

Appeal for help

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Abdullah Al Hasan is a youth from Mymensingh and a graduate of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology's Forestry and Environmental Science (FES) department.



He was diagnosed with kidney disease and 90 percent functionality of both of his kidneys is lost.

His doctors advised kidney transplant which will cost around Tk 50 lakh, said Anup Datta, a lecturer of the FES department. Around Tk 13 lakh was collected for his treatment fund till yesterday, he added.

"Although we planned for the transplant operation at a hospital in Delhi, the process has become delayed during the coronavirus shutdown. Hasan is undergoing dialysis thrice a week at a Mymensingh hospital and costs are increasing," said Anup.

Hasan's family is seeking help to cover his medical expenses. Contributions can be sent to the fund formed by Sust's FES department's teachers and students. Account name - FES Treatment Fund, account number - 201 151 151581 of Dutch Bangla Bank Limited (Amborkhanna Branch), Sylhet.

Donations through bKash can be made to: 01791069892 (Dr Swapan Kumar Sarker, associate professor), 01917174537 (Dr Abu Sayed Arfin, associate professor), and 01834532951 (Anup Datta, lecturer). For PayPal donations: sontosh.kdeb@gmail.com.



Activists of National Garment Workers Federation yesterday formed a human chain in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club, demanding arrest and property seizure of those factory owners who still have not paid their workers' salaries for March.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A welcome

FROM PAGE 3
regular intervals and some of the herbivores graze on the trees and grass inside their enclosures," said Nurul Islam.

As the shutdown to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus continues -- for nearly two months now -- the zoo authorities are getting a glimpse of how the animals behave in the absence of constant human disturbance.

Authorities are also beginning

to notice something curious around the zoo premises -- adjacent to the National Botanical Garden. The sprawling zoo grounds have turned into a hotspot of sorts to go birdwatching in the earliest hours of dawn within the city.

Birds which would usually only be seen sparingly are now flocking over to the waterbody by the zoo. Streaks of white -- Egrets -- fly and land ever

so gracefully by the lake, little hoopoes dance and bob their heads on the empty gravel path.

For the zoo authorities, this can be a means of changing future management strategies when the institution does open up again. For now, the animals get a much-deserved break from their captors.

Ananta Yusuf, Saim Bin Mujib and Tamim Khan contributed to this story.

Resume transport

FROM PAGE 3

construction materials, he said, adding that many sectors -- including banks, ports and transport -- are involved with the process.

AKM Manir Hossain Pathan, additional chief engineer (planning and maintenance wing) of RHD, said they have already asked project officials to resume work as much as possible, maintaining all health-safety measures.

"There are many districts which are not much affected yet. We have asked officials to escalate work in those districts," he told this correspondent on Wednesday.

Contacted, MAN Siddique, managing director of DMTCL, said although they have been continuing their work on limited scale, they want to go full swing within seven to 10 days.

He said only 12 out of around 1,000 foreign nationals involved in the project left the country. Besides, one third of local workers are still at project sites, he added.

They will bring back other workers on special arrangement after doing necessary health check-ups, taking assistance from local administration, he added.

"We got hints that the government will give directive to resume work, so we have already started work on the stations... But we may not be able to continue work in full swing due to safety concerns," he further said.

MRT-6 is under-construction at a cost of Tk 22,000 crore and is expected to be completed in December 2021. However, the project witnessed 44.12 per cent overall progress as of April this year.

Once completed, it will carry 60,000 passengers per hour.

Physical work of MRT-1, the country's first underground metro rail running from Dhaka airport to Kamalapur Railway Station, is scheduled to start in December this year. It would have an elevated part to connect Purbachal with Natun Bazar.

Prepare list

FROM PAGE 3

He said the committee during Monday's meeting with the health minister suggested that the authorities should take measures so that workers now working at different factories in Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur do not change their locations.

They also recommended steps so that none can leave their current stations ahead of Eid in a bid to contain the spread of Covid-19.

"It will be easier to trace them through the list and send them to home quarantine if they return home from these three districts," he said.

NO. OF REOPENED FACTORIES RISING
Meanwhile, the number of factories resuming operations is increasing by the day.

At least 3,492 out of 7,602 export-oriented factories reopened as of yesterday, according to industrial police. The number of factories reopened was 1,427 on April 26, the first day after a one-month shutdown.

