







# Stigma making it worse

Experts say many hide Covid-19 symptoms putting others at risk of infection

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

A person who later turned out to be coronavirus-positive had gone to Dhaka Medical College Hospital on April 8 after having visited a few other hospitals.

The patient was complaining of abdominal pain. Doctors performed an X-ray and suspected that the patient is probably infected with Covid-19.

When doctors suggested that samples be collected to be tested for the virus, the patient's relatives told the doctors that his sample had been collected earlier.

Later, the patient died and his namaz-e-janaza was held without following the WHO's burial guidelines as the family had kept his infection a secret.

Doctors learned later that his sample was collected and sent for testing when he had been at a private hospital prior to coming to DMCH, and the test results came out positive for Covid-19 the following day.

"Some of our doctors wore PPE during the treatment but there were other patients in the ward so they might have been infected," said a doctor wishing not to be named.

On April 9, nine doctors, six nurses and a ward boy of the hospital went into quarantine as they came to know that they had unwittingly treated a patient with coronavirus.

This is not an isolated incident. There are a number of reports that people suspected of coronavirus infection are avoiding quarantine facilities owing to fears of isolation and social stigma.

Experts said this is leading to panic and further spread of the deadly disease. Such patients are even infecting

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People of Narayanganj, one of the districts hit hard by the coronavirus outbreak, disregard social distancing advice and are seen crowding a street in Fatullah yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# 'DISINFECTANT' ROW Trump says he was being sarcastic

REUTERS, Washington

President Donald Trump said he was being sarcastic when he raised the possibility of using disinfectant inside people's bodies to fight the coronavirus, seeking to walk back comments that alarmed medical professionals worldwide.

Trump said at a Thursday news briefing that scientists should explore whether inserting light or disinfectant into the bodies of coronavirus patients might help treat Covid-19, the respiratory illness caused by the virus.

At an Oval Office event on Friday, Trump sought to walk back those comments while also seeming to continue to advance his theory that disinfectants and sunlight might ultimately help within the body.

"I was asking a question sarcastically to reporters like you just to see what would happen," he told journalists at an event in the Oval Office.

His remarks on Thursday, directed at Dr Deborah Birx, who is coordinating the president's coronavirus task force, and William Bryan, acting head of the US Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate, did not come across as sarcastic.

Pressed repeatedly about the issue on Friday, Trump said he was not encouraging people to ingest disinfectant.

The Maryland Emergency Management Agency said it had received several calls about disinfectant use and Covid-19. "This is a reminder that under no circumstances should any

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# Six more die after showing Covid-19 symptoms

STAR REPORT

Six people, including a 16-month-old baby girl, died after showing Covid-19-like symptoms in five districts yesterday.

Local health officials collected samples from their bodies for novel coronavirus testing.

The houses of the five and those of their nearby neighbours were put on lockdown by the local administration officials.

In Faridpur, two patients, aged 17 and 30, died at the isolation ward of Faridpur Medical College Hospital with Covid-19-like symptoms yesterday.

Saifur Rahman, superintendent of the hospital, said the 17-year-old girl from Sarukdia village in the district's Saltha upazila died around 11:45am. The 30-year-old housewife from Baliadanga village in Charchhadrasan upazila passed away around noon.

The two were admitted to the hospital on Friday with fever and respiratory problems, Saifur added.

In Khulna, a sixteen-month-old baby girl, who was undergoing treatment at the isolation unit of Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) with novel coronavirus-

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## FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

### No settlement without Bangladesh's concurrence



Bangabandhu praying at the mazar of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq on April 26 on the occasion of the 10th death anniversary of Sher-e-Bangla.

April 26, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

#### BANGABANDHU'S INTERVIEW WITH THE STATESMAN

Bangabandhu is today quoted as saying India will not and cannot negotiate any settlement with Pakistan on the prisoners of war issue without Bangladesh's concurrence.

Resident Editor of The Statesman, Delhi, Kuldip Nayar, who had an 80-minute interview with Bangabandhu in Dhaka, says in despatch that Bangabandhu would not comment on India holding

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# 5 private universities get world ranking

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five Bangladeshi private universities made it to the second edition of the Times Higher Education's pioneering Impact Rankings, which assess the social and economic impact of universities, using metrics based on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

According to the report published on April 22, Brac University and Daffodil International University ranked 301-400, United International University and World University of Bangladesh ranked 401-600 while Independent University, Bangladesh, ranked 601+.

Last year in the first edition of The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, Daffodil International University ranked 201-300 and World

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# Charity dogs to 'sniff out' virus



AFP, Milton Keynes

Can dogs detect Covid-19? A British charity believes so, and has begun training canines to sniff out the coronavirus following previous screening success with various illnesses.

Medical Detection Dogs, set up in 2008 to harness dogs' sharp sense of smell to detect human diseases, started working on the project late last month.

In its training room in Milton Keynes, in central England, the dogs are being intensively trained to sniff out samples of the virus, and indicate when they have found it to receive a treat.

The approach is based on a belief that each disease triggers a distinct odour, which canines are uniquely well-placed to smell.

The charity has previously worked with its dogs to detect cancers, Parkinson's disease and bacterial infections using samples taken from patients.

"We believe dogs can detect Covid-19 and will

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#### PRAYER TIMING APRIL 26

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4:04 12:45 4:45 6:29 8:00  
JAMAAT 4:14 1:15 5:00 6:39 8:30

#### SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

#### SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

#### RAMADAN APRIL SEHRI IFTAR

2	26	6:29
3	27	4:03 6:29
4	28	4:02 6:29

# India plans to fast track Chinese investments

REUTERS, New Delhi

India plans to fast track the review of some investment proposals from neighbouring countries such as China following concerns new screening rules could hit plans of companies and investors, three sources told Reuters yesterday.

To avoid opportunistic takeovers during the coronavirus outbreak, India said this week that all foreign direct investment from countries sharing a land border would require prior government clearance, meaning they can't go through a so-called automatic route.

Advisers to Chinese firms have said they are concerned the process could take several weeks and hit deals and investment timelines. Auto firms such as SAIC's MG Motor and Great Wall, and investors Alibaba and Tencent have placed major bets on India.

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Two young volunteers of Gift for Good providing food among people of the Bede community which has been hit hard by the restrictions imposed to contain the coronavirus outbreak. The photo was taken in Malkhanagar area of Munshiganj's Sirajdikhan upazila last week.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

# Taking care of the neglected

Alokito Shishu delivering food, groceries to transgender, Bede, Harijan communities

MD MIZANUR RAHMAN HIMADRI

"This virus has affected everyone -- it did not even show any compassion for those already considered excluded, marginalised, and invisible."

Kanta (not her real name), a transgender person from Dhaka, said this while talking about the hardship the community is facing amid the countrywide shutdown enforced to combat the coronavirus outbreak.

For their livelihoods, many in their community either collect alms from roadside shops and on the streets or work in the sex trade.

Since the first day of the shutdown, they, like many others, have become jobless. On top of this, no one from the authorities came forward to help them in this time of need, Kanta said.

In this dire situation, several young members of a charity, however, appeared at their colony in Jatrabari area earlier this month, bringing groceries and other essential items. Those included rice, lentil, salt, flour, onion, potato, oil, puffed rice, soap, saline, and basic medicine.

Gift for Good, an initiative of Alokito Shishu, aims to support the families of underprivileged minority communities such as the transgender, Bede (river gypsies), and Harijan (also known as sweepers and cleaners) communities during the ongoing shutdown.

Alokito Shishu, a non-profit organisation, began its journey in 2015 with the aim of providing basic education to the children of Bede and Harijan communities, said its

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