350,000

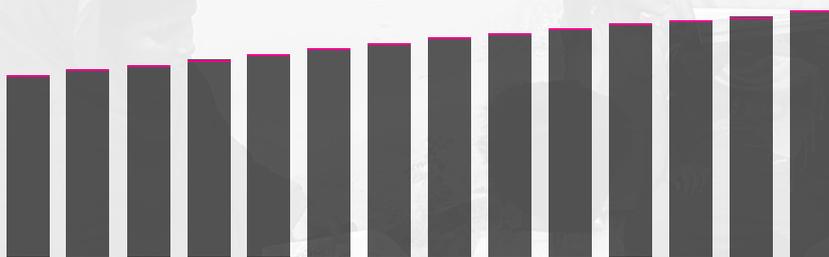
families received cash support



COVID-19 breakdown in Bangladesh

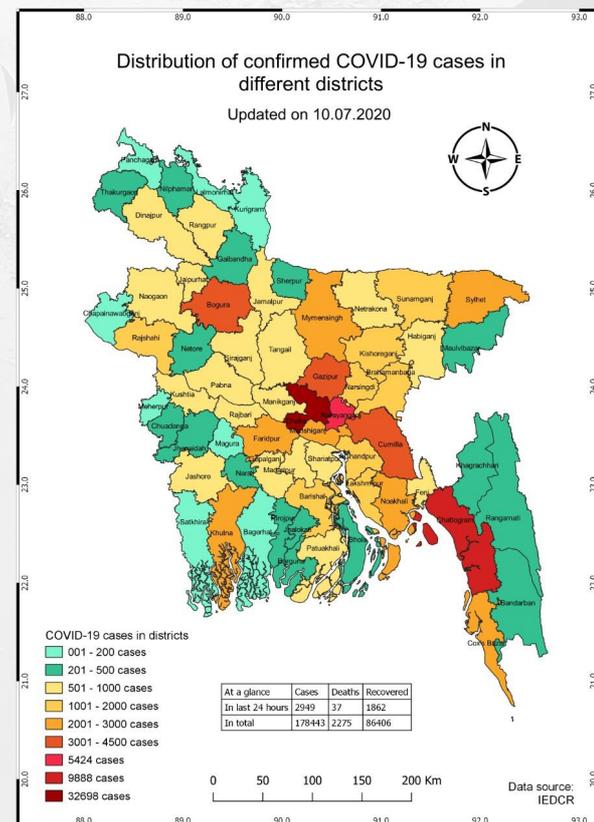
Cumulative confirmed cases 172,134

Cumulative deaths 2,197



25 JUN

8 JULY



“This situation has helped me gain new experience. Being able to help others through this crisis is really motivating.

We distributed 300 face masks and 500 leaflets through community forums, and encouraged people to improve their hygiene practices.

If anyone is sneezing, has a cough or fever, we advise them to stay in a room alone and self-isolate. If the person is feeling worse, we advise them to go to the hospital or seek medical assistance. We are encouraging people to call both the government and BRAC’s emergency numbers.

This is how I wish to continue my work in the foreseeable future, helping people and working for the betterment of society.”

34-year-old Rabeya Khatun sought permission from the sub-district local administration to continue working while the area was under lockdown. When there was a shortage of masks, she sat down with her sewing machine and produced 100 hand-made masks herself.

Rabeya is a programme organiser of BRAC’s community empowerment programme in Mymensingh, north-central Bangladesh. She has been part of the BRAC family for more than 10 years.



