



# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



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## FOR COVID-19 PATIENTS ONLY Govt readying 6 hospitals

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and WASIM BIN HABIB

As part of efforts to contain the spread of coronavirus infections, the government is converting six hospitals in and around the capital into facilities for treating COVID-19 patients.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has started appointing on deputation doctors, nurses, and other healthcare employees to the facilities. It is also procuring and sending necessary equipment to the hospitals, officials said.

The hospitals are: Bangladesh Railway Hospital at Kamalapur, Mahanagar General Hospital at Nayabazar, Mirpur Maternity, Kamrangirchar 31-bed Hospital, Aminbazar 20-bed Hospital, and Jinjira 20-bed Hospital.

Aminul Hasan, director (hospitals and clinics) at the DGHS yesterday said, "The situation in the country is normal. But we are preparing out of caution in case the situation becomes dire."

He also said the DGHS had asked all public hospitals in the country to prepare isolation beds so that there were 4,500 such beds available.

"We are preparing ourselves in advance so that it does not strain the healthcare system even if the situation turns bad. But there is no reason to panic now," he told The Daily Star.

The officials at the DGHS said many of these hospitals have shortages of doctors, nurses and other employees. These hospitals serve relatively fewer patients and that was why they were chosen.

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## WHO says it's now pandemic

Death toll jumps to 827 in Italy, Merkel says up to 70pc Germans can be infected; India suspends most visas until April 15

STAR REPORT

The World Health Organization described the coronavirus outbreak as a pandemic for the first time yesterday as Britain and Italy announced multi-billion-dollar war chests to fight the disease.

The United States also said it was considering new steps to battle the virus that emerged in China in December and has spread around the world, halting industry, grounding flights, closing schools and forcing events to be postponed, reports Reuters.

"We are deeply concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity and by the alarming levels of inaction," WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters in Geneva.

"We have therefore made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterised as a pandemic," he said, using the formal name of the coronavirus.

There are now more than 119,711 infections in 114 countries and 4,351 people have died of the virus, with the numbers expected to climb, Tedros said.

Use of the word pandemic does not change the WHO's response, said Dr Mike Ryan, the head of the Geneva-based agency's emergencies programme.

WHO officials have signalled for weeks that they may use the word "pandemic" but said it does not carry legal significance. The WHO classified the outbreak as a "public health emergency of international concern" on January 30, triggering an increase in global response coordination.

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### COVID-19 UPDATE

**4,351 DEATHS**  
**119,711 CONFIRMED CASES**

## IEDCR was 'slow to act'

Say sources about tracing contacts of 3 coronavirus cases

MOJIBUDD AHMED SUJAN and RASHIDUL HASAN

Measures taken by the IEDCR following the detection of three coronavirus cases have lately raised some concerns.

At a press briefing on March 8, the Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research announced the first confirmed coronavirus cases in the country. It said three Bangladeshis -- two of them Italy returnees -- were found to have been infected with the virus.

It also said three others, believed to have come in close contact with the infected ones, were quarantined at hospital while another was self-quarantined at home.

Then what about the other passengers of the two flights that carried the two Italy returnees to the country and those the two met at the Dhaka airport and later?

The Daily Star learnt that the IEDCR sought information on some

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## WORLD KIDNEY DAY TODAY

## Agonising wait for amendment

Patients keep suffering as provision to allow emotional voluntary donations not incorporated yet

NILIMA JAHAN and TAMANNA KHAN

Still bearing the trauma of her last dialysis, Marjia Rabbani Shoshi was speaking with a smile until the subject of the Organ Transplantation Act 1999 (amended in 2018) came up.

"I worked hard to finish my studies, earned my licence, but now I cannot practise," said Marjia, the first blind lawyer of Faridpur Bar Association and a recipient of The Daily Star and IPDC Finance's Unsung Women Nation Builders Awards 2020.

With frustration, the 26-year-old explained how restrictions in the law have been an obstacle between Marjia and her dream.

Marjia suffers from end-stage renal failure and requires a kidney transplant. Having no eligible and willing donor in her immediate and extended family as defined by the law, her only hope is a nonrelative donor or a cadaveric one.

Though the law allows cadaveric transplant, the social taboo about removing organs from the body of a brain-dead patient makes the option an unlikely solution for patients like Marjia.

On the other hand, kidney from an unrelated donor can only be possible once the law is amended.

Last December, in response to a petition filed by the mother of another end-stage renal disease patient, the High



Marjia Rabbani

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## Tigers rout Zimbabwe in T20Is too

Complete their first clean sweep of a full series

MAZHAR UDDIN

Bangladesh tied a bow on their sheer dominance over Zimbabwe when the home side completed a clean sweep over the visitors with a comprehensive nine-wicket win in the second and final T20I at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

With this win, Bangladesh -- who had previously won the one-off Test which was followed by a 3-0 ODI series win -- concluded a perfect outing at home after a dismal show in Pakistan ahead of the series. It was the first time ever that Bangladesh managed a clean sweep of their opponents in all three formats of a series.

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আপনার বাড়ি আপনার তাজমহল

প্রিয়জনের জন্য গড়া আপনার বাড়িটি প্রজন্মের পর প্রজন্মা টিকিয়ে রাখতে ১০০ বছরের বেশি সময় ধরে বিশ্বজুড়ে জনপ্রিয় সুইজারল্যান্ডের ব্র্যান্ড

Holcim Strong Structure

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\* তাজমহলের খুঁটি শুধুমাত্র সুন্দরীল ডাঙার হাটীক। তাজমহলের ছাপাও একটি নিদর্শন।

## 4-LANE DHAKA-BHANGA EXPRESS HIGHWAY BUILT WITH BSRM XTREME

Just like other national mega structures, the Dhaka-Bhanga Express Highway is being built with BSRM Xtreme. The Express Highway will not only connect the entire nation through Padma Bridge, it will also open many new business and economic possibilities.

BSRM is truly grateful for getting the opportunity to help people and the nation to progress forward, and wishes to express its sincere gratitude to the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

We also express our thanks to:  
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh,  
Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, Roads and Highways Department,  
Henan Corporation Korea, 24 Engineer Construction Brigade –  
Bangladesh Army, 17 ECB, Abdul Monem Ltd.,  
Spectra Engineers Ltd. and Wahid Construction Ltd.

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