

Road accidents kill 7, injure 12

STAR REPORT

At least seven people were killed and 12 injured in road accidents yesterday, report our correspondents.

In Tangail, six people were killed and 11 injured after a cement-laden truck hit a road divider and overturned at Kandila of Tangail Sadar upazila around 5:30am, said Md Shafiqul Islam, senior station officer of Tangail Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Sacks of cement fell on 16 people who were travelling on the truck, leaving five dead on the spot and 11 injured.

Firefighters rushed the injured to Tangail General Hospital, where one more victim succumbed to his injuries.

Four of the deceased were identified as Julhas (50), Alek (45), Babu (25) and Abdullah (35). Sajedul Islam, traffic inspector (administration) in Tangail, said most of the victims are day labourers. They boarded the truck from different places, including the capital's Karwan Bazar, to go to their home districts.

"Both the driver and helper fled the scene after the accident," he added.

In Gopalganj, a boy was killed and his father injured after a pick-up van hit their rickshaw-van at Borosura area of Kashiani upazila around 12:45pm.

The deceased is Imran Khan (13), said Moloy Roy, sub-inspector of Ghonapara Highway Police Outpost. Imran died on the spot, and his father, who was pulling the rickshaw-van, was injured, he said.

The pick-up also overturned, while its driver fled the scene, added the SI.

Secondary students

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the lecture.

"They [Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education] will provide us the content and we will run it from 9am everyday," he said. Sangsad TV usually is on air from 5pm to 8pm, he added.

Meanwhile, Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) Director General Md Fasilullah said they have taken decision to air classes through Sangsad TV for primary students.

"We are working on the issue. But we are considering to take a method that can help all students. We are also thinking of airing classes through social media sites and to create a web platform to upload the classes," he said.

"We are also working on recording of lectures," he added.

DPE oversees over 1 lakh primary schools, madrasas, and kindergartens, which have over 1.74 crore students across the country.

Ziaul Kabir Dulu, president of Dhaka-based association of school-goers' parents Abhibhabak Oikya Forum, welcomed the move, but said as Sangsad TV is a cable channel, the government can consider airing the lecture through Bangladesh Television for two or three hours a day.

"BTV is terrestrial channel so there is no need for a cable line," he said.

Asked, Shahedul Khahir Chowdhury said they will look into how many students were out of coverage of TV lecture.

"We also have plans to upload these lecture to Youtube as well as web-based teachers' platform teachers.gov.bd. We are also looking for ways how we can keep this content that will be available for offline [out of internet coverage] people," he added.



A truck carrying sacks of cement overturned in Tangail, leaving six dead and 11 injured. The individuals were sitting on top of the goods, and at one point, the sacks fell on them, killing some on the spot. PHOTO: COLLECTED

General patients

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under the upazila, went to the hospital with his two-and-half-month-old son who was suffering from pneumonia.

He was seen walking along the corridor with his child in his arms.

"I am worried that my son might be infected with coronavirus. So, I am trying my best to leave right after receiving treatment," he said.

On an average, 150 to 200 patients visit the hospital's outpatient department every day, but the number has come down to 30 to 40, said Dr Nurul Haque, Kulaura upazila health

and family planning officer.

In Pirojpur, a total of 126 people have completed their home quarantine and 269 are put in isolation in its seven upazilas. However, no one was infected with coronavirus, said Civil Surgeon Hasnat Yusuf Jaki.

In Bagerhat, Sadar Hospital and eight upazila health complexes are experiencing similar situation with only 40 inpatients at the 100-bed Sadar hospital.

Generally, 450-500 patients receive treatment at the outpatient department on a daily basis, said

Dr Belfar Hossain, resident medical officer, adding that nowadays the figure has come down to 100. However, it has launched hotlines -- 015680801768, 01742827712, 01311078802 and 01760646569 -- to provide general health service over phone.

No one is visiting the hospital unless they are severely ill, said the medical officer.

Civil Surgeon Dr KM Humayun Kabir said the government has asked everyone to stay home. "We have advised people not to come to hospital unless they have serious problems."

A forsaken territory

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Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Turkey, Malaysia, Singapore and India.

However, air communications with the UK, China, Hong Kong and Thailand will remain open, a press release of the civil aviation ministry said yesterday.

Biman on Friday decided that it will suspend flights on its two remaining

routes -- London and Manchester -- from March 30 till April 7, marking a temporary halt to all its flights.

