

Chinese team recommends 4 drugs to fight Covid-19

UNB, Dhaka

The visiting Chinese medical experts have said the use of Ritonavir, Resochin, Ribavirin, and Arbidol can be effective to some extent.

They have advised institutional quarantine for international travellers, irrespective of whether they are in good health or not.

The travellers must be taken to institutional quarantine for 14 days after the nucleic acid test, said the experts.

The Chinese side said the use of Ritonavir, Resochin, Ribavirin, and Arbidol can be effective to some extent, according to the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka.

When asked about the high infected rate of police in Bangladesh, Chinese experts pointed out that the police personnel did not zip up the PPE well, but exposed it in the

air.

They suggested that there is no need to wear PPE in the open space, while washing hands frequently and wearing masks in the right way are highly important.

The Chinese experts visited Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College Hospital, Bashundhara Covid-19 Field Centre, and Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on the fifth day of their visit.

Like in the previous days, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Chief of Mission of the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka Yan Hualong accompanied them.

In reply to a query of Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College Hospital experts, the Chinese team said "no" to antibody tests instead of nucleic acid.

Denied treatment

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"It was handwritten on her file that the patient was 'Covid-19 negative' but that was not enough for the doctors at the emergency," Moutushi said, adding that the doctors from the neurosciences institute also spoke to the Ibn Sina doctors confirming that Sultana did not have Covid-19.

"We begged the doctors for two hours to just give her some primary treatment while we made other arrangements, but they wouldn't touch her. We spoke to the resident physicians of the Neuromedicine department and implored them to save her.

"We called the 999 emergency hotline. They sent over police from Dhanmondi Police Station. Around 3:30am the police came to discuss. During all of this, her limbs started going limp. We were losing her. The police quickly instructed the doctors to take her to the emergency."

The doctors then hooked her to the

electrocardiogram machine, but the monitor only showed a flat line, she said.

"She was moving, she was breathing when we brought her to the hospital. She died during the two hours."

Anisuzzaman, senior general manager at Ibn Sina Hospitals, said, "She was brought dead, or when she was close to death. We give primary treatment to patients who are likely to have Covid-19 and get them tested. She would not have survived that procedure."

A resident physician who requested not to be named, said, "The patient had breathing difficulties. These patients usually get admitted into the ICU directly. This is the hospital's protocol. The emergency unit was asked to follow the protocol." Sultana graduated from Ibn Sina Nursing Institute's diploma programme in nursing and midwifery in 2018. She was buried in Naogaon.

Virtual courts refuse

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Magistrate Md Jasim refused to hold hearing on a bail appeal submitted by Kajol's lawyer Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua in the case filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station as a petition for showing him arrested is now pending.

The case was filed by Saifuzzaman Shikhor, a ruling party lawmaker from Magura-1, with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station on March 9.

Meanwhile, Metropolitan Magistrate Debdash Chandra Adhikary passed the same order after Kajol's lawyer submitted a bail petition virtually in the case filed with Hazaribagh Police Station.

As per the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), no bail petition can be filed until or unless a person is shown arrested in a case.

Earlier on May 5, the Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTC) Inspector Motlubur Rahman sought to have him "shown arrested" but the Metropolitan Magistrate Baki

Billah postponed the petition until Kajol was brought to Dhaka from Jashore. The magistrate asked the jail authorities in Jashore to produce Kajol before his court on June 1.

Kajol, however, was not brought to Dhaka on that date.

Fifty-three days after his disappearance, Kajol was "discovered" by Border Guard Bangladesh in Benapole on May 3.

But he was arrested -- initially on charges of trespassing -- and granted bail in the case after he was produced before a Jashore court the same day.

But later the same evening Kajol was shown arrested under section 54 of the CrPC -- and sent to Jashore Central Jail as police informed the court that three more cases were pending with different police stations in the capital.

Section 54 of the CrPC stipulates that a person can be arrested without a warrant if there is credible information of his involvement with a "cognisable offence."

RHD seeks Tk 250cr to repair

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than a million people of nine districts in Khulna and Barishal divisions.

