

Bangladesh builds mega field hospital as virus outbreak worsens

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Bangladesh has prepared a huge field hospital in three weeks to treat coronavirus patients in an attempt to fight the intensifying outbreak in the country.

The South Asian nation has reported nearly 18,000 infections and 269 deaths from COVID-19 despite a countrywide lockdown, but critics say the numbers are far lower than the true virus figures because of insufficient testing.

Only a handful of state-run hospitals in Bangladesh are currently treating coronavirus patients, and officials are hoping the new 2,084-bed facility in the capital Dhaka will help ease pressure on the country's healthcare infrastructure.

"If we can manage necessary manpower, we will be able to provide much better service in this isolation centre," the hospital's director Ehsanul Haq told AFP on Wednesday, referring to the more than 4,000 healthcare workers needed before it can start operations.

The 2,084-bed Bashundhara Convention Centre Grid Hospital (BCCGH) comprises three convention centres and a large temporary structure at a 2.5 million square-foot compound lent by the Bashundhara Group, one of the largest private companies in Bangladesh.

With fears rising in Bangladesh about a massive spike in cases, the hospital's ability to more than double its capacity to 5,000 beds is likely

to prove useful to authorities.

The project's executive engineer Masudul Alam said it was inspired by the makeshift hospitals built at breakneck speed in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the [coronavirus](#) first emerged late last year before spreading around the world.

Alam said 250 people "worked 24/7" to help build the 290 million taka (\$3.4 million) facility in three weeks.

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