The civil aviation ministry yesterday said suspension of all flights of the flag carrier on domestic routes has been extended for seven days up to April 7 from March 31. Biman will operate its next flights to London and Manchester today, and fly back to Dhaka tomorrow, an official said.

As per the decision, Biman's flight suspension to Jeddah, Madina, Riyad, Dammam, Kuwait, Doha, Muscat and Bangkok have been extended till April 5, Abu Dhabi till April 7, Dubai till April 9, Singapore till April 11, Kathmandu till April 12, Kuala Lumpur till April 14 and Kolkata and Delhi till April 15.

However, air cargo operation to and from Dhaka will continue.

Sales drop at bazaars

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no one else touch the meat as it might spread viruses. Instead we are helping them decide which cut of meat they want," said another butcher Rahamat Mia (40) in Nururchala.

As a precaution, some vegetable sellers have limited their movement,

and aren't roaming around much further from their home. "As the virus has spread, I am also worried. I'm no longer going to different wards like I used to," said Md Shafique (35), who sells vegetables on a van in Badda area.

Regarding the price, customers didn't have much to complain about.

"I thought price would decrease due to the current situation but it has stayed the same," said Rakibul Haque.

"I am not buying everything here, just vegetables and spices. Not buying meats regularly, because for that I'd have to visit bazaar often, which I should avoid now," he added.

Civil surgeon

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colleague -- anaesthetist Iqbal Mahmud -- rushed there, around 15km away from district town, to conduct the operation.

The 25-year-old mother gave birth to a boy.

"The condition of the woman from an impoverished family was not good. They tried to manage doctors but could not...As I used to do gynecological operations, even though it is not my job now, I decided to help them out," Gaffar told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Moving her to district town was risky as there was serious risk to the mother and her unborn baby on the way," he said, adding that both mother and the boy are doing well.

The prompt act of the civil surgeon was hailed by the many in the district.

Legal actions

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from any sources other than the government or verified ones," it read.

The government also requested all to call 999 or the PID phones at 9512264, 9514988 or email piddhaka@gmail.com if they notice any false or incorrect information circulating.

4 'yaba traders'

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orchard with bullet wounds, he added.

After primary treatment at Teknaf Upazila Health Complex, they were sent to Cox's Bazar General Hospital, where the on-duty doctor declared them dead, the CO said.

Their identities could not be known, the CO said, adding they might have been from the Rohingya community.

Around 180,000 yaba pills, two locally-made firearms, two rounds of ammunition and a sharp weapon were recovered from the spot, he said.

Meanwhile, another yaba trader, identified as Musa Akbar, 36, was killed in a gunfight with police around 4:00am in Whykong union, said Pradip Kumar Das, officer-in-charge (OC) of Teknaf Police Station.

Musa, a resident of the union's Kharaingyaghona area, was accused in several cases, including narcotics, the OC claimed.

Two sharp weapons and 15,000 yaba pills were recovered from the spot, he said, adding that three police men were also injured in the gunfight.

'Don't try to subvert

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release from prison in Pakistan he has been working very hard from 18 to 19 hours a day. "I have to work facing a lot of difficulties," he adds.

The prime minister says that the government sanctions 16 crore Taka for test relief work. He asks people to see that nobody can misuse this money, and to see that the money goes to the needy.

Bangabandhu further says that anybody trying to sabotage his government's nationalisation programme will be firmly dealt with.

POWS TRIAL SOON

Bangabandhu declares at a public meeting in Chattogram that Pakistan army officers will soon be brought to Bangladesh for facing trial before the Tribunal for the atrocities they

had committed on the people of Bangladesh. Bhutto should disown these Pakistanis, he adds.

The prime minister further says that Bhutto will have to allow four lakhs of Bangladeshis living in Pakistan to return to Bangladesh. Bangladeshis in Pakistan are absolutely innocent and they have been living there without creating any problem, he adds. Bhutto has no right to try them, Bangabandhu says.

BANGALEES STRANDED IN MIDDLE EAST AT PAKISTAN'S INSTANCE

A large number of Bangladeshis have been stranded and confined in various countries of the Middle East at the instance of the Pakistan government. The Bangladeshis who had gone to the Middle East countries before the liberation of Bangladesh on Pakistani

passport have been put under confinement. Their passports have also been seized by the governments of Muslim countries of the Middle East who have not yet recognised Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh immediately after liberation had sent a request to the governments concerned to allow the Bangladeshis in their respective countries to return to their homeland. But the respective governments are planning to send those Bangladeshis to Pakistan where Pakistani President Bhutto has threatened to hold the Bangladeshis as hostage for the Pakistani Prisoners of War in India.