At least 12 people were killed and nearly 2.20 lakh houses were damaged by the cyclone that swept through the south-western part with a wind speed of over 150km per hour. It destroyed crops, vegetables and fruits on 1.76 lakh hectares land, uprooted millions of trees and damaged fish farms, said officials.

According to the RHD report, prepared based on field data, total 70.50km of 23 roads -- mostly regional highways and district roads-- were damaged while 3.1km of the roads have been washed out.

Satkhira is the worst-affected district in terms of road damage as 27.55km of its roads were damaged by the cyclone, followed by Bagerhat, Bhola and Khulna with 20.45km, 15km and 7.5km respectively.

"According to our preliminary estimate, a total of Tk 29.56 crore would require for short term repair while Tk

220.90 crore would require for long-term repair," an RHD official, wishing not to be named, said.

Mir Nizam Uddin Ahmed, executive engineer at RHD's Satkhira division, said three kilometres roads under his division were washed out after an embankment of Water Development Board got damaged.

"We will start repair works of the road after the embankment is repaired," he told this correspondent. Other parts of the roads have already made usable, he added.

RHD's Khulna Division's Executive Engineer Anisuzzaman Masud said seven kilometres roads of Koira-Noaveki-Shyamnagar road remained underwater due to a damaged embankment of WDB.

Dipankar Mondal, deputy secretary (maintenance section) of Road Transport and Highway Division, said RHD was asked to repair the roads using the existing fund as it's not possible to get additional money from finance ministry at the end of the fiscal year.

India recommends

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Organization (WHO), this medicine can give us success against Covid-19," Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope tweeted.

With 1,04,568 coronavirus cases and 3,830 deaths, Maharashtra remains the worst hit in India.

India also recorded the highest single-day spike -- 11,929 novel coronavirus cases yesterday. And the death toll crossed the 9,195 mark, according to data provided by the India Health Ministry yesterday.

Amid the continued increase of Covid-19 cases across India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to hold a virtual meeting with chief ministers of different states on either July 16 or 17 to discuss ways to contain

the spread.

Sources have said Modi is also expected to discuss lockdown issues with the CMs.

In another development, Union Home Minister Amit Shah today held a meeting on the Covid-19 situation in Delhi. It is the third worst-hit state after Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu and has registered 38,959 cases so far. It recorded more than 2,134 cases today.

Delhi's Health minister Harsh Vardhan, Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and officials of the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) were present in the meeting, NDTV reported today.

The meeting also decided to increase tests threefold in Delhi within six days.



With no posts or corners to which to tie his mosquito net, a homeless man resorts to wrapping himself with the protective material to guard against the mosquito menace. The photo was taken in front of Khilgaon level crossing yesterday around 6:30am.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Minister Abdullah laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State minister for religious affairs Sheikh Md Abdullah was laid to rest at his family graveyard in Gopalganj yesterday.

Abdullah, who was also a valiant freedom fighter, breathed his last at Central Military Hospital in Dhaka around 11:00pm on Saturday. He was 75.

Nurul Islam, secretary to the ministry, told The Daily Star that Abdullah suffered a cardiac arrest. He was diagnosed with Covid-19 after his death.

Nazmul Haque Saikat, assistant personal secretary to Abdullah, said several hundred people attended the Namaj-e-Janaza of the state minister on Sultan Shahi Madrasa ground at Kekania village.

"They [people attending the Namaj-e-Janaza] maintained physical distance to contain the spread of coronavirus," he added.

Abdullah was buried next to his parents' graves.

He left behind his two wives, eleven children, a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Abdullah was born on September 8, 1945 at Kekania village in Gopalganj. His father was late Sheikh Md Matiur Rahman and mother Mosammat Rabeya Khatun. He was the second among his four brothers and three sisters.

He worked as the chief polls agent of Sheikh Hasina every time she was elected as Member of Parliament of Gopalganj-3 (Tungipara-Kotalipara) constituency.

After the formation of the current government last year, he was made the state minister for the religious affairs ministry.

Motivated by the ideologies of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Abdullah got engaged in politics when he was a student. He was actively involved in the Mass Uprising Movement of 1969 and the Liberation War.

