

## Let's turn

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behavioral change that would last beyond the crisis.

Even after long periods of awareness raising and hygiene promotion, handwashing practice remains inadequate. Now, because of the Covid-19 situation, people are becoming more aware of the need to wash hands and practice good hygiene. We can build on this to make this practice long lasting. However, the availability of resources or adequate investment in hygiene remain an underlying factor of this predicted success.

**TDS:** What needs to be done to accomplish this?

**Hasin Jahan:** Our focus should be making a long term behavioral change that would last beyond the current outbreak. We need to influence people to adapt good hygiene as part of their daily life. For that, it is essential to work on three interlinked factors -- building knowledge, creating an enabling environment, and stimulating willingness.

All of these would naturally require huge levels of investment. WASH investment planning by the government should be part of an overall public health strategy. Covid-19 is showing us the extent of the economic and social losses from a public health hazard. This should be a lesson to invest more on WASH to prevent these losses.

**TDS:** What is your organisation doing to promote healthy and hygienic behaviour?

**Hasin Jahan:** WaterAid has been promoting its mission of clean water, decent toilets, and good hygiene in Bangladesh for the last thirty-five years, both on the field and on the national policy levels.

In the context of Covid-19, WaterAid

has designed a response plan with these in mind. We have reached various groups in both rural and urban areas, including vulnerable populations, like slum dwellers and persons with disabilities, with tailored awareness messages using a variety of channels, such as broadcasting messages through loudspeakers, banners, posters, and community radio. We have partnered with WHO and IEDCR to disseminate Covid-19 preventive measures and handwashing steps.

It is essential to reach people with tailored hygiene messages, as well as facilitating the practice of handwashing with soap and water through context-specific handwashing stations. We have developed twenty-two types of portable handwashing stations which are placed at strategic points to encourage handwashing.

**TDS:** What would be your call to the government?

**Hasin Jahan:** We need to have a holistic and far-sighted vision when addressing this crisis. The government needs to update the "National Hygiene Promotion Strategy in 2012" to address epidemic diseases including Covid-19 and align it to the Sustainable Development Goals. Presently, WASH budgetary allocation is inadequate, and there is a large disparity between urban and rural areas, especially remote areas like chars, haors, and coastal zones.

It is also necessary to establish equity in water pricing through multiple slabs like in electricity tariffs. Otherwise people in low-income communities will compromise their frequent handwashing practice to save money. As we strive to prevent further spread of Covid-19, improve WASH outcomes and achieve health benefits beyond this crisis, we need to ensure that vulnerable communities are not left behind.

## Thousands

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Gazi Moimul Hossain Litu, panel mayor of BCC and councillor of Ward-19, said at first each was asked to prepare lists for 450 people.

They submitted the lists and people received the rice accordingly.

With the increase in allocation, the food department has advised to add another 450 people from each ward. Ward administrations have signed this proposal and the renewed lists will be submitted soon, he added.

However when contacted, a section of councillors -- under condition of anonymity -- said they are not being involved in the special OMS rice distribution process.

Moajjem Hossain, administrative officer-in-charge of the special OMS preparing list for the city corporation, said the list was being sorted out so that there's no mistakes.

Asked about BCC's failure to deliver a complete list for May, he said they were being cautious about enlistments and as a result it took some time to prepare the list, before which the deadline had been reached and parts of the allocation had to be returned.

The food department has formed a special OMS Divisional Approval Committee to approve and check the list sent by BCC, with the divisional commissioner as a convener, and the regional food officer as a member secretary of the committee.

If BCC can send the list in time, the committee can approve it swiftly. Any delay on BCC's part can delay the whole process, and end up depriving those the people who are in dire need of the rations right now.

## Closure to cause

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said child labour will increase and 58 percent said early marriage will increase.

Thirty percent of them warned of increased early pregnancy, 88 percent believe that syllabus lessons may not be covered on time and 72 percent believe many teachers lack expertise to use ICT and not willing or able to teach online.

Of them, 70 percent said teachers may not receive salary on time, particularly the non-government teachers and same number of respondents were concerned that non-government teachers might lose their job.

