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Urban Poor Hit By Outbreak: Tk 2k to each of 50 lakh families

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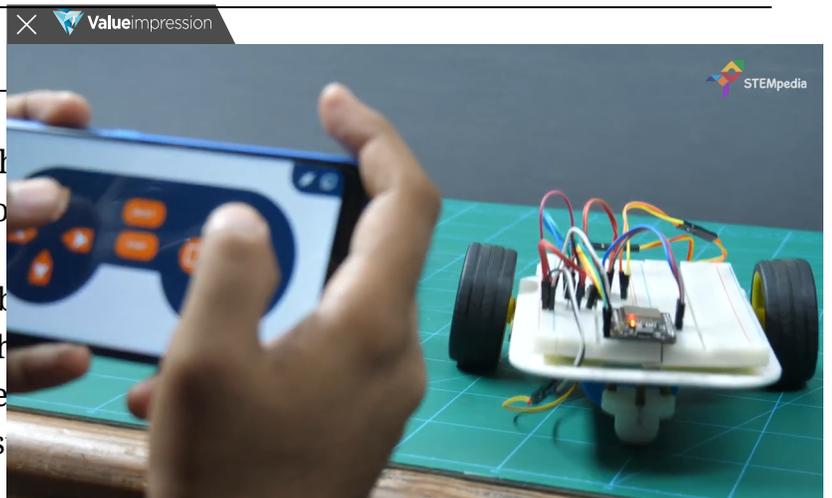
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Star Report

The government will provide Tk 2,000 to 50 lakh families clobbered by the shutdown of the economy.

The families engaged in the informal labor market, including mechanics, construction workers, rickshaw pullers, street vendors and restaurant employees, will receive Tk 2,000 each. The senior secretary at the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief said.



"Our ministry has prepared a list of the people based on information collected by the DC, UNO offices and city corporations across the country. We will submit the list to the Prime Minister's Office on May 4," he added.

The PMO will then take the next steps, he told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that Tk 1,000 crore has been allocated for the programme.

The initiative is part of an effort to help the most vulnerable people stay home during the coronavirus outbreak.

Families in which the breadwinner has become unemployed due to the shutdown will be the beneficiaries, he added.

The government also has plans to provide food assistance to a total of 1.25 crore families under various programmes, Kamal said. Officials hope that over five crore people will be fed under the programmes.

Transport workers and hungry villagers in different districts have been demonstrating on highways demanding food for the last few days.

Hundreds of thousands of people in the country's informal labour sector became unemployed or had their income drastically reduced after March 26, when the government announced the shutdown to contain the spread of coronavirus.

FOOD PROGRAMMES

The government will continue to sell rice among poor people at low prices throughout May under its Food-Friendly Programme, which was supposed to end in April, according to food ministry Secretary Mosammat Nazmanara Khanum.

Besides, the government has decided to continue until the end of June the Special OMS (open market sale) Programme for 12.5 lakh families of city corporation areas and divisional cities.

Under this programme, the enlisted families will be able to buy rice at lower prices. But no family will be allowed to buy more than 20 kg at a time, she told The Daily Star yesterday.

Cards required to avail the opportunity will be distributed among soon.

PACKAGE APPROVED FOR BORO FARMERS

The Food Planning Monitoring Committee (FPMC) yesterday approved the purchase of eight lakh tonnes of paddy. The approval came four days after the official procurement started on April 26.

"We are purchasing paddy from farmers to ensure that they get a fair price for their crop. Initially, we decided to purchase six lakh tonnes. We increased the amount as per the prime minister's direction," Nazmanara said.

Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaq, fisheries Minister SM Rezaul Karim, health Minister Zahid Malik, and local government Minister Tajul Islam joined the FPMC meeting via video conference.

Besides the eight lakh tonnes of paddy, the government is also purchasing one million tonnes of parboil rice and 1.5 lakh tonnes of sunburn rice.

The yield of paddy this boro season will probably be around 1.95 crore tonnes, the agriculture ministry estimates.

