

# 6-Point emerged as demand of freedom: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the historic Six-point Demand had emerged before the people of this part of Bengal as their demand for freedom since they had taken it as their right to live.

"The people had taken the Six-Point Demand in such a way that I don't know whether such a demand could draw so much popularity so rapidly in any country of the world. The people of Bangla had taken it as their rights to live. And it was actually that demand," she said while chairing a virtual online discussion marking the historic Six-Point Day.

The National Implementation Committee for the Celebration of the Birth Centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman organised the discussion as well as an online quiz completion with participation of the young generation.

Hasina said the people of the country not only extended support to the Six-Point Demand, they also accepted the demand of autonomy as their own.

Focusing on the context of the Six-Point Demand, Hasina said Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had placed the demand for establishing the rights of the Bangalee nation.

"It was seen the people of East Bengal meaning East Pakistan was completely unprotected during the 1965 Pakistan-India war," she said, adding that the then Pakistani rulers did not take any step to save the East Bengal.

The PM said the Pakistani rulers arrested numerous leaders and activists of the Awami League and the general people during the six-point movement.

The Father of the Nation in his "Karagar Rojnamcha" (Jail Diary) clearly wrote how the Pakistanis unleashed torture and repression at that time, she said. But the people of Bangladesh were marching forward along the path of movements and struggles.

"With continuation of the tortures and oppressions to suppress

the movement, the people of Bangla became more conscious, more organised and more united. Of course, there was exception for some collaborators. Some collaborators are always there, which is a problem," she said.

Bangabandhu on January 18, 1968, was taken to Dhaka Cantonment from Dhaka Central Jail after his arrest and a case -- which became famous as Agartala conspiracy case -- was framed by the Pakistani rulers against Bangabandhu and 34 other civil and military officers and persons.

Bangabandhu was made the number-1 accused in the case, said Hasina, the eldest daughter of Bangabandhu.

In this case, the main charge was that Bangabandhu tried to secede East Bengal from Pakistan through an armed revolution, she mentioned.

But the people of Bangladesh burst into protest against the case. Chhatra Sangram Parishad waged movements in a united way and mass upsurge took place, she said.

Ayub Khan was compelled to withdraw the case in the face of mass movement on February 21, 1969. And Bangabandhu was released from jail on February 22, 1969, she added.

The PM said the 1970 general election was held in the backdrop of the six-point movement and Bangladesh Awami League won the election and got majority seats in entire Pakistan.

"June 7, the day the historic Six-Point Demand was placed in 1966, is very important for us as we got the independence for the Six-Point Day," she said.

Bangabandhu raised the issues of disparity and deprivation again and again, Hasina said. "Bangabandhu struggled against the deprivation and we got the independence marching along the way of his struggles."

Noted writer Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam was present as the chief discussant at the event, while Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque and Education Minister Dr Dipu Moni also took part in the discussion.

## Strict rules for stay at home

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The steps come amid a continued spike in new cases of the coronavirus.

Slum dwellers in the red zones or someone with a sudden loss of job will be provided with food for two weeks. Only the goods laden vehicles will be allowed to travel through the areas at night.

All offices and factories will remain closed and there will be restrictions on going to mosques too.

In the yellow zones, grocery stores, pharmacies, and restaurants will remain open, but offices and factories may operate with 50 percent of their employees by informing the administration in advance. Public transport will also operate with half the seats empty while rickshaws and three-wheelers will carry one person.

These and many other restrictions have been mentioned in the draft standard operating procedure (SOP) the government has prepared to enforce containment zones to control transmission of Covid-19 in the cities.

The draft SOP was submitted before the prime minister on Saturday night and the cabinet division might issue a circular endorsing it in a day or two with edits suggested by the PM, officials familiar with the development said.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the draft SOP.

Meanwhile, local administration declared three areas in Narayanganj as red zones, and imposed lockdown for the next 15 days starting yesterday, to contain the growing number of coronavirus cases in those areas.

LACK OF PREPARATION HALTS INITIATIVE

In the wake of rising Covid-19 deaths and infections, the government originally planned to make containment zones in some areas of Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur and Narsingdi.

But that did not happen as planned yesterday because the preliminary work had not been done, several officials said.

There were areas under the capital's Wari and Sher-E-Bangla Nagar police stations that were to be in the containment zones.

Contacted, officers-in-charge of both the police stations said they had not received any directives in this regard from their high ups.