SOURCES: March 30, 1972 issues of Ittefaq, The Bangladesh Observer, Azad, Morning News, Dainik Bangla and Purbodesh.

Have an immune-boosting diet

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glasses of water per day for an adult.

"As we are less active during such situations, and may not feel as thirsty, it is important to keep hydrated properly and, in that case, we should avoid cold water. We should avoid ice cream. It is better to drink lukewarm water and gargle with that," Farzana said.

The nutritionist suggested that the plate should be colourful with green vegetables and fruits, adding that people should consume vitamin C, D, iron, along with other vitamins regularly.

"All types of vegetables, including

carrots, pumpkins, green chili should be on the plate. Oranges, apples, papaya, pineapple, malta, lemon, sour fruits are rich sources of vitamin C. So people should consume those as much as they can to boost the immune system," Farzana said.

She also suggested that one must also consume milk and other such dairy products, regularly as those are the best sources of vitamin D.

Bananas, watermelon and apples are good sources of iron, which also helps strengthen the immune system, she said.

Farzana said that it is better to avoid

processed food as these are bad for the human body and foods that are oily or deep fried also hinders the regular activities of the immune system.

"One must eat protein rich foods like meat, fish and eggs regularly," she added.

As people around the world are being forced to stay at home to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic, Farzana, who is a dietitian by profession, suggested that people have to be physically active through free hand exercises, walking on treadmills and if the house is spacious then walking around the house.

Dengue too may join in

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viruses at the same time," he said, adding, "Both viruses are active there and almost 25,000 dengue patients are in that country."

The authorities should launch drives near the houses and workplaces of dengue patients. Adulticiding, larviciding and source reduction are needed there, he said.

Entomologist Kabirul Bashar of Jahangirnagar University said the light rain a few days ago had helped the breeding of Aedes and it would take 15 days for the larva to be adult mosquitoes.

Cleaning activities and awareness campaigns should launch across the country, he added.

Train stations, bus stops, and police stations should be cleaned, he said.

The construction site owners should be very careful. At such sites, the authorities should use bleach in the ditches, containers and reservoirs, he added.

In union and upazila parishads, there is no equipment to control mosquitoes, he pointed out.

Shahnila Ferdousi, line director of Centre for Disease Control at DGHS, said city corporation representatives and individuals should embark on a cleaning mission.

"We distributed 43,000 dengue testing kits to the 491 upazilas," she said.

New doctors in upazila hospitals were trained on dengue patient management in January, she added.

"Due to the coronavirus situation, now we are trying to provide the training online."

A Covid-19 patient infected with dengue will suffer seriously, she said.

"We are advising doctors to observe patients who have fever very carefully."

Local Government and Rural Development Minister Md Tajul Islam said the city corporations were asked to procure enough insecticides and start using them regularly.

They were also asked to create awareness among people and conduct mobile courts when necessary.

CORONAVIRUS IN MALDIVES

Bangladeshi workers at high risk: HRW

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 100,000 migrant workers in the Maldives, including many Bangladeshis, are at added risk from Covid-19, Human Rights Watch has said, urging authorities to ensure their access to healthcare.

According to the Maldives' health authorities, as of March 27 there were five active cases of Covid-19, two of them tourists and one a Maldivian returnee from the UK, the global rights group said in an article published on its website on Friday.

"But the Maldives faces another big challenge. The other two cases of Covid-19 reported were migrant workers. There are about 100,000 migrant workers in the Maldives, mostly from Bangladesh, making up roughly 25 percent of the islands' total population," it said.

This population is vulnerable to seeing a much larger number of cases because they live in congested shared quarters and do work that does not make it possible to practise strict social distancing, it added.

HRW said although employers in the Maldives are legally obligated to provide all migrant workers with health insurance, coverage is often minimal and many are not informed they have insurance at all.

Employers also illegally confiscate workers' papers, making it difficult for them to obtain healthcare. As a result, migrants are frequently forced to pay more than the citizens for medical services.

Undocumented workers are especially vulnerable, the HRW article added.

The global rights group had said on March 11, the government established a dedicated Covid-19 clinic for migrant workers on Hulhumale Island, near the capital Male, which does not require them to show work permits or other documentation.