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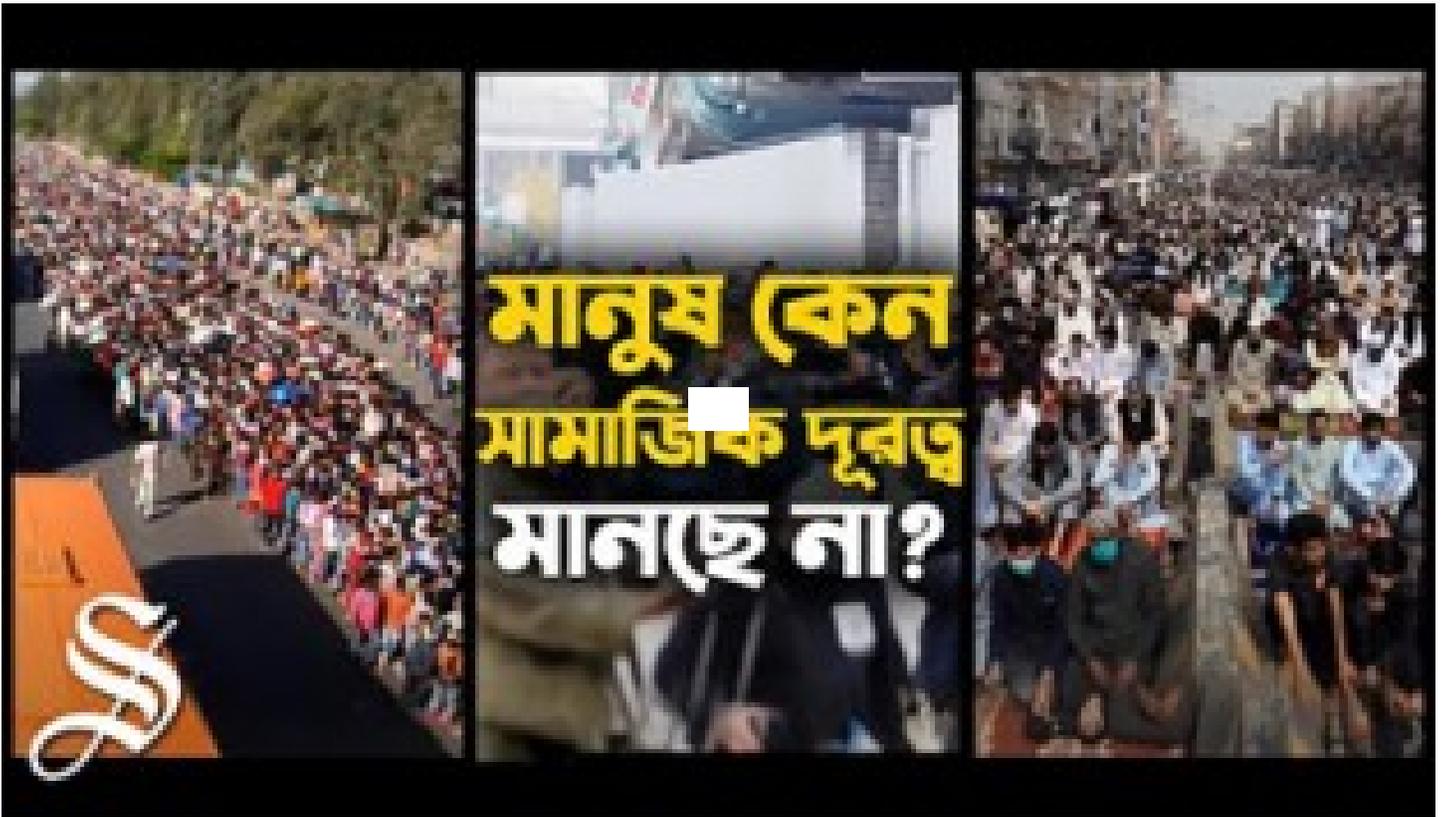
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