Health ministry's medical cell

Chief Habibur Rahman Khan said,

"There was an attempt at starting a zoning system from today. But...the background work was not complete.

"People directly involved in the process can tell you [when the process will start]."

Habibur, also an additional secretary of the ministry, said classifying areas as red, yellow and green zones was a time consuming process.

Officials are also working to figure out how the restrictions will be enforced, he said.

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Atiqul Islam, who played the key role in preparing the draft SOP, told The Daily Star last night: "We hope to start [the zoning system] within a day or two... upon getting approval from the prime minister."

The mayor said he intended to start a lockdown as soon as possible.

The issue was discussed at a meeting on June 1 chaired by Health Minister Zahid Maleque and attended by mayors from three cities.

The suggestion of classifying different areas came from health experts after the government on May 31 relaxed the nationwide shutdown enforced on March 26.

The suggestion was then discussed at another high-level meeting attended by the health, home, LGRD ministers, and the two mayors of Dhaka.

City areas would be marked as green, yellow and red zones on the basis of the number of cases detected in a ward, its population density and people's living standards.

The eight-member government expert panel formed to supervise, monitor and support the coronavirus response prepared a set of draft recommendations about the zoning system.

An area with no recorded Covid-19 case would be marked a "green zone". A ward area with less than 40 detected cases would be put in the "yellow zone". If the area is densely populated and the living standard of most of the people is low, the number should be 30.

Any ward area will be put in the "red zone" if it has more than 40 cases. If population density is high, the number considered should be 30, according to the draft recommendation.



As sweltering heat becomes unbearable, children and some young adults play in the water of Crescent Lake in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Bangladesh MP held in Kuwait

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traffickers in Mizdah of Libya. Eleven others were also injured. The victims were on their way to Tripoli from Benghazi while heading to Europe through the Mediterranean.

Momen said Shahid, also known as Kazi Papul, has a big business firm in Kuwait. Shahid is its managing director and a Kuwaiti national its chairperson.

"His Kuwaiti partner is trying to help him with bail," Momen mentioned.

Asked what action the government would take against the MP, the minister said, "We are investigating. We will take appropriate actions after probe."

Contacted earlier in the day, Bangladesh Ambassador to Kuwait SM Abul Kalam said he was trying to learn why the MP was detained. "No human trafficking takes place from Bangladesh to Kuwait. What happens is visa trading," he said.

Meanwhile, Shahid's wife Salina Islam in a statement claimed that the information published by some news portal about her husband's arrest in

Kuwait was wrong.

"My husband has not been arrested in any case. As per the rules of the country, the government of Kuwait called him to meet at its respective department or CID for discussion on his business," said Salina, also an MP from the reserve seat for women.

She urged all to refrain from "spreading misinformation".

ACC PROBE

In response to a complaint filed on February 16, Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission opened an enquiry into an allegation that Shahid Islam amassed Tk 1,400 crore by trafficking people to Kuwait and siphoned off the money to different countries.

Asked, Shahid at that time said he had been in construction business for 30 years and that about 26,000 people worked in his Marafie Kuwaitia General Contracting Company. Of them, about 20,000 were from Bangladesh and the rest from different other countries, including India and Nepal.

"I don't have any businesses in Bangladesh. I have never made any

illegal transaction and have always used proper banking channels," he had said, denying his involvement with any criminal activity.

Earlier, the Kuwaiti media reported that three Bangladeshis were operating a human trafficking racket in the Middle Eastern country. On February 12, a report of the Arab Times, an English language daily, said one of the three was a "member of parliament in Bangladesh".

According to the report, the trio "occupied sensitive positions" in three major companies that brought more than 20,000 Bangladeshi workers to Kuwait in exchange for an amount believed to be more than Tk 1,391.6 crore.

Migration experts say studies found Bangladeshi migrants pay the highest amount of money to go abroad.

Even, cases filed for human trafficking rarely see conviction. According to the Police Headquarters in Bangladesh, 5,088 cases were filed under the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act-2012 between 2012 and 2019, but only 111 people were convicted.

## 9 local rings in league with int'l traffickers

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Madaripur, Gopalganj and Shariatpur, one in Chattogram and one in Magura, said the official.

DB claimed to have found "the leader" after arresting a member of one of the syndicates on Saturday night from Kamalapur area in the capital.

During primary interrogation, the arrestee Sujon Mia, 26, admitted to sending around 16 people to Libya over the last two years, said Shahadat Hossain, additional deputy commissioner of DB police, to this newspaper.