He was also the religious affairs secretary of the Awami League. He obtained Bachelor of Commerce (honours) degree from Khulna's Azam Khan College in 1963 and Masters of Commerce degree from the University of Dhaka in 1972 and Masters of Arts degree in Economics in 1974, according to the website of the religious affairs ministry. He also obtained LLB degree from Dhaka Central Law College in 1977.

After completion of his education, he started his career as the Headmaster of Sultan Shahi Kekania High School.

Later, he started practicing law at Dhaka and Gopalganj judge courts and Bangladesh Supreme Court as an enlisted lawyer.

Mark 56 city zones red

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Habibur added that there will be at least a day or two before a lockdown.

According to the meeting minutes, Dhaka and Chattogram city corporations' cut off value for red zone will be 60 cases in the last 14 days for 100,000 residents.

Cut-off values are the dividing points on measuring scales where the test results are divided into different categories; typically positive, or negative.

Under DNCC, Bashundhara, Badda, Cantonment, Mohakhali, Tejgaon, Rampura, Aftabnagar, Mohammadpur, Kallyanpur, Gulshan, Mogbazar, Airport, Banasree, Rayerbazar, Raja Bazar, Uttara, Mirpur are identified as red zones.

Under DSCC, the areas that are identified as red zones are: Jatrabari, Demra, Gendaria, Dhanmondi, Jigatala, Lalbagh, Azimpur, Basabo, Shantinagar, Palta, Kalabagan, Ramna, Sutrapur, Malibagh, Kotwali, Tikatoli, Shahjahanpur, Motijheel, Wari, Khilgaon, Poribagh, Shahbag, Eskaton, Kodomtoli, Siddheshwari, Laxmibazar, Elephant Road, Segunbagicha, Dhanmondi, Malibagh and Khilgaon.

These areas are under consideration to be made more granular for more effective zonal management, the meeting minutes said.

The areas under Chattogram City Corporation categories as red zones are: Chittagong Port Ward No-38, Patenga Ward No-39 (Part), Chittagong Port Ward No-39 (Part), Pahartali Ward No-10, Kotwali Ward No-16, Khulshi Ward No-14, Ward No-20, Kotwali Ward No-21, Halishahar Ward No-26, Chittagong Port Ward No-37 and Kotwali Ward No-22.

Govt's unscientific

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"That's why we're seeing that what was once limited to Dhaka and its neighbouring areas has now spread to the whole country."

He urged the government to devise and adopt a scientific and precise strategy and then oversee its implementation.

Sporadic measures will not stop the spread of the infection, he added.

In this connection, Be-Nazir pointed out the instance of the capital's Rajabazar area, which has been categorised as a "red zone" and locked down since June 9.

"Will such sporadic lockdowns bring any result?" he asked, suggesting that the government take a holistic approach instead to stem the spread of the virus.

About containment zones, he said public health experts should be given the helm to tackle the situation.

"We've seen the consequences of giving the administration and police the responsibility. They completely ignored public health issues," he said, pointing to the example of hoisting red flags on houses with infected people.

"Such immature measures forced the infected people to hide information, leading to infections among others," said Be-Nazir.

He suggested the formation of a national committee headed by health experts. There should be at least 500 sub-committees that will look after the zones, and local police, admin and representatives should be members of these committees headed by health officials.

Everything -- from identifying Covid-19 cases and contact-tracing to ensuring daily necessities of city-dwellers and hospital services to critical patients -- should be run by these sub-committees until a red zone turns into a green zone.

"The goal of the committees would be to give the best services to critical patients in hospitals," he said.

He also suggested that the government not take any further half-hearted decisions or measures. "Otherwise, our infection rate will continue to rise and we'll become the next USA, Brazil, Chile, Mexico or India."

ZONING SYSTEM GUIDELINES

At the daily virtual briefing yesterday, Dr Nasima, additional director general (admin) of the DGHS, said the government has published guidelines for the zoning system.

According to the guidelines, compared to some wards, the

infection rate per million people is at least 90 times higher in some particular areas in big cities.

The government will lock down Gazipur, Narsingdi and Narayanganj, Wari and Rajabazar on a trial basis, read the guidelines.