CAMPE executive director Rasheda K Choudhury said, "This is high time to change the priorities of budget; and health and education sector should get more priorities," stressing upazila-based recovery and rescue plan.

Brac University Professor Emeritus Manzoor Ahmed proposed that the government should make special allocation of Tk 5,000 crore for upazila-based recovery and rescue plan from coronavirus crisis beside 15 percent allocation for education sector in the next budget.

He also called for transparency, accountability and proper use of money while expending the allocated money.

Director of education at Brac, Safiqul Islam, said efforts will be needed to recover the loss of momentum of success in the education sector.

Centre for Policy Dialogue Research Director Khondaker Golam Moazzem proposed that the government can cut down allocation from large project that will not complete by next year.

He said there should be some separate allocation for increasing sanitation and wash facilities at school.

Lawmaker Aroma Datta and CAMPE deputy director KM Enamul Hoque also spoke at the webinar.

## Ex-DIG

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A Dhaka court on July 29 last year rejected a petition filed by Partha seeking bail in the same case and sent him to jail after ACC produced him before it and appealed to the court to confine him to jail until the investigation is completed.

Before his arrest on July 29 last year, ACC Director Mohammad Yousuf quizzed Partha over allegations that he committed irregularities and corruption as DIG (prisons) of Chattogram division.

After interrogation, ACC team accompanied by Partha went to his Green Road residence and recovered the money.

## Protect the migrants

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cancelled readymade garment orders of more than \$3 billion, raising concerns over the country's export earnings. The World Bank has, meanwhile, said the remittance may see 22 percent decline in Bangladesh this year because of decline in overseas jobs and already joblessness of those abroad.

Officials of the Bangladesh's foreign and expatriates' welfare ministries said there might be a few lakh Bangladeshis returning home in the coming months if the coronavirus situation does not improve. Already, there is a process of repatriating over 30,000 Bangladeshi migrants mostly in jail, deportation centres, and undocumented from the Middle Eastern countries.

Five regional rights bodies in Asia and the Middle East on June 1 issued a joint statement calling for establishing a transitional justice mechanism for the migrant workers.

In the statement, Migrant Forum in Asia, Lawyers Beyond Borders Network, Cross-Regional Centre for Migrants and Refugees, South Asian Trade Union Council, and Solidarity Center said millions of migrants could slip into poverty if they are repatriated without compensation.

Out of similar realisation, Bangladesh is trying to communicate with various regional and UN bodies.

During a recent virtual meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Bangladesh proposed creation of a common fund for the migrants affected by the new coronavirus.

Bangladesh also urged the migrant-receiving countries to make sure that the migrants get food and healthcare during the pandemic.

"Recently, we had communications with the Bahrain authorities. They said they won't force any migrant to return home. Also, the Saudi Arabian authorities said they are ensuring food and healthcare of the migrants," Momen said.

Turkey, which is a powerful member of the OIC, has endorsed Bangladesh's call for ensuring six months' salary in the case of job termination of the migrants, while supporting the proposal for creating a common fund for the migrants.

Some of the OIC members inquired how the fund could be created for the private sector migrants, the foreign minister said.

"We said our prime minister has shown the way. Readymade garment workers are working in the private sector. But she has declared Tk 5,000 crore stimulus package for them. The garment factory owners can take loans at a very low interest rate and pay the workers' dues," Momen said.

He added that some of the destination countries of the Middle East import food from other countries, but now they can go for producing food by employing the migrant workers in the farm sector.

"By this time, our migrants have proved in some of these countries how they have produced food crops. We said instead of sending the migrants back, they can re-deploy them in the farm sector because food shortage will be a major issue in the coming days," the foreign minister mentioned.

## Ensure TCB

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measures in the next seven days to this effect.

The HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan passed the order following a writ petition filed by rights organisation Law and Life Foundation, seeking necessary directives.

The bench held a virtual hearing on the writ petition over video conference.

Law and Life Foundation President Barrister Humayun Kabir Pallob told The Daily Star that the TCB's daily essentials are currently sold to

people in city corporation and municipality areas at a minimum rate while those in upazila levels are deprived of the TCB goods.

