

No way to get home

Several thousand Bangladeshis are stuck in 9 Gulf countries with no flights to Dhaka

RASHIDUL HASAN and JAMIL MAHMUD

Several thousand Bangladeshis have been stranded in nine Middle East countries amid suspension of air communications to and from Dhaka for containing Covid-19 spread over the last two weeks.

Of them, at least 1,000 are stuck in Saudi Arabia; many of them went there to perform Umrah, said Golam Moshi, Bangladesh ambassador in the Gulf country.

The eight other countries are Oman, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. The Bangladeshis went there for business, travel and other purposes.

Talking to this newspaper over phone on Monday night, Moshi said as most of these nations have imposed restrictions to different extents including lockdown, it has become very difficult to communicate with the stranded Bangladeshis.

Many of the Bangladeshis must be passing days in hardship as they are running out of money, he also said.

According to worldometers.info, the nine nations saw nearly 5,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus and 73 fatalities as of Monday.

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, the authorities in the countries took some unprecedented measures to contain the virus transmission.

They include curfew, countrywide shutdown, ban on commercial passenger flights, closure of land borders, SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Some 3,000 passenger boats lying idle on the bank of the Buriganga amid the 10-day countrywide shutdown to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The boatmen, whose only source of income has come to a standstill, are spending days in uncertainty. The photo was taken recently from Telghat area in capital's Keraniganj.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Four die with Covid-19-like symptoms

STAR REPORT

At least four people, including a teenage boy, died after showing Covid-19-like symptoms in four districts yesterday, while three patients exhibiting similar symptoms and fever have been kept in isolation in Chattogram.

Our correspondents from different districts reported on the deaths of people exhibiting Coronavirus-like symptoms and subsequent lockdowns at some places.

In Pirojpur, a 17-year-old boy who sat for the SSC examination this year, died yesterday after suffering with fever and cough for the last three or four days. But he did not go to hospital, said HM Jahurul Islam, Bhandaria upazila health and family planning officer.

The boy suddenly started suffering from bleeding from the mouth and nose at noon and died shortly afterwards, the health officer added.

"The body's samples have been sent to the IEDCR [Institute of Epidemiology, SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Three killed in 'gunfights'

STAR REPORT

Three men -- two alleged robbers and a suspected drug dealer -- were killed in "gunfights" with law enforcers in Bagerhat, Dinajpur and Pabna yesterday.

In Bagerhat, Faruque Morol, 35, was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab members in the Sundarbans area.

The man was the ringleader of a robber gang locally known as Faruque Bahini, said Rab.

Col Rawshawul Firoz, commanding officer of Rab-6, said they conducted a raid in the area around 8:00am on information. As soon as they reached there, members of the robber gang opened fire, forcing them to retaliate.

At one point, Faruque sustained bullet injuries. Rushed to the local health complex, doctors declared him dead. Two Rab officials, who also sustained injuries during the "gunfight" received primary treatment, he added.

Contacted, Maloy Mollick, doctor at Mongla Upazila Health Complex, said Rab members brought three men in the morning. One of them was dead and had bullet injuries on his body.

In Dinajpur, Ferdous Fahim, 33, of Birganj upazila, was killed in a "gunfight" with police.

The dead used to smuggle drugs from India and sell it inside Bangladesh, said SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

'Peace must be restored'



Bangabandhu addressing a gathering at Jessore Airport on his way to Dhaka from Khulna on April 1, 1972.

APRIL 1, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

MAKE OPTIMUM USE OF LAND

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today urges farmers to take to cooperative farming for the optimum use of land and increase agricultural production. Addressing a large crowd at Jessore Airport, Bangabandhu says that all properties now belong to people and the root of exploitation has already been destroyed through revolutionary measures, which include nationalisation. He suggests to the cultivators to pool their capital and start cooperative farming.

Regarding antisocial activities and dacoities in rural areas, the prime minister says that peace will be restored everywhere

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A prototype with huge potential

Team led by cousins build ventilator for Covid-19 patients

ZYMA ISLAM

A rough-edged black box with a plastic tube coming out of it, and a small LCD screen -- this could be the lifesaving ventilator for critical Covid-19 patients in the imminent future.