Situation overview

TESTING AND PREVENTION

- **Bangladesh has 172,134 confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of 8 July 2020.** 3,489 cases were confirmed in the last 24 hours. The pandemic has claimed 2,197 lives, 46 of which were reported in the last 24 hours (updated: 8 July 2020).
- **The [shortage](#) of testing kits is serving as a major setback as efforts increase to scale up COVID-19 testing facilities.** More than 500,000 testing kits remain in storage, awaiting [approval](#) from the authorities, while testing centres in high risk zones in Dhaka, Gazipur and Narayanganj have lowered the number of daily tests due to the shortage of kits. Hospitals are releasing patients [without second or third tests](#), to reserve the remaining kits. Some laboratories have discontinued sample testing due to the shortage of kits, and are struggling to meet the daily targeted number of tests as per samples collected. A 300-bed government hospital in Narayanganj of central Bangladesh - one of the most affected areas in the country - suspended testing for five days.
- **The Directorate General of Drug Administration [announced](#) the authorisation of rapid testing kits for measuring antibodies** - which pass a 90% sensitivity and 95% specificity margin. The kits must be packaged with the mention that “this is not for diagnosis, but to be used only to detect antibodies”. Experts have recommended the use of antigen testing since the early stages of the outbreak, to help determine the status of the disease in the country.

HEALTH

- **Hospitals found to be issuing [fake COVID-19 certificates](#) have been directed to be shut down by the Directorate General of Health Services.** Hospital authorities had charged BDT 3,500 (USD 41) per test, embezzling over BDT 35 million (USD 410,000), despite the agreement with the government to test and provide treatment free of cost.
- **More than half of beds in hospitals dedicated to COVID-19 treatment in Bangladesh are vacant, [according](#) to public health authorities, even though the number of reported positive cases are surging.**
- **Absence of regulatory policies on essential hospital services have led to [increased](#) hospital charges, which are proving insurmountable for many COVID-19 patients.** The demand for oxygen has increased hospital charges, especially in privately-run COVID-19-authorized hospitals.
- **[Telemedicine](#) and online medical consultation have served thousands of patients during the pandemic.** The online services are largely run by doctors providing free-of-cost medical consultations over mobile applications, social media and telephone. The Directorate General of Health Services is planning an initiative to provide guidelines for doctors voluntarily providing online medical services.

ECONOMY

- **Bangladeshi [exports fell](#) sharply in the last quarter of FY20 due to COVID-19, crashing by 51.20% to USD 4.7 billion.** The fall in earnings was mostly driven by the slump in the apparel and leather goods sectors. According to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association data, global apparel buyers stalled or cancelled work orders worth USD 3.18 billion. Leather and leather goods exporters saw work orders worth USD 200 million on hold or subjected to cancellation.
- **A post-COVID Bangladesh could see inequality rise, putting the progress of the past decade at risk** - unless [job creation](#) is put at the heart of recovery - according to a study conducted by the Centre for Research and Information (CRI). The study emphasised that low-income and labour-intensive jobs in the informal sector have been the most affected by the pandemic. The study made suggestions to resume labour-intensive infrastructure projects and provide immediate access to finance for unbanked micro, small and medium enterprises in the informal sector.
- **Farmers are selling their cattle at [low rates](#) to meat traders before Eid-ul-Azha** (the country's annual mass religious sacrifice) out of the fear of incurring losses inflicted by the pandemic. It is expected that the demand for cattle for the religious sacrifice this year will be low since so many people have lost their jobs or faced losses in their businesses.

RIGHTS AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

- **[Three million domestic workers](#) across the country have either completely lost their jobs or have suffered cuts in income**, according to the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies. Lack of concrete laws to protect the rights of domestic workers have left them in a dire condition.
- **Returnee migrant workers will receive [food support](#) and be able to acquire loans from the government's safety net programme.** The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief has made arrangements of providing rice and other basic food items to the returnees until they are able to find income generating opportunities. 21,000 Bangladeshis have returned home since April. Workers who are waiting to fly back abroad to their jobs are facing [huge expenses](#) as a result of limited flights.
- Bangladeshi Nobel laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus issued a **pledge for a [COVID-19 vaccine](#) to be a common good, to ensure that the vaccine is made accessible** to all, once discovered. The pledge has been signed by 105 world leaders.