"We filed the writ petition as a public interest litigation with the High Court on May 31, seeking its directives on the authorities concerned of the government to expand the project of selling TCB goods to upazila levels so that people [there] can purchase daily essential commodities at a minimum rate. The High Court has granted our prayer," he said.

The lawyer also said the government has been asked to inform the High Court by June 11 what steps have been taken to comply with its order.

Deputy Attorney General Samarendranath Biswas represented the state.

## Biman

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regular flight operation resumed on a limited scale on the three domestic routes after more than two months of suspension due to coronavirus.

On Tuesday, Biman also cancelled all its 12 flights on the three routes due to lack of passenger, Tahera said.

According to sources the price difference between the national flag carrier and private operators was one of the main reasons behind the passenger shortage.

Biman was charging Tk 3,000 to 3,200 or more as starting price for tickets while two private airlines -- US-Bangla and Novoair -- charged Tk 1,999 to Tk 2,500 for the same ticket.

That is why people are moving to the two private operators for air travel, said the sources.

A senior official of Biman said they did not want to operate their flights incurring loss.

"Other airlines are operating their flights at a reduced price. But we don't want to do unhealthy business," he said wishing anonymity.

"Our starting price is Tk 3,000 to Tk 3,200 while other air operator is offering Tk 2,000 to Tk 2,500. We will not operate our flight in this way," he added.

"Instead of domestic flight, we are giving priority to operate chartered flights on international routes which is profitable."

## Sample error leads to false negatives

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three days and then they can restart the trial again," Mohib Ullah told The Daily Star yesterday.

Gonoshasthaya Kendra has, meanwhile, sought speedy completion of the trial of antibody test kit and submission of the report to the Directorate General of Drug Administration so that the latter can authorise mass production and marketing of the antibody test kit.

A team of Gonoshasthaya Kendra scientists developed the antibody and antigen kits to test for Covid-19 in mid-March. On April 26, they approached

the DGDA for validation of the kit.

The drug administration, however, suggested that Gonoshasthaya Kendra go through a contract research organisation (CRO), but Gonoshasthaya refused to do so, saying that it would raise prices of the kit and that CROs were a vehicle of corruption.

On April 30, the DGDA allowed Gonoshasthaya Kendra to go through performance trials at BSMMU. Gonoshasthaya supplied 500 antibody and 500 antigen kits to the BSMMU for the trials.

Gonoshasthaya Kendra Founder and Trustee Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury statement said.

They also placed emphasis on increasing sample testing across the country, apart from expanding healthcare facilities and taking necessary steps to install labs and facilities in public universities.

"Increase the capacity of daily tests to reduce the clutter of collected samples, reduce unnecessary delays in sample identification."

About Gonoshasthaya Kendra's Rapid Dot-Blot test kits, the citizens asked the government to make publicise the trial results of the kit. If successful, nationwide use of this kit should be expedited, they added.

In the context of the increasing number of patients, they urged the government to increase the number of beds and provide uninterrupted supply of oxygen to each patient in

## New school

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Students of classes three, five, seven and nine would get new textbooks in January 2022, while students of other grades would get them in 2023.

"We will now implement the decision in two phase," Narayan said.

### TENDER PROCESS STILL INCOMPLETE

NCTB officials said that they were yet to complete the tender process for textbooks for the next academic year as offices were closed till May 30 in a bid to contain the spread of coronavirus.

Tender for printing textbooks for grades one, two and four has not been released. Tender has been released for printing textbooks for rest of the grades, but they were yet to be opened.

Usually tender process ends by April-May, winning bidders receive work order by June-July and they start printing books in August. The textbooks are delivered in October. Almost all new textbooks reach the hands of students on January 1, first day of the new academic year.

Tender will be opened on June 8 and June 16 respectively, for two groups of new textbooks, said Narayan.

has repeatedly demanded that the authorities go for emergency authorisation of the antibody kits as the infection rate is increasing every day.

The antibody kit, which is low-cost and can give result in 10 minutes, could be used for large-scale testing and isolation of the infected people -- a way that could prevent the spread of the virus, he said recently.