DB arrested Sujon while investigating a human trafficking case filed with Teigaon Police Station after 26 Bangladeshis were kidnapped and killed in Libya on May 28.

According to First Information Report, Sujon and his syndicate members sent three people -- Esar Uddin, 25, Md Bijoy, 22, and Md Sajal, 26, -- to Libya on December 3rd last year. But last month, Esar called his wife Sumaiya on the cell phone and said the traffickers have confined him to a torture cell and will kill him if she did not send Tk 10 lakh to them.

The Daily Star managed to get some audio recordings from the victim's family, in which Esar was crying and shouting for help. He was saying, "Please send Tk 10 lakh, they broke both my hands and are electrocuting me."

Sumaiya's brother Mohammad Ali said they registered a complaint with the police as they were unable to contact Esar for one week after the 26 Bangladeshis were murdered.

Out of the three who went to Libya through Sujon, only Sajal is now undergoing treatment in hospital and Bijoy and Esar remain missing, said ADC Shahadat.

"We are now trying to trace the

victims using the information we got from Sujon," he added.

Regarding the trafficking system, ADC Shahadat said that after interrogating Sujon, they have learnt that the syndicate members first send migrants to UAE, where a Bangladeshi person named "Afrin Ahmed", wearing a blue T-shirt, receives them.

"Afrin then sends the migrants to Amman, where another person [of unknown identity] wearing a green T-shirt receives them and sends them to Libya, where three Bangladeshis -- Sanjib, Manik and Jafor -- wearing black and white T-shirts receives them," he said.

Finally, the traffickers send the migrants to Europe by boat via Malta, the ADC said, adding that Sujon himself had gone to Libya using this route in 2017. He joined the trafficking syndicates after coming back to Bangladesh.

Primarily, these traffickers charge Tk 4.60 lakh to send people to Libya but they take an additional Tk three to four lakh more before sending them to Europe, according to official.

The Bangladeshis, who receive these migrants in Libya, hand them over to local gangs who keep them in torture cells for money. They do not release the migrants until their demands are met, the official added.

Contacted, Golam Mostofa Rashed, deputy commissioner (west) of DB police, told The Daily Star that they have traced of some of the syndicates while investigating.

Rashed refused to disclose further details of these syndicates as it may alert them to take shelter. "We are conducting drives and are hopeful to arrest all the absconding members soon," he added.

13 SYNDICATE MEMBERS ARRESTED

Meanwhile, different units of police have arrested around 13 people in connection with 22 cases filed across the country till yesterday, regarding the killing of the 26 Bangladeshis, according to a statement of Police Headquarters.

Under the strict guidelines of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Benazir Ahmed, all police units, including Rapid Action Battalion, Criminal Investigation Department, Police Bureau of Investigation and Dhaka Metropolitan Police, started drives on the field to arrest those responsible for the trafficking. The drive is still underway, reads the PHQ statement.

Earlier in an emergency video conference with all police unit chiefs and high officials on June 1, the IGP said, "The way our countrymen were brutally killed is totally unacceptable. Bangladesh is no longer in a position in which it's people should die in such a manner."

"Those who have deceived the citizens of the country, taken them abroad, and are responsible behind their miserable deaths will not be spared. Every one of these syndicates will be found and will face capital punishment in line with the law so that no one dares to play with life and lead any Bangladeshi to their death," the IGP warned.

It is to be noted that Bangladeshis who go abroad this way usually travel to India or other countries first through a valid process using valid travel documents like passports and relevant visas. In all these cases, they left Bangladesh after showing valid documents, reads the PHQ statement.

Then, in collaboration with brokers and traffickers, they migrate to the Middle East or Libya from India or other countries, it added.

## Fears for UK homeless as virus hotel scheme draws to close

AFP, London

Thousands of homeless people in Britain were given hotel rooms to protect them from coronavirus but as the outbreak slows, charities fear they could soon be back on the streets.

Lisa was among 15,000 people in England given emergency accommodation as part of an unprecedented government scheme in March to get "Everyone In" as Covid-19 spread.

She has a chronic health condition and had been living on the streets, relying on temporary shelters run by the charity Glass Door, which helped her onto the hotel scheme.

"I was elated," the 30-something told AFP by telephone. "To be able to sleep in a bed, it was like sleeping on cloud nine!"

But her room in a London hotel is only confirmed until the end of June -- and as the government eases a nationwide lockdown, she is getting increasingly anxious.

