

TREATING COVID-19 PATIENTS AT ALL HOSPITALS

Experts fear wider transmission

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

When the government directed all the public and private hospitals with more than 50 beds to take measures for treating Covid-19 patients, some health experts said the initiative can spread transmission further.

They said the initiative can increase the risk of "cross-contamination" and "hospital infection" as many hospitals do not have proper infection control systems and patient safety measures.

The experts said the hospital authorities should ensure a proper infection control system first before going to introduce both Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 treatment.

They called for a separate set of manpower and equipment for each section to control cross-contamination.

The health ministry on May 14 issued a circular asking all government and private hospitals and clinics to take separate initiative for treating both Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 patients at the same hospitals.

The circular said the directive was given following the advice of health experts and proposal of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

It also mentioned that public health experts at DGHS, observing Covid-19 treatment in different countries, suggested that treatment of both groups of patients should be given at separate parts of the same hospital.

There are some 2,200 government and 5,500 private hospitals and clinics across the country. But there are over a dozen dedicated hospitals in Dhaka and one dedicated hospital in each of the divisions except Barishal for treating Covid-19 patients currently.

Besides, at district and upazila levels, the government hospitals have isolation centres where Covid-19 and suspected Covid-19 patients are being provided treatment.

WHAT EXPERTS SAY?

Prof Muzaherul Huq, former Southeast Asia regional director of World Health Organization, said such a move would increase the risk of "contact

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital being cleaned and prepped yesterday, ahead of the reopening of inter-city train routes on Sunday. The station will be busy with passenger activity after over two months, although fewer people will travel in every train as part of measures to ensure social distancing amid the Covid-19 outbreak.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

GAZIPUR ENGINEER KILLING Colleague confesses to plotting murder

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Anisur Rahman Selim, an assistant engineer of Gazipur City Corporation, has confessed to a magistrate that he was the mastermind behind the murder of his senior colleague, executive engineer Delwar Hossain.

"According to my plan, I hired someone to kill Delwar, following conflicts over a previous enmity. Delwar had strongly disagreed with me regarding some of my office activities. This is why I, along with the hired goons, killed him," Selim said in his confessional statement.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Shahinur Rahman on Wednesday recorded the confessional statement after Md Mofizul Islam, an inspector of Turag Police Station and also the investigation officer of the case, brought Selim to the magistrate's chamber upon completion of his five-day remand.

After recording the statement, Selim was sent to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj on Wednesday.

Around 9:30am on May 11, Selim, along with the other killers, went to Delwar's residence in Mirpur with a microbus, he said in his statement.

To get Delwar out of his house, they paid a rickshaw-puller, who was passing through the area, Selim told the court.

They gave Tk 100 to the rickshaw-puller to make him call Delwar, saying that he

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Domestic flights to resume from June 1

RASHIDUL HASAN

The civil aviation ministry yesterday decided to resume domestic flight operations on a limited scale from June 1. The resumption comes after more than two months of ban on regular passenger flights on all international and domestic routes to contain the Covid-19 outbreak.

"We have decided to resume domestic flight operations on a limited scale initially on Dhaka to and from Chattogram, Sylhet and Saidpur routes," Civil Aviation and Tourism ministry senior secretary M Mohibul Haque said yesterday.

After observing the situation, the ministry will consider reopening all seven domestic destinations, including Jashore and Rajshahi, after June 15, the official added.

"We are also considering withdrawing the ongoing ban on international flight operations after June 15 depending on the situation," he said, adding that the government is considering the resumption

of flights to London.

The decision was taken following the government's announcement that the ongoing general holidays will not be extended after May 30, and that starting May 31, public transportation on road, rail, waterways and air will be allowed on a limited scale.

The government on March 16 suspended regular flight operation on all domestic and international routes except for China to contain Covid-19 until May 30.

The suspension included all domestic flights while cargo, special, air ambulance, relief carrying flights and emergency landing aircraft remained out of its scope.