At least 1,269, out of 1,882 factories under BCGMEA, reopened till yesterday, industrial police said. A total of 369, out of 1,101 of BKMEA, 183 out of 389 of BTMA, 304 out of 364 under BEPZA and 1,367 out of 3,866 other factories so far reopened, they added.

No clinical audit of the dead

FROM PAGE 12

possible to scrutinise the coronavirus fatalities.

"In the case of dengue patients, for example, a death review committee assesses the causes of death," she said.

Such a method is not being followed for coronavirus patients, she said.

"We are collecting data on comorbidity [the number of other conditions a patient has] for analysis but it is not being done in the same format as that of dengue patients for example."

However, experts said, while the IEDCR is mainly responsible for studying the disease and its effects, hospitals also have a role to play.

A clinical audit, or a death audit, is important because it gives an understanding to what happened

and why from the patient's history and their treatment experience at hospitals.

Prof Muzaherul Huq, former adviser (Southeast Asia Region) at the World Health Organisation, said a clinical audit should be performed for all Covid-19 deaths.

"This should be done to identify the cause of death and also weaknesses in hospital services," he said.

The clinical audit helps go beyond the numbers of deaths and ratio of deaths to the number of case, to determine the inciting factors and take measures on how these deaths could have been avoided.

The health specialist said if the exact cause of death is not identified, undertaking the proper intervention for patients will not be possible.

"We see that there have been no

deaths of coronavirus patients in Vietnam, Nepal, Bhutan and some other countries," he said.

"So, what the actual cause of death is should be identified so as to act properly."

Experts said a committee can be formed to ascertain the cause of death pertaining to coronavirus victims.

Eminent medicine specialist ABM Abdullah said a good number of coronavirus victims died with severe and aggressive pneumonia and other complications, including old age.

Although, globally, the elderly have been the worst victims of Covid-19, in Bangladesh fatalities were found in almost all age groups; this requires a detailed analysis of the cause of death in each case, he said.

Silence of the looms

FROM PAGE 12

during Eid-ul-Fitr. This year, earning Tk 500 crore is becoming impossible in the peak season because the Covid-19 outbreak has put the country into months-long shutdown," said Aiyub Ali Khan, secretary of the association.

Looms across the country manufactures 14 types of attires, including saree and lungi. Over 10 crore lungis and four crore sarees worth Tk 5,000 crore are manufactured a year mostly in Pabna, Sirajganj, Tangail and Narshingdi, according to the association.

Bodiuzzaman, who is also the president of the Sirajganj chapter of the organisation, said only 40,000 to 50,000 out of over three lakh looms in Sirajganj and Pabna are operating this year.

Festival production decreased by at least 80 percent in the last two months because of Covid-19 fallout, he said.

In big factories, 20 to 30 percent looms are running while most marginal weavers have stopped production due to the lack of money, he added.

HARD TIMES FOR WEAVERS

Md Abul Kalam, owner of a powerloom factory in Pabna Sadar upazila's Kulunia village, is operating only four out of his 10 looms.

"I closed my factory on March 25 due to the countrywide shutdown and resumed production on a small scale from the first of Ramadan targeting the Eid market. Of the 10 looms, I am just running four, producing 30 to 35 lungis everyday although I had produced 120 to 150 lungis a day last year around Eid," he said.

Before shutting his factory, Kalam had manufactured over 10 thousand

pieces of lungi, most of which remained unsold to date.

Md Jamal Bishwas, a marginal weaver of Kulunia, could not sell any of the over 100 sarees he had weaved before the shutdown.

Jamal had borrowed money and raw materials from local lenders to make those sarees using his two powerlooms.

"Before I could sell my products, all the wholesale markets closed down," he said. He is now stuck with piles of sarees at home and no cash in hand.

"Failing to repay loans, I am unable to resume production," Jamal lamented.

Md Alamin Hossain, trader at Sirajganj's Shahzadpur wholesale clothing market, said the market has been closed since the countrywide shutdown started.

"We do not open our shops. Traders from different areas of the country also cannot come to the wholesale market," he told the Daily Star.

The traders of Baburhaat wholesale clothing market in Narshingdi, however, resumed operation at a small scale from the beginning of Ramadan.

"When the buyers come to the market, they call us and we give them clothes. We are allowed to do business for a few hours every day. Small traders do not pay cash due to their poor business, but we are giving them clothes on credit," Md Mobarak Hossain Ripon, a trader of Baburhaat market, said.

"Last year, I sold 3,500 to 4,000 pieces of lungi earning Tk six lakh to Tk seven lakh a day," he said, adding that this year he is struggling to make Tk five lakh to Tk six lakh in a week.