"This is welcome, but with thousands of workers scattered throughout the Maldives islands, many cannot afford to travel to this clinic," it further said.

Working with the World Health Organization, the Maldives government has taken important steps to establish isolation and quarantine facilities and prepared hospitals for testing and treatment.

However, the Maldives has not ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families -- they should do so immediately and abide by its provisions in the meantime.

Most urgently, the Maldives government should ensure migrant workers have the right to visit clinics and hospitals without fear of arrest or deportation, it added.

No defective kits

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of China, nor has it been listed as a qualified supplier of medical equipment by the Ministry of Commerce of China," read the statement.

China will always stand by the friendly people of Bangladesh and will continue to offer necessary assistance within their scope of capacity in the fight against Covid-19, it added.

The statement also suggested that all the test kits require specific conditions of storage and the testing process should be conducted by professionals following strictly the instructions and user manuals provided by manufacturers.

"The Chinese government and manufacturers will not be responsible for any problem resulting from the mishandling or malpractice in the use of the test kits," said the statement.

Security fears at ATM

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"A kind of fear grips me no matter how much I try to divert my mind," the man said who has been protecting the booth for the last five years.

"Many people come here and there is a fear of coronavirus. But I am concerned about security. I am not equipped with weapons. If robbers attack, I will not be able to resist."

Gani was singing a folk song aloud keeping the door of his tiny compartment shut inside the booth when our correspondent talked to him.

"I was trying to sway my evil thoughts," a smiling Gani said.

Against the backdrop of rising Covid-19 cases, the government has announced public holiday from March 26 to April 2 and halted all public transports.

On top of that, the government has repeatedly been requesting people to stay at home. To check public gatherings, the government also deployed law enforcers and army personnel.

At a situation like this, the banks have decided to continue operations for limited hours and suggested clients to use automated teller machine (ATM) and mobile banking services.

Soon after the government declared the public holiday since March 26, a large number of people left the capital, turning the vibrant city into almost a mute city.

"We are used to see empty Dhaka during the Eid vacation. But this time it is different. There is no mass transport on the road," said Al-Amin, a security guard at a booth adjacent to a cinema hall in Farmgate area.

Al-Amin also said that the fear of coronavirus infection coupled with robbery grip him now a days.

The high-ups of the bank he serves to have him instructions to shut the door of his ATM booth after 12:30am.

However, not all banks are operated similarly.

"Our booths remain open all night long," said two security guards of two booths next to Grameenphone center in Farmgate.

Meanwhile, attacks on security guards on ATM booths are no rare phenomena.

In the last August, a security guard of a booth in Gazipur was stabbed to death at night. In August, 2018, police recovered a slit-throat body of a security guard of an ATM booth in Joypurhat town.

In the same year, another security

guard of another ATM was found dead in cantonment area in the capital.

Along with the security guards, the clients of the banks are also feeling insecure.

Shahinur Islam, employee of a private company, said, "We are encouraged to use ATM booths but I'm afraid of robbery. What if they [criminals] take advantage of empty roads?"

Shahinur, who lives in Dhaka for about 17 years, said, "I've never seen such Dhaka in these years."

Expressing concern, businessman Kamal Ahmed said, "People are now using masks due to coronavirus. Robbers can take advantage of that [hiding identity wearing masks]."

Sohel Rana, assistant inspector general at Police Headquarters (PHQ), told The Daily Star on Thursday that the usual law enforcement and security duty of police is going on in parallel with the massive activities and awareness campaign on coronavirus issues.

"PHQ has already directed all the field units and made them aware of ensuring regular patrolling and a special coordination cell has also been set up at the PHQ to monitor the activities," he said.

Rana further said that they have been directed to strengthen the regular security patrols across the country so that criminals and law breakers can't take the privilege of this special situation.

While visiting different areas of the capital in last two days, these correspondents found presence of only small numbers of police officials on the streets.

There were barricades in some areas of Dhaka including Gulistan, Motijheel and Kawran Bazar, but there were no police personnel in those check points.

Asked, Shafiqul Islam, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said there was nothing to worry about as regular police patrolling would be continued.

"There is no people on the streets as we are not allowing anyone to move without their necessities," he said.

Besides the police patrolling, the army patrol teams are also moving on the streets. So, there is nothing to be worry about, added the police commissioner.

At a campaign programme on Friday, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said law enforcers were alerted to prevent untoward situations like theft and robbery.