Last week, CAAB prepared a guideline for airlines with instructions for how to run flights following all health guidelines, including social distancing.

According to the document, all airlines will have to keep at least 30 to 25 percent seats vacant on each flight to ensure social

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Loss of a great mentor Sunbeams founding principal Niloufer Manzur passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Niloufer Manzur, renowned educationist and founding principal of Sunbeams School, passed away on Tuesday at the capital's Combined Military Hospital. She was 74.

She was admitted there with symptoms of pneumonia. On Sunday, she tested positive for Covid-19 and received plasma therapy. However, her condition started to deteriorate and she breathed her last around 3am on that day.

The noted educationist left behind her husband Syed Manzur Elahi, former adviser to a caretaker government and chairperson of Apex Footwear Ltd, son Syed Nasim Manzur, daughter Munize Manzur, daughter-in-law Dr Samia Huq, six grandchildren and a host of friends, admirers and students.

Daughter of late Dr Mafiz Ali Chowdhury, who was a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



INT'L DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS

Of service and sacrifice

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA, back from Mali

The mighty desert sun beats down mercilessly on the sand; the thermometer reads 50 degree Celsius; humidity stands at only five percent -- that's the unforgiving Saharan climate for you. That's the West African country of Mali for you.

On our day of correspondence, a massive convoy is moving forward slowly, piercing the desert sand and its near absolute lifelessness. In the front row, a Bangladeshi soldier sits -- wearing a helmet, a pair of sunglasses, and on top of everything a 20kg bulletproof vest, standing waist-deep inside a state-of-the-art armored car in all that heat.

On one hand, he is holding a walkie-talkie; on the other a tight grip holds on to the hook of the armored personnel carrier (APC).

The desert is truly deserted, with barely any sign of life anywhere around. Neither human beings, nor trees, life is only found in the soldiers of the convoy. They're all geared with modern weaponry, but it doesn't make them feel the least bit safe.

"You cannot take your eyes off the road for even a second," said Maj Shafin, the Bangladesh army officer who was being described above. Maj Shafin is one of the 6,543 peacekeepers from Bangladesh currently on UN peacekeeping duties.

Every time something suspicious catches his attention, Shafin utters "stop" on to his walkie-talkie, and everything behind him freezes. The convoy is immensely cautious and absolutely petrified by the prospect of stepping on to hidden landmines or being hit by a rocket launcher or some other types

of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

This is especially important for the peacekeepers posted in Mali. The desert nation is sometimes called the world's capital of IEDs. Tribal feuds, which have always been common, have taken a turn for the worse in recent years, after several international Islamist groups turned Mali into their strongholds. All these partisans have planted IEDs across the country with the hopes of ravaging oppositions.

The road communication network in Mali is nothing like that in Bangladesh. In fact, there is no roads in the proper sense of the word, let alone highways. Whatever roads there are, giant potholes everywhere make them extremely bumpy. Clearly, with such daunting obstacles on the road, it's impossible to muster any speed.

In August, a 740km journey on wheels to a remote conflict-prone region took the group 17 whole days. For the entirety of these journeys, members of the convoy have to be on their toes.

"The driver of the APC is totally dependent on me. My eyes are his eyes. The challenge is, every time I utter "stop", he literally has less than a second to react and step on the brake paddle. Even a small communication gap may lead to disaster," Shafin said to this reporter recently at the Gao Super Camp in Mali.

"It's a huge pressure on your nerves. Everyone's lives and deaths depend on your eyes. One mistake and everyone could be dead in seconds," Maj Shafin continued.

"Whenever I go on an operation, I can't

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Zobeda Haque passes away

CITY DESK

Zobeda Haque, mother of Liberation War Museum trustee



Mofidul Haque, passed away at a hospital in the capital yesterday. She was 96, says a press release.

She left behind four sons, a daughter and a host of relatives to mourn her death. Her son Manjurul Haque is a professor and a journalist in Japan. Her youngest son Mobinul Haque is a professor at a Canadian university.