PRICE HIKE OF RAW MATERIALS

Though the sales declined, prices of threads and dyes have rapidly increased, loom owners said.

Price of one bundle of thread has increased from Tk 16,000 to about Tk 23,000 and the price of one kilogram of dyes has soared from Tk 2,000 to Tk 4,000, they said.

"Thread and dyes are mostly imported from India and China. There has been almost no import in the last two months, so the price of raw materials has increased. Lockdown of Narayanganj, the main market for raw materials of clothing, also pushed up the price," Md Bodiuzzaman said.

INDUSTRY IN NEED OF SUPPORT

"Most of the big loom factories have large bank loans. They are suffering because bank interest is accumulating but they could not sell their products in the last few months to pay interest," he said.

"If they do not get soft loans for resuming their business, nobody will be able to revive their business."

Marginal weavers, running two to three looms, need financial support without any condition, he added.

Although the government announced a Tk 20,000 crore stimulus package for the cottage, micro, small and medium enterprises to deal with the economic fallout caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the weavers and loom owners are still in the dark about it.

Noting that approximately 20 lakh people across the country are involved in the weaving industry, Ayub said they have not received any direction about accessing the benefits under this package.

Resist armed miscreants

FROM PAGE 12

activities across the country, he adds. He calls for resisting these criminal elements in cooperation with law enforcement agencies.

The prime minister appeals to the people to work hard and give their best effort to increase agricultural production. He describes in detail various government incentives in this regard.

Bangabandhu further says that he has started the task of reconstruction on debris and will not be able to deliver any substantial goods to the people for three years. He however assures that not a single person will be deprived of the government's relief and rehabilitation support.

A BRIDGE OVER JAMUNA

Bangabandhu today declares at Bogura that a bridge will be built over Jamuna River. He shares that Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku Sato is taking keen interest in the Jamuna Bridge project. A Japanese survey team will soon visit Bangladesh to prepare a feasibility report for a bridge on Jamuna and apprise the Japanese government of the financial requirements for it, adds the prime minister.

CASE AGAINST 1,500 PAKISTANI OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS

Bangladesh government has filed cases against 1,500 Pakistani officers and soldiers for the commission of mass killing and other war crimes against humanity in Bangladesh during the

Liberation War. The government is planning to set up a special tribunal under Geneva Convention to hold the trial. The Indian government will soon be requested to hand over those PoWs against whom war crime charges are brought by the Bangladesh war crimes investigation committee.

SOVIET UNION HANDS OVER SEA-GOING VESSEL

The Soviet Union has handed over a 1,300-tonne sea-going vessel as a gift to the people of Bangladesh. Industry Minister Syed Nazrul Islam received the ship from the Soviet Ambassador to Bangladesh Valentin Popov at a ceremony at Naryanganj dockyard. SOURCE: May 9, 1972 issue of *Dianik Bangla*.

Outbreak worse 'attack'

FROM PAGE 12

"Could have been stopped at the source. Could have been stopped in China," he said.

Hua responded: "They might say the pandemic is comparable to Pearl Harbor or 9/11, but the enemy facing the US is the novel coronavirus."

She said Washington should "fight side-by-side" with Beijing instead of as "enemies".

Hua added that "lots of foreign countries, experts and scientists have all made positive comments on China's effective virus prevention and control."

"But the US alone has made some very disharmonious, untruthful and

insincere remarks," said Hua.

The coronavirus, which first emerged in central China late last year, has now killed more than 73,000 people in the US.

'EXTREMELY CAREFULLY'

The World Health Organization (WHO) warned on Wednesday that countries emerging from restrictions to halt the new coronavirus must proceed "extremely carefully" or risk a rapid rise in new cases.

Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said countries needed to ensure they had adequate measures to control the spread of the Covid-19 respiratory disease like tracking systems and quarantine provision.

Rabindranath's

FROM PAGE 12

of 13 surviving children of Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi.

He became Asia's first Nobel laureate after winning the Nobel Prize in literature for Gitanjali in 1913.

Two of his songs are now the national anthems of Bangladesh and India.

Tagore wrote novels, short stories, songs, dance-dramas, and essays on political and personal topics. Gitanjali, Gora, Ghare Baire, and Chokher Bali are among his best-known works.

Meanwhile, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday issued separate messages on the occasion.

Brick kiln worker punished

FROM PAGE 12

2013 (Amended).