Emerging risks and challenges

- **Only 44% of children in rural areas have a television at home.** In urban areas, the figure is 75%, according to the government's COVID-19 response plan for the education sector. Experts fear a widening of the competency gap among urban and rural children.
- **Bangladesh's [frontline responders](#) are highly vulnerable.** The mortality rate of doctors in Bangladesh was the highest in the world in June. 1,352 nurses, 1,919 people providing medical services, 11,000 police officials, 3,000 armed force personnel and 40 judges have [tested positive](#) for COVID-19.
- **Lack of rigorous testing, contact tracing, isolation and treatment to contain COVID-19 is [likely](#) to lengthen the duration of the outbreak,** according to a public health expert. In the last three weeks, the rate of total positive cases among those tested have remained slightly over 19%.
- **Doctors are observing a [decline](#) in parents bringing their children for vaccinations.** WHO, UNICEF and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisations have urged people to continue regular vaccination to prevent vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks in the future. Hospitals and centres offering vaccinations can reassure people of the safety measures in place and offer a scheduling system to reduce waiting time.
- **The government may need to update public health guidelines in light of emerging evidence of the virus being [airborne](#),** meaning that physical distancing measures of three feet may not be sufficient to prevent infection.
- **Monsoon flooding has displaced thousands of people.** Bangladesh Flood Forecasting and Warning Center warned that another spell of flood may hit Bangladesh's northern and northeastern districts in the next 72 hours. This spell may affect a larger number of districts. See Page 9 for a more detailed report.
- **The government is yet to ensure the safe management of COVID-19 [waste](#),** resulting in infection risks and environmental hazards. Primary collectors of waste are at a [high risk](#) of COVID-19 infections from exposure to disposed protective wear. People who are homeless and children living in urban poverty often take masks from the waste and wear them. Dhaka South City Corporation is planning to collect disposed protective wear separately from other household waste from 7 July.
- **Experts assisting the Directorate General of Health Services [predict](#) that transmission will peak at the end of July,** and the number of cases may begin to fall in September. The number of cases may cross 260,000 by the end of July, according to their projections. Suggestions have been made to restrict public movement during the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha (the country's annual mass religious sacrifice) in late July/early August.



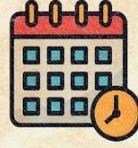
Orientation, safety and safeguarding

- **73 million programme participants across the country have been oriented on COVID-19** through awareness activities by BRAC's frontline staff.
- **134,588 BRAC staff and volunteers have been oriented on COVID-19** through BRAC's online orientation sessions with healthcare experts and training modules.
- **2,027,55 hygiene products have been distributed** to staff and communities.
- **876,000 items of protective wear** such as face masks, hand gloves, surgical caps, coverall, and safety glasses have been distributed.
- **1,370 people have received counselling** through BRAC's tele-counselling platform "Mon er Jotno Mobile-e" (phone-based emotional support) since its launch in April.
- **137,423 packets of sanitary napkins have been distributed to adolescent girls and women** in low-income households and remote areas, to improve access to menstrual health products during the economic shutdown. The first phase of distribution took place in urban slums, the second phase reached out to those in rural areas, and the third phase was aimed at remote areas of Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- **Isolation centres have been set up to support staff across Bangladesh.** Service staff have been trained and oxygen cylinders and pulse oximeters have been provided. Currently, 320 rooms in regional and area offices, 60 rooms in BRAC's learning centres and 50 rooms at BRAC University's Savar Campus are being used for this purpose.

How do you tackle a pandemic in one of the most densely populated countries in the world? A brief on BRAC's response strategy.



It has been over 120 days now since the first case of COVID-19 was detected in the country.



Case numbers are now nearing 120,000 and reported deaths exceed 2,000.

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL SYSTEMS

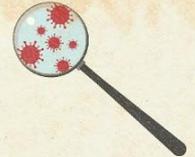
Supporting the government to respond, both in filling short-term gaps and in building a long-term new normal.



53,602 calls to national COVID-19 hotlines received by BRAC doctors



50,000 BRAC community health workers working with government teams to track cases and refer to national facilities



63,435 samples collected in BRAC-managed testing kiosks sent to national labs

PREVENTION

Reinforcing the government's messages through community engagement, behaviour change and mass campaigning.



73 million people reached with information, hygiene and sanitation products



876,000 items of personal protective wear distributed



134,000 staff and volunteers trained on tackling COVID-19

FOOD SECURITY & SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Working with the government to get short-term relief to those who need it the most.