Zobeda played a crucial role in left political and democratic movements.

She was buried at Azimpur graveyard after Zohr prayers yesterday.

Report steps taken to protect Halda dolphins

HC asks govt during virtual hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday wanted to know what steps the committee led by the deputy commissioner of Chattogram has taken to protect biodiversity, environment, fishes and dolphins in Halda river in the district.

During a virtual hearing on a writ petition, the court ordered the DC to submit a report before it in the next 15 days, stating the steps taken by the committee to this effect. The HC also directed the DC to explain in the same report why a dolphin from Halda River died on May 24.

The HC bench of Justice Obaidul Hassan set June 18 for passing further orders on this issue, Deputy Attorney General Amit Talukder told The Daily Star.

During the court proceedings, writ petitioner Barrister Abdul Qaium Liton placed a report published in The Daily Star's online edition on May 24 before the HC, saying that a dead giant dolphin of around 70kg was recovered from Halda River -- even after the court formed a committee to protect dolphins and the biodiversity of the river.

He prayed to the HC to pass an order in this regard.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam represented the state during the hearing.

During hearing of the same writ petition, the HC on May 19 formed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

UNDOCUMENTED WORKERS Malaysia to send back those who test Covid-19 negative

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Malaysia will send back undocumented Bangladeshi migrant workers, who are currently at different deportation centres in the country, following Covid-19 tests.

Illegal immigrants who tested negative would be sent back to their respective countries, Malaysian Senior Minister for Security Ismail Sabri Yaakob told Bernama, the country's national news agency, yesterday.

On the other hand, illegal immigrants who tested positive are being treated at a temporary hospital in the country, according to reports in Malaysian media.

One report published by The Star on Wednesday on its online version said there were 227 positive cases from three deportation centres in Bukit Jalil, Semenyih and Sepang.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Precariously positioned on a moving auto-rickshaw, sitting on each other's laps and clicking selfies for the social media, this large group of friends were spotted while crossing the Postogola bridge yesterday. While the shortage of transport have been a problem for some commuters, there is no excuse for choosing to be reckless, especially at a time when roads are empty and susceptible to accidents.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



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একজন নীলুফার মঞ্জুর। একজন বাতিঘর।

আপনাকে আরো কটা দিন প্রয়োজন ছিল,
আরো একই দুঃ পথ পার করে দিয়ে গেলে ভাল হতো।
ভাল-মন্দ, সত্য-মিথ্যা এখনো গুলিয়ে ফেলি,
আপনি কেমন পরিষ্কার দেখতে পেতেন,
কই আপনার তো স্থল হতো না।
আমাদের এখনো স্থল হয়ে যায়,
চকিতে তাকাই আপনার দিকে
আপনার অভিব্যক্তিতে বুঝে নিই বাস্তবিক।
তাই বর্শাধারাম, আরেকটি প্রয়োজন ছিল আপনাকে।
এমন কঠিন সময়ে কেউ এভাবে চলে যায়!
সম্মানের কোন বাতিঘর দেখিয়ে বলবে
এই আসার পথ ধরে এগিয়ে যাও,
সেজাসাপটা, লোক না দেখানোর স্তরিকা
কে শেখাবে, এই লোক দেখানো শহরে!
মিটে ল্যাম্পের আলোয় চলছে এখন আপাতত, তবে
গল্পনা বাঁধতে বাতিঘরের বয়স প্রয়োজন ছিল।

Mrs. Niloufer Manzur, renowned educationist and Principal of Sunbeams School, was wife of Syed Manzur Elahi, Chairman of Grey Dhaka and Apex Footwear Ltd and former Adviser to the Caretaker Government, mother of Syed Nasim Manzur, MD Apex Footwear Ltd and daughter of Late Dr. Mafiz Ali Chowdhury, MP, a former Minister in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's cabinet in 1972.

This is a tribute on behalf of the Grey family for her sudden demise.