Meanwhile, the actual owner Abdul Aziz alias Kuttu Mollah, of Nazirpur village under Baufal, said he has no idea why Barishal DoE identified Tareq as the owner and jailed him.

"Everyone knows that I am the owner of the kiln. But I don't know why my worker was punished as the owner," he told this correspondent on May 2.

Tareq has been working since November last year. He is a very good man at heart," the owner added.

However, director Abdul Halim said there is no room to question any

sentence given by a mobile court.

"A higher court can look into the matter," he added.

Tareq's father Abdul Matin said, "My innocent son has been unjustly punished."

To appeal against the sentence at the local magistrate court, on March 22, Abdul Matin applied for certified copies of the documents issued by Barishal DoE's mobile court.

He alleged that the director of Barishal divisional DoE has been reluctant to provide the certified copies.

When contacted, Abdul Halim told this correspondent on May 5 that

the certified copies of the documents were sent to the Patuakhali district magistrate court on May 3.

Like most institutions, all courts are closed till May 16 because of the pandemic.

Advocate Syed Mohammad Mohsin, secretary of Patuakhali bar (lawyer's) association, said the court will decide on the hearing after getting the documents.

After the hearing, the court can either grant bail to Tareq or fix a date for the final hearing. The court may also consider whether there was any discrepancy in the mobile court sentence, he added.

'Half tested positive after factories reopened'

FROM PAGE 12

in Mymensingh and Chattogram, one each in Manikganj and Jashore and the rest 14 in other areas, it added.

Findings of the report "Data list of coronavirus-infected garment workers" were disclosed yesterday via a virtual press conference.

While disclosing the findings, Taslima Akhter, president of BGSS, said coronavirus outbreak at the community level and rapidly increasing number of infected garment workers suggested that the factories were resumed without due preparations.

"As a result, the workers are now exposed to a bigger risk," she said.

Taslima hoped that the report would help the government and factory owners reconsider steps regarding operations of the factories and providing safety to the workers and saving the garment sector as a whole.

The report was prepared based on news reports published in 25 media

outlets including national and local dailies and online news portals.

The report read that gender identity of 76 infected workers have been reported in the media.

Of them, 53 percent was male workers and 47 percent female workers. Of the workers, 90 percent are aged between 18 and 35, and the rest above 35.

The report said 10 garment workers and one factory official have died either due to coronavirus infection or showing symptoms since April 3.

Three of the dead were coronavirus positive, it added.

According to the report, treatment condition of 46 of the workers could be known. Of them, 16 were under institutional quarantine and majority of others were in home quarantine.

So far garment workers in 24 districts found coronavirus positive. Only two infected workers have recovered, the report added.

BGSS said the findings hinted there was further chance of infection among

garment workers due to factory reopening without adequate preparation.

Usually, garment workers live low-paid and small rented accommodations amid squalid condition along with other family members, it said.

This at one end raise concern over the effectiveness of their home quarantine, while there is also risk that their family members and neighbours could get infected by them, it warned.

In its proposal, BGSS called upon the government and owners to reconsider decisions regarding factory reopening amid health concern of workers and the countrymen.

It demanded quick disclosure of information regarding infected and deceased workers and disinfection of factories including those in Savar and Ashulia where workers were found infected.

It urged the authorities to ensure treatment to the infected garment workers and supply of treatment costs.

Request for Proposal (RFP)

(RFP-BD-2020-011)



United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh is inviting Request for Proposal from interested firms/organizations for supporting Formulation of National Adaptation Plan (RFP-BD-2020-011).

This procurement process will be conducted through online e-tendering system of UNDP. Interested firms/organizations who wish to submit the RFP document must register in the system to access the bidding document (RFP). To register please visit the link: <https://etendering.partneragencies.org> and use the user name and password provided below to start the registration:

Username: event.guest

Password: why2change

Once registered, bidders have to insert under the field "Event ID" the following: "BGD10" in the first box, and "RFP-20-011" in the second box and click the Search button.

The complete user guide and bidding document (RFP) can be found at UNDP Bangladesh website in the link below: https://procurement-notice.undp.org/view_notice.cfm?notice_id=65645

Pre-proposal conference will be conducted online on Wednesday, May 13, 2020, 2:00 pm (LOCAL BD TIME). Link to online conference is provided in the bidding document.

The deadline for submission of proposal is Wednesday, May 20, 2020, 2:00 pm (LOCAL BD TIME).