350,000 families received cash support



17,840 families received food packages



10,600 families affected by Cyclone Amphan received relief

CONTINUING CRITICAL SERVICES

Collaborating with the government to devise new ways of working through COVID-19.

Ensuring no student is left behind, through providing teachers and developing content for TV and phone schooling.

Enabling access to justice while courts are closed, through providing legal advice, referrals and dispute resolution through phones.

Providing critical healthcare services, which national facilities are coping with COVID-19 patients, through keeping essential facilities such as maternity clinics operating.

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.



Keeping the price of rice down: A prerequisite for food security

Bangladesh is one of the leading rice producers in South Asia, with its rice-dominant agriculture sector showing encouraging performance for two decades now. This achievement is vitally important for the country, with rice production and supply being a significant determinant of Bangladesh's food self-sufficiency and security.

Production of rice, especially the *Boro* variety (cultivated in residual water in low-lying areas), has facilitated Bangladesh's journey from import dependence to food self-sufficiency. Total production of the three main varieties of rice paddy (*Aus*, *Aman* and *Boro*) increased from 28.8 million tonnes to 36.45 million tonnes in 2019, making up 88% of total grain production in the country. Wide availability of rice means millions of people can afford a staple food source, contributing to poverty alleviation.

The government showed strong commitment to ensuring food security this year by supporting farmers in the early harvesting of *Boro*, which was in danger because of forecasted flash floods and a lack of workers due to lockdowns. The government provided facilitation services and supplied mechanical harvesters on credit, and a combination of innovative local interventions in labour mobilisation, technology and strong monitoring together resulted in a successful harvest.

Boro rice accounts for more than half of Bangladesh's total rice production. This year, due to pandemic-induced economic shock, a good *Boro* season was even more important for farmers. For many, it could be their last resort to avoid hunger if lockdowns continued. Good harvests also make it easier for the government to buy enough for public sale at a reduced price (commonly known as open market sale, or OMS), which regulates prices, or to redistribute as relief. 175,000 tonnes of rice were distributed among more than 67 million people up until 15 June, according to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. An additional 100,068 tonnes have been allocated for distribution before *Eid-ul-Adha* (the country's annual mass religious sacrifice).

Even though the *Boro* harvest was good, why is the price of rice so high?

The government was anxious to ensure that farmers received good prices for *Boro* production, to help to ease their pandemic-related financial troubles. As a result, the government procurement target was doubled - to 800,000 tonnes. The procurement price stayed at the same level - BDT 1,040 (USD 12.3) per mound (equivalent to 40kg).

Farmers received higher prices for their rice than they did in 2019 - a study by the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development found that farmers received approximately BDT 765 per mound from millers - but there was still not enough rice in the market.

There are four key reasons for this. Firstly, the cost of production this year was approximately 13% higher than last year, meaning that even though farmers were offered higher prices, profit margins were slim - so they were less inclined to sell. **Second, looking at an uncertain future and an unstable market, many farmers opted to keep additional stock for personal consumption.** The normal practice is to keep enough just to tide families through to the next harvest (*Aus*) - but this year many decided to keep extra for safety. **Thirdly, this year was marked by significant demand-supply gaps.** Bangladesh faced a number of natural disasters in 2019, resulting in widespread economic hardship, particularly in rural areas, so food consumption in those areas dropped. People simply could not afford to eat as much.

Coarse rice is the most common staple eaten in those areas, so demand for it dropped, and the price soon followed suit. In 2019, the government procurement target was also half of what it is this year, and there was not a lot of relief distributed, which compounded the price drop. In parallel, increased migration to urban areas (where finer varieties of rice are more commonly eaten) resulted in an increase in the demand for, and therefore the price of, fine grain rice. This year, as a result, farmers opted to produce less coarse and more fine varieties of rice. **Unfortunately, COVID-19 flipped the market dynamics.** Huge need for relief meant that demand for coarser varieties, which are cheaper and more preferable as relief items, shot up. Parallely, there was sudden mass migration to rural areas because of fewer employment opportunities in urban areas, and, as a result of drastically reduced socialising and closed restaurants, there was almost no demand for finer varieties of rice often used in rich dishes such as *biryani* and *pulao* for weddings. **Finally, farmers who were more financially solvent and saw the price of coarse rice increasing in the market, especially following Cyclone Amphan, hoarded stock.**

