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Hospitals were never this far

People in need of urgent medical care struggle to reach hospitals amid transport crisis; hospitals too won't take them in

ZYMA ISLAM

With the capital in shutdown, people who need to urgently reach hospitals have been left in the lurch mainly due to a dearth of vehicles.

The problem was exacerbated by the fact that many hospitals are still refusing to take patients with fevers and colds citing their lack of preparations for dealing with potential coronavirus vectors.

Add to this mix, this is the flu and dengue season, and people having fever is quite common now.

On Friday, Gulam Mukhtadir's 16-month-old son was suffering from fever with the temperature reaching 104 degrees Fahrenheit. He had to carry the sick child and walk from his home in South Kafrul to a hospital in Mirpur-10 via Dhaka cantonment area.

That is a distance of over five kilometres, and making it on foot would take one over an hour. Count in more if the person is carrying a child who is too weak to walk.

"We live in an area next to the cantonment, where you won't find any rickshaw now. When my son's temperature was soaring, we contacted all the local hospitals, but they told us straight that they won't allow anybody with fever to enter," said Mukhtadir, a businessman.

After many frantic phone calls, he finally found the hospital at Mirpur-10 willing to treat his son. Unable to find any vehicle, he began to walk, carrying the child. "I could not bear my son's pain. I had to do it," he said.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, he said he was going back to the hospital to collect test results and that doctors were suspecting typhoid or dengue -- nothing related to coronavirus.

Recently, the government has announced a 10-day countrywide shutdown as part of its efforts to contain the spread of coronavirus. Since

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Customers wait inside the orange circles painted on the ground in front of a convenient store in Mohammadpur Katasur area in the capital yesterday. The circles are three feet apart forming a queue to maintain social distancing. Many shops have opted this method to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Many sick Bangladeshis still stranded in India

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

A large number of Bangladeshi patients and their attendants are stuck in India as the neighbouring country has been under a lockdown since March 25.

Though the Bangladesh High Commission in India could not confirm the exact number of stranded people, it is being said that hundreds of Bangladeshis are stuck in different cities of India, many of whom are suffering from complicated diseases.

As the high commission staff are also locked down in their houses, almost nothing has been done so far to bring these people back. The commission has established a hotline number which is +91 859555 2494 and urged all the stranded people to call the number if any sort of help is required.

But several victims have told this newspaper that they did not get any response after calling this

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BANGLADESH UPDATE



0

infected in 24 hours



48

Total cases



15

Total recovery



5

Death

GLOBAL UPDATE



28,717

Total deaths



1,35,735

Total recoveries



6,15,519

total cases

Europe suffers huge surges in cases, deaths

Spain counts 832 fatalities in 24 hours; global death toll nears 29,000

AFP, Rome

Europe was reeling from a staggering surge in coronavirus deaths yesterday, still days or weeks from what experts desperately hope will be the epidemic's peak.

Grim new tolls from Italy and Spain came as the IMF confirmed the world economy has plunged into a historic slump, and the US invoked wartime procurement powers.

The number of deaths around the world from coronavirus stood at 28,717, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally yesterday.

More than 6,15,519 declared cases have been registered in 177 countries and territories since the epidemic first emerged in China in December. Of these cases, at least 1,35,735 are now considered recovered.

Variations in testing regimes mean the true number is likely far higher still, and confirmed deaths are mounting.

Spain recorded 832 fatalities in 24 hours, bringing its toll to 5,690,

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TREATING COVID-19 PATIENTS Fearful, locals resist a noble initiative

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Protests erupted in Tejgaon Industrial area yesterday over the plan to set up a dedicated hospital at a building in the area for treating coronavirus patients, halting the refurbishment works for hours.

Locals said the protesters attempted to vandalise the existing building where Akij group, in association with Gonoshasthaya Kendra, is planning to set up the hospital.

The demonstrators, who are the followers of local ward councillor Shafiullah Shafi, also prevented two trucks carrying beds and other equipment from entering the compound.

The protest began around 12:15pm

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SHUTDOWN EXCESSES BY POLICE, ADMIN

Outrage; move on to pull in the reins

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and RAFIUL ISLAM

Amid widespread outrage over police excess in enforcing restrictions on people's movement, the authorities yesterday issued several directives asking police and other officials to act professionally.

Over the last few days, policemen hit people with batons in Tangail, Rajbari, Chattogram, Dinajpur, and in some areas in the capital, according to media reports.

There are allegations that people who left home to buy essentials and even an on-duty medical officer were among those attacked.

People vented their frustration on social media the most after photos of an assistant commissioner (land) publicly humiliating elderly people in Jashore's Manirampur went viral. The official was withdrawn yesterday. In two photos, Sayeema Hasan is seen taking photos with her phone of elderly men holding their ears.

At Chinotola kitchen market on Friday, Sayeema made three men -- a rickshaw-van puller, a vegetable vendor, and a man riding a bicycle -- hold

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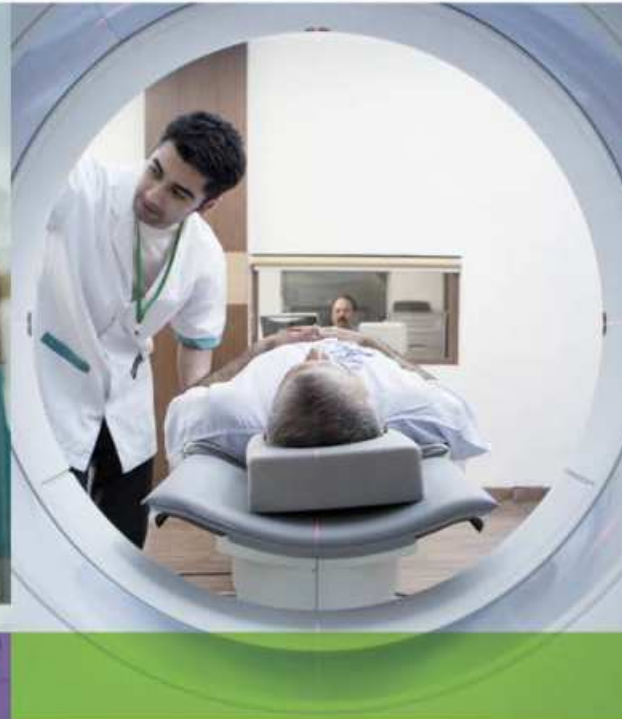
SHUTDOWN GUIDELINES

DMP tells its officers what to follow

- 1 Restaurants, bakeries should remain open; their staff should be allowed to move freely
- 2 Shops of essential commodities should remain open
- 3 Customers should be advised takeaways instead of eating at the restaurants
- 4 Individual movement in any form should be allowed with health advice
- 5 Police should take special care for people on important duty, like doctors, nurses, medical assistants and technicians, city corporation officials, security guards, etc.
- 6 Police officials are expected to behave professionally
- 7 Police have to practise social distancing while on duty

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