In its own trial, Gonoshasthaya found the tests to be more than 90 percent accuracy. The test kit -- RT-PCR -- that is now being used in Bangladesh is considered the gold standard, but that is time-consuming and expensive.

hospitals treating Covid-19 patients or coronavirus wards at upazila, district and divisional levels.

The statement also suggested that temporary hospitals be set up in indoor stadiums, gymnasiums and convention centres.

They also urged the government to ensure appropriate medical care for about 1 million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

The eminent citizens include -- Prof Anu Muhammad and Prof Mirza Taslima Sultana of Jahangirnagar University, Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua, Prof Gitira Nasreen, Prof Rubayet Ferdous, Prof Tanzimuddin Khan, Associate Professor Samina Luthfa of Dhaka University, Nusrat S Chowdhury, Associate Professor of Amherst College, Massachusetts, USA, among the other signatories.

## 'Bangladesh can be best in Asia'

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### GANAMUKTI DAL JOINS AWAMI LEAGUE

Ganamukti Dal, under the leadership of Manindra Nath Bhattacharya and Abdur Razzak MCA, joins Awami League today. Speaking at the joining ceremony, Bangabandhu calls upon the people to devote themselves to the task of building Shonar Bangla. The country has to be built from scratch as the Pakistani hoarders destroyed lifelines of the country, he adds.

He urges all to uphold the four principles of nationalism, socialism, democracy and secularism and work hard to bring smiles to the faces of the teeming millions. He asks people to be aware of the conspirators who are trying to tarnish the image of the country and fight these evil-mongers unitedly.

**DEADLY TRAIN ACCIDENT IN JESSORE** Bangladesh witnesses a tragic train accident in Jessore today that leaves at least 50 people dead and over 400 others injured. Bangabandhu expresses deep condolences to the bereaved families and assures them of all kind of support from the government. A high-powered committee is formed to inquire into this tragic incident.

### SATELLITE COMMUNICATION PLAN RESUMED

The government is planning to resume the work of establishing satellite communication in the country. Several

engineers have already been employed in this regard. The project was supposed to be completed by November, 1971. Once completed, the project will significantly improve Bangladesh's telecommunication with the world.

SOURCES: June 5, 1972 issue of Purbodesh.

## Cleanest air

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her team suspected that the air over the Southern Ocean would be least affected by humans and dust from the world's continents.

## Italy leads Europe

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come? No one from South America, China or the US," said Mimmo Burgio, a cafe owner near Rome's Colosseum.

**GERMANY TO LIFT TRAVEL WARNING** International flights were only expected to resume in three main cities: Milan, Rome and Naples, and some of Italy's neighbours are not yet ready to lift travel restrictions there.

## UN accuses

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The UN High Commissioner said she recognised the need to restrict harmful disinformation to protect public health, or any incitement of hatred towards minority groups.

 **Save the Children**

Date: June 4, 2020

**Save the Children is the world's leading, independent organisation for children**

**Invitation for Tender for Framework Agreement (FWA)**

Save the Children International (SCI) is hereby inviting for tender from interested experienced bona fide vendors for FWA of supplying Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) items for its offices and other locations in Bangladesh. For details please see the IFT schedule, which is available on <http://procurement.scibd.info/> under tender notification. Downloaded copy is acceptable for tender participation.

| Description, submission time & date: |  |                                 |                                |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Package No.                          | Name of IFT  | Reference No.                   | Last date of Tender Submission |
| 1                                    | FWA for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) items | IFT/SCI/BD/CO/FY-20/(Manual)/05 | June 20, 2020                  |

**Special Instructions: (a)** All activities in connection with the said procurement of Goods will be guided as per the SCI's Procurement Policies. **(b)** If it is not possible to receive & open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received and opened on the following working date at same time and same place.

Senior Manager, Procurement & Supply Chain

 **মুজিববর্ষের প্রত্যয়**  
নারী-পুরুষ সমতা

**মহিলা ও শিশু বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়**  
মহিলা নির্বাচন প্রতিরোধকল্পে মাল্টিসেট্টারাল প্রোগ্রাম

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