Amid scarcity of ventilators at a time when a possible coronavirus outbreak is looming over the country, a team, led by two cousins -- a doctor and engineer -- have developed the prototype of such a device.

The cousins are Baized Shuvo, chief executive officer of Axion Engineering, and Kazi Shakkher, medical officer at the capital's Rushmono Specialized Hospital.

The team also include Asif Fahad Kingshuk, a student of computer

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STAY HOME, STAY WELL

Protect the elderly

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

People over 60 are particularly vulnerable to severe or life-threatening symptoms if infected with coronavirus.

One of the few facts amid the uncertainty swirling around the coronavirus pandemic is: The highest rate of fatalities has been among older people, particularly those with underlying medical conditions. According to figures at worldometers.info, death rates start rising significantly above the age of 50 (1.3 percent in all cases), to 21.9 percent among those aged 80 and over in confirmed cases.

Medical experts say that even if people over 60 in good overall health are infected, they are more likely to exhibit severe, life-threatening symptoms. Keep elder people at a distance even if there is no coronavirus patient in the house, says a health expert.

"A young person can be an asymptomatic carrier but that can be fatal for elderly people. So, keep distance and, if possible, keep them in isolation," says Dr Md Nazmul Hasan, assistant professor of Department of Internal Medicine at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

He suggested it is better to keep aged people in full isolation till the situation improves and if needed elderly people can communicate with other members of the family living in the same house through phone calls.

As people get older, their immune systems weaken, so they are exposed to a greater number of

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Eight more Bangladeshis die in US

Death toll now 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 31 Bangladeshis died of Covid-19 in the US as of last night, according to the US authorities.

Of them, seven breathed their last in New York, which is the worst affected state, and one in Michigan in the last 24 hours.

The highest number of deaths -- 27 -- have so far been reported in New York, where a large number of Bangladeshis live.

The hospital authorities of the country confirmed the deaths to local newspapers and Bangladesh journalists living in the US.

Neher Siddique, a Bangladesh journalist residing in New York, told The Daily Star that they had to collect information from the hospitals remotely as the authorities banned all unauthorised entry there.

They are not even SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Car crash kills 3 in Cumilla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

Three people, including a young couple, were killed as a car fell into a roadside ditch in Muradnagar upazila of Cumilla yesterday.

The dead are Saddam Hossain, 27, of Brahmanbaria, his wife Parvin, 23, and the car driver Abdur Rahman, 28, of Noakhali, said police.

Quamuzzaman Talukder, officer-in-charge of Bangara Police Station, said the bodies were handed over to family members and an unnatural death case was filed in this connection.

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PRAYER TIMING APRIL 1

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-40 12-45 4-45 6-21 7-45
JAMAT 5-15 1-15 5-00 6-24 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Volunteers of Bidyanondo Foundation carrying an elderly woman to Chattogram Medical College Hospital. The homeless woman was lying unconscious on the port city's KB Fazlul Kader road yesterday noon.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Bangladesh eligible for EU GSP

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Bangladesh will remain an eligible country for the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) as the European Ombudsman has found no maladministration in a case filed over non-compliance of labour rights.

European Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly on March 24 said she closed the case after finding no maladministration in it, according to EU website.

The case was filed by the International Trade Union Confederation, the Clean Clothes Campaign and HEC-NYU EU Public Interest Clinic in June 2018.

Rubana Huq, president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), yesterday said, "It is a very good news for Bangladesh as we are sometimes blamed for bad practice of labour rights by different quarters."

With this verdict, Bangladesh was again saved from earning a bad reputation of unfair labour practices, the BGMEA chief said in an audio message.

The European Union is the largest export destination of Bangladesh. Being a least developed country, Bangladesh has been enjoying the zero-duty benefit on export to the EU under its GSP since 1971.

With the zero-duty benefit to the EU in force, Bangladesh, eventually became the second largest apparel exporter following China. It now holds 6.4 percent global market share, business analysts say.

According to data from the Export Promotion Bureau, Bangladesh exported garment items worth \$21.13 billion to the EU in 2018-19 fiscal year, up from \$19.62 billion and \$17.75 billion in the previous two fiscal years.

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