The millers found themselves in a difficult situation. First, because the farmers were less interested in selling, the millers had to offer them higher prices. Second, the millers had to accept rice with higher moisture content - often soaked with Cyclone Amphan-induced rain - meaning that their costs rose as they dried it. Third, labour and transportation costs rose as a result of lockdowns. According to a number of millers interviewed by BRAC staff, the production cost this year was between BDT38 - BDT42 per kg, while the government offered only BDT36. As a result, many millers decided to sell the finished rice to wholesalers instead of to the government.

This presented a new challenge. Millers offered the rice to the wholesalers on credit, as is the custom for that product. Wholesalers were reluctant to buy though, as they still had much of the rice that they purchased from millers in May and June in stock. Why?



The retail price of rice went up in March-early April because of panic buying following the first death from COVID-19. Wholesalers eagerly raised their prices in response. The millers, who generally keep the largest portion of the stock in their yards, followed suit - and benefited the most. **All the players in the supply chain benefited from the panic buying, except for the farmers (who generally cannot afford to keep any extra stock) and the consumers, who ultimately absorbed the price of everyone else's profits.**

In mid-April, people grew cautious with their money, realising that the pandemic was going to last for more than a few weeks. Buying slowed and prices slumped. Retailers rushed to dump the stock they had acquired to keep up with the increased customer demand (which they had bought for the higher prices), and suffered the first losses in the supply chain. These losses rapidly trickled down, with wholesalers then also rushing to dump their higher-priced stock. Lockdowns began, and retailers then had to suddenly close, temporarily bringing the entire supply chain to a halt.

When retailers came back to their stores in mid-June, most of them still had a large quantity of high-price rice to sell. They had to recoup their losses, so they artificially created 'shortage' by not buying more rice from wholesalers. This caused another domino effect, with wholesalers hiking up the wholesale price in response, which increased their inventory turnover time.

Millers were stuck in a difficult situation, sandwiched between wholesalers and farmers. They still had rice from the previous harvest, which they could not sell because wholesalers did not want it, and they also could not access credit to buy new rice from farmers, because the wholesalers had not sold the previous quantities of rice which they had bought from them - and the credit system in Bangladesh works such that buyers do not have to pay until a shipment has been sold. This slower than average wholesale sell had two consequences. Firstly, millers had to take credit at a higher rate of interest to procure *Boro* rice from the farmers. Secondly, they had to reduce the credit limit for the wholesalers. Consequently, the cost of the production for millers went up and a significant quantity of ready-to-market rice is now piling up in the millers' silos.

The first obvious secondary impact of COVID-19 is that the government could not meet the declared procurement target. As of June 16, the government procured just 4% of the target, which is half of what it was at the same time last year. **This failure can potentially have huge consequences.** The first consequence is that the government will not have enough rice to run open market sales. Not being able to regulate the price by making it available at a lower price to the public means people could end up paying any price for it - which would affect those living in poverty the hardest. The second consequence is that if the government needs to distribute rice as relief for either COVID-19 or another natural disaster, the required rice will need to be bought at a higher price. As of 3 June, the public stock of the staple stands 29% lower than that of last year, and flooding is predicted across Bangladesh's northern regions in coming months.

The second obvious secondary impact is a rise in the price of rice. As described, the production price for farmers and millers have increased. Wholesalers and retailers are not only buying rice at higher prices, but they are also both trying to recoup losses. As a result, the price of *Boro* coarse rice has increased 50% at the retail level and 49% at the wholesale level, compared to 36% and 33% respectively in April 2020. **In brief, customers are ultimately paying for the whole market system inefficiency.**

The government is considering reducing tariffs on rice imports to ease the pressure. This will give a negative signal to *Aman* producers ahead of cropping season, which may lead to the price drastically falling just before harvesting. This would not have an overall positive effect on the economy, and would particularly negatively impact the rural economy.

In this context, we would like to suggest supportive measures at multiple levels;

- **The government could import rice on a government-to-government basis.** This would enable them to expand open market sales, which would dampen the price at the retailer level, which would force wholesalers to reduce their prices - which would ultimately drive down prices for consumers. The government could also increase market monitoring to discourage hoarding.
- **Measures to reduce food insecurity among small, and medium farmers and sharecroppers could be made a mid-term priority.** We see consistently, at the first sign of market instability, that farmers hoard extra stock for safety. These household-level stocks contribute to destabilising markets. Introduction of rice banks, which have been piloted by many non-government organisations including Uttaran, offer a fascinating model. The banks are village-level silos to store food grains for challenging times. As a shared pool, the total food grains stored in such silos typically are much smaller in amount than the total amount of rice otherwise stocked up in individual households.
- **Farmers' Organisations (FOs), of which Bangladesh has a rich history, can play a vital role in improving the ability of the farmers to get a better price.** A 2013 survey by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) found there were as many as 198,114 FOs of diverse types, and 81% of them were formed with the support of the government. These organisations could play an important role in accumulating rice from individual producers, use machines to do the drying and act as a collective agent to undergo all the bureaucratic processes required to directly sell the rice to government agencies and collect the proceeds. This year, for example, if farmers could have received the government-declared price instead of what they received from millers, more farmers would have sold their rice to the government. These FOs, if properly capacitated, could also create their own rice banks to reduce concerns around food insecurity as well.
- **In the present situation, injecting cash to millers could also help to unlock markets.** Millers buy paddy for cash but sell finished rice for credit, playing the vital role of investors in the supply chain. When they are cash-starved, the market is starved. 'Warehouse financing' could be adopted, using millers' rice stocks as collateral, to access immediate and low-interest credit. This could be supported by government monitoring to discourage hoarding by the millers.





Snapshot: Monsoon floods

The recent monsoon floods have affected more than 7.5 million people across 23 districts in Bangladesh, temporarily displacing 2.8 million people.

The monsoon season brings torrential rainfall to the country every year between June-October. This year, water from upstream and heavy rainfall since the last week of June has induced fresh flooding in the already flood-affected lowlands and *haor* (wetlands) areas.

Most regions are beginning to recover from the floods, but low-lying areas and some *char* (riverine island) areas are expected to face a second spell of inundation mid-July.

Current situation overview:

- Bangladesh's northern districts of Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Rangpur, Gaibandha, Bogura, Sirajganj, Tangail, Jamalpur, and Faridpur, and northeastern districts of Sunamganj and Sylhet reported flooding due to the swelling of major rivers.
- Erosion of the banks of the Jamuna River, particularly in the districts of Sirajganj and Bogura, is leaving scores of people [homeless](#) and threatening hundreds of acres of cropland.
- People who were displaced took temporary shelter on embankments and elevated roads.
- A shortage of dry food has caused food insecurity among the people whose houses were submerged in water.
- People are exposed to water-borne [diseases](#), fever, stomach aches and skin diseases because of a lack of safe drinking water. There is also potential for diarrhoeal diseases, which could pose great risk because of reduced access to healthcare services.
- Road communications have been disrupted badly in the affected districts.

It is anticipated that more than 222,000 hectares of crop land may be submerged for up to seven days if there is a second round of inundation, according to the [Need Assessment Working Group](#).

As of 5 July, 168 of BRAC's microfinance branches have been affected. Field collection has partially stopped in 26 branches.

The scale of the crisis is within the communities' coping capacity, according to the government, which has carried out food and water distribution. BRAC is closely observing the situation and is ready to respond in case need arises throughout the month of July.



Update: Cyclone Amphan

Super Cyclone Amphan hit the coast of Bangladesh on 20 May 2020, affecting 2.6 million people and reportedly claiming 26 lives. Eight districts were severely affected. More than two million houses were damaged, 55,000 houses completely destroyed and nearly 41,000 toilets became unusable. In addition, 18,000 tube wells were damaged, 14,000 head of livestock were lost and more than 32,000 hectares of cultivable land was submerged by saline water. Prawn and fish farming, common livelihoods for the coastal region, suffered losses of more than 18,000 hectares of cultivation enclosure area. The government also reported that 440km of road and 76km of embankment that guard the community from tidal surges were damaged.