The scheme "does give me some glimmer of hope that things can go forward. When you are on the street it feels never-ending", she said.

"I have faith that the charities are not going to put us back on the street. But if it's a case of going back into the kind of temporary accommodation I was in, I know the cycle will be repeated."

Campaigners are demanding the government urgently clarify what happens to people like Lisa when the hotel contracts run out.

"Returning people back onto the streets should not be an option, but time is running out to find alternative solutions," said Glass Door chief operating officer Lucy Abraham.

There are also calls for wider action amid warnings that homelessness will increase as the economic impact of the outbreak bites.

"The government's actions and support so far are welcome, but there is still a long way to go," said a joint letter to ministers from leading homelessness charities.

"With the risk of a second wave of infection and looming economic crisis, more needs to be done. Getting this right is critical for the health and economic security of tens of thousands of people and families."

## Country now

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The growing number of infection in Bangladesh may take the case number to around 90,000 by the mid of this month, Shafiqul Shimul, an associate professor of health economics at Dhaka University, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Like other experts, he also said the number of tests is too little compared to the other countries.

So far, Bangladesh has tested 2,418 people in every million whereas the US has tested 62,924, according to www.worldometers.info.

Among the Asian countries with more cases than Bangladesh, Qatar has tested about 91,008 people for every million, India has tested 3,384 and Pakistan 3,099.

Based on the test results of 13,136 samples in 52 Covid-19 testing labs, the rate of positive cases was 20.88 percent yesterday, Dr Nasima Sultana, additional director general (administration) of DGHs, said during a briefing.

Meanwhile, 578 Covid-19 patients have recovered in those 24 hours, taking the total number of recoveries to 13,903 and the recovery rate to 21.14 percent.

Among the deceased, 35 were male and seven female, she said adding that 27 were from Dhaka, eight from Chattogram, two from Sylhet, two from Rajshahi, two from Khulna and the other from Mymensingh division.

Of them, 30 died in hospitals and 12 at home, the DGHs official said.

Of the deceased, one was aged between 21-30 years, seven between 31-40, nine between 41-50, seven between 51-60, 14 between 61-70, three between 71-80 and another between 91-100 years old, Nasima also said.

A total of 467 people were put in isolation during this period, she said.

## CHT affairs minister

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"As he is a VIP patient, and there is no ICU and CCU in Bandarban, we sent him to Dhaka."

Civil Surgeon Aung Swi told The Daily Star last night that samples of Bir Bahadur were sent to a Cox's Bazar lab on June 4 for coronavirus tests.

The minister tested positive on Saturday, he said.

"He was admitted to the Dhaka CMH around 12:45pm," said Biswas Russel Hossain, personal secretary of the minister.

He added that the minister had no fever and only a slight cough now. Bir Bahadur is the first minister of the country who is infected with Covid-19.

Meanwhile, ISPR in a press release said the minister was flown to Dhaka by a Bangladesh Air Force helicopter.

## Anti-racism protests spread around world

FROM PAGE 1

Floyd's neck for almost nine minutes as he pleaded for his life -- the latest unarmed black person to be killed by white law enforcement officers.

The officer, Derek Chauvin, has been charged with second-degree murder.

President Donald Trump announced in a tweet yesterday that he has ordered the National Guard to begin withdrawing from Washington, DC.

Peaceful protests swelled in other US cities on Saturday.

Tens of thousands rallied across New York City and Philadelphia, Chicago shut down the city's Lake Shore Drive to facilitate protests, and demonstrators marched in Los Angeles.

New York Mayor Bill de Blasio early yesterday lifted a curfew he had imposed on the city for nearly a week as anti-racism protests raged there and nationwide, reports AFP.

In San Francisco, thousands

marched across the Golden Gate Bridge, briefly stopping traffic as they spilled into the driving lanes.

"I CAN'T GO IN"

But the demonstrations in Washington were the biggest since protests began in Minneapolis before spreading across the country and then abroad.

"Today, the pain is so raw it can be hard to keep faith," tweeted Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden.

A remembrance for Floyd was held Saturday in North Carolina, the state where he was born, following a memorial service in Minneapolis on Thursday.

Hundreds waited to view his coffin, some holding umbrellas against the hot sun. Some sobbed and many held cell phones high as a hearse arrived with the casket.

Floyd's sisters LaTonya and Zsa-Zsa told reporters they would not go inside.