The zones will be identified in terms of the infection rate in the area over the previous 14 days. If 60 people per 10 lakh in an area in Dhaka are found infected it will be marked a red zone. Outside Dhaka, an area will be red-zoned if there are 10 infected people per million.

Any area in Dhaka where the number of patients would be between 3-59 per million in last 14 days of the trial would be yellow-zoned. Outside Dhaka, it would be 3-9 per million.

The status of a red zone will not be changed for three weeks even if the condition of the area is fit to be yellow-zoned.

Several local committees comprising police, health officials and social workers will be formed, according to the guidelines, but local representatives will lead the committees.

DAILY BRIEFING

Another 3,140 people were found infected with coronavirus in 24 hours till yesterday afternoon, after 14,505 samples were tested in 60 labs across the country. With this, the total now stands at 87,520.

During the same period, 32 people died from Covid-19, said Dr Nasima.

The death toll now stands at 1,171.

During the same period, 903 Covid-19 patients have recovered, taking the total number of recoveries to 18,730 and recovery rate to 21.40 percent, the DGHS official added.

Of the dead, 27 were male and five female, she said, adding that 16 were from Dhaka, 11 from Chattogram, two from Sylhet, and one each from Barishal, Rangpur and Mymensingh divisions.

Of them, one was aged between 21 and 30, one between 31 and 40, six between 41 and 50, 10 between 51 and 60, nine between 61 and 70, two between 71 and 80 and the other three were between 81 and 90, she said, adding that 20 of them died at different hospitals while 11 died at their respective homes. One was declared dead while being taken to hospital.

A total of 712 people were put in isolation in those 24 hours, Dr Nasima said.

SUED UNDER DSA

HC grants journo Sushanta bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted ad-interim bail to Sushanta Dasgupta, editor and publisher of local newspaper Dainik Amar Habiganj, in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

The HC bench of Justice Md Ashraf Kamal passed the order of bail to Sushanta following a petition filed by his lawyer seeking bail in the case.

The ad-interim bail will continue till further hearing of his bail petition in the same case before a regular High Court bench following its reopening after the ongoing shutdown, Sushanta's lawyer Advocate AM Amin Uddin told The Daily Star yesterday.

Amin also said there is no legal bar for his client's release from jail following the HC's bail order.

Deputy Attorney General Bashir Ahmed represented the state during the virtual hearing of the bail petition yesterday.

Sushanta also runs a platform called Amarp.com that provides contact information about parliamentarians and allows constituents to communicate with their representatives.

The platform was developed with support from the government's ICT Division.

The journalist was picked up from his newspaper office in Habiganj town's Chirakandi area on May 21 this year.

Speaking to The Daily Star on May 22, Masuk Ali, officer-in-charge of Habiganj Police Station, said, Sayeduzzaman Zahir, general secretary of Habiganj Press Club, lodged the case against Sushanta and three other journalists of the newspaper for running "false reports" on lawmaker Abu Zahir.

Sayeduzzaman said, "The lawmaker from Habiganj-3, Abu Zahir, is a respected person. He is also the district Awami League president and a lifetime member of Habiganj Press Club. Recently, Sushanta Dasgupta's newspaper ran several false reports on Abu Zahir."

"I felt that the reports directly affected the image of the press club also. That's why I filed the case," he told The Daily Star.

Lawmaker Abu Zahir said, "My public image has been compromised because of those false reports."

Mohammed Nasim laid to final rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Veteran Awami League leader Mohammed Nasim was laid to eternal rest at Banani graveyard in the city yesterday. The freedom fighter was given a guard of honour before the burial.

The AL presidium member and son of Shaheed Captain M Mansur Ali died of a cardiac arrest at city's Bangladesh Specialized Hospital on Saturday at the age of 72.

Floral wreaths were placed at his coffin on behalf of President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, AL sources said.

Earlier, the first namaz-e-janaza of Nasim was held around 9:40am at Dhanmondi's Sobhanbagh Jam-e-Mosque. It was attended by several hundred people mostly from his electoral constituency Sirajganj-1.

The second namaz-e-janaza -- participated by several hundred leaders and activists of his party -- was held at Banani