BRAC's response

Recovery of livelihoods has been increasingly difficult following the disaster, due to the lack of income generating opportunities resulting from the lockdowns to contain COVID-19.

BRAC is providing cash support to 10,600 affected families across the worst-affected districts of Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat. Each family is also receiving BDT 5,000 for house repairs. Participants have been chosen from households with members who were elderly, chronically sick, children, people with disabilities, lactating and pregnant women with limited income scope, as well as families in isolation due to COVID-19.

Support has been provided in the form of conditional cash grants, in two installments. The first is being given after identification and the second is being given upon partial completion of rebuilding the house and water, sanitation and hygiene facilities. In addition, tippy water taps (simple devices for hand-washing with running water without hand contact) are being installed to maintain basic hygiene practices, and information, education and communication materials have been distributed among the affected communities to help prevent COVID-19 and waterborne diseases.

6,000 of these households were assisted through BRAC's own funds and 4,600 through the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.



Prevention

- **1,666 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

- **54 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. A total of 63,435 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 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. BRAC is aiming to reach 2,743 more families living in extreme poverty through the funds raised through private donations from individuals and companies.
- **17,840 households living in urban and rural poverty have been provided with essential food support.** Out of 17,840 households, 7,000 were supported by DFAT, 5,000 households by Standard Chartered Bank, 3,700 households by PEPSICO and 2,140 households 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

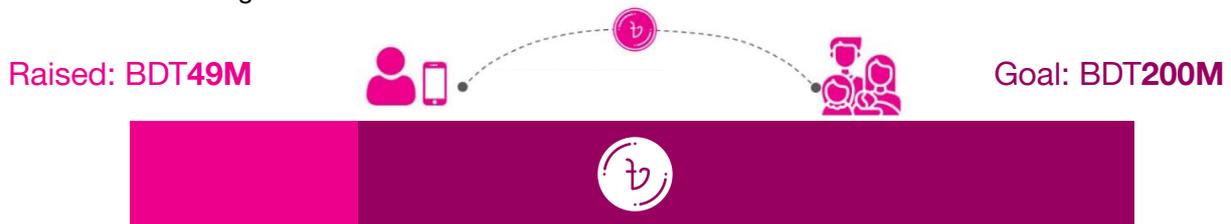
- **GIZ has partnered with BRAC** to enhance the COVID-19 response measures and ensure access to justice for vulnerable populations.
- **Bata Shoe Company** is collaborating with BRAC to provide 75,000 pairs of footwear to women who are in need of assistance or are working in the frontline of the ongoing 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

- **Infection rate of COVID-19 continues to rise.** The total number of COVID-19 positive cases in the district of Cox's Bazar stands at 2,902 as of 7 July 2020. 45 new COVID-19 cases were reported on 07 July. 40 deaths have been recorded from the virus.
- **54 positive cases have been identified in the Rohingya camps as of 7 July.** A total of 11 people from the Rohingya community are in facility-based quarantine in the camps as of 7 July. (WHO, Bangladesh; 7 July)
- **The lockdown in Cox's Bazar municipality came to an end on 30 June, and is opening up in limited capacity.** A 'general holiday' will be continued until 11 July in the red zones.
- **96,654 people from both the host and Rohingya communities were reached with awareness** on the prevention of COVID-19 between 2 July and 8 July. Among them, 81,439 were from the host community and 15,215 were from the Rohingya camps.
- **A total of 1,023 interpersonal communications sessions and 158 religious talim (religious education) sessions on COVID-19 prevention and gender-based violence** have been conducted in the Rohingya camps, reaching 5,588 men and 803 women.
- **24,795 children received psychosocial support** through the 'P Ashe Achi' (beside you) tele-counselling service.



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 21st edition of BRAC's external COVID-19 situation report. Find previous reports at <https://www.brac.net/covid19/sitrep.html>

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