

Dear colleagues, partners and friends,

1. Bangladesh is experiencing an exponential rise in identified cases, with the highest one-day spike in both cases reported (341) and deaths (10) yesterday, 16 April. The total number of cases now stands at 1,572 and the total number of deaths at 60. A total of 2,019 samples were tested across the country in the last 24 hours. The majority of the infected cases (81%) are in Dhaka. More tests continue to be carried out, but the testing rate in Bangladesh remains [the second-lowest](#) in Asia. The government has declared that Bangladesh is now at risk, under the Infectious Disease (Prevention, Control and Elimination) Act 2018.

2. The first death of a doctor from COVID-19 in Bangladesh [was reported](#). 100 healthcare professionals, including 54 doctors, have been infected to date. Healthcare providers continue to be hesitant about treating COVID-19 patients due to the unavailability of protective equipment and proper guidelines on usage, maintenance and disposal.

3. Bangladesh is in the 21st day of economic shutdown. Dhaka and Narayanganj remain areas of high risk. Large areas in the cities and identified hotspots, including over 15 districts, continue to be under lockdown. The 'general holiday' has been extended until 25 April, and people have been instructed not to leave their homes after 6pm.

Despite restrictions, hundreds of workers in the ready-made garments sector took to the streets in Savar on Monday, risking infection to demand salaries that have been due for months.

On 14 April, the Government of Bangladesh announced that it will support [15 million families living in poverty](#) with cash to help them survive the lockdown. On 16 April, the Prime Minister added that 5 million more people will be eligible for receiving [ration cards](#) to assist families in vulnerable situations. Income of the country's low-income group has fallen by 70% following the countrywide shutdown - this [was revealed by a joint PPRC-BIGD rapid response survey](#). We will share details on this in our next situation report.

4. Working in close coordination with the government and community-level organisations, BRAC has provided a total **154,739 families** with cash support of BDT 1,500 (USD 18).

BRAC completed the first phase of providing cash support to 100,000 families on 14 April. **We started our second phase on 16th April with the aim of reaching additional 100,000 families, with a focus on rural and hard to reach ultra poor, people with disabilities, host community in Cox's Bazar and indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.** BRAC will continue to prioritise the most vulnerable - the elderly, pregnant or lactating mothers, people with disabilities, women-headed households, people living in ultra-poverty and those who are not receiving support from any other sources.

5. On a trial basis, as testing capacity is getting ramped up, BRAC is working with DGHS to start a Kerala style Kiosk based sample collection centre in BSSMU hospital and in Narayanganj.

Please see details on the current situation and our work in the [attached situation report](#).

**Asif Saleh**  
Executive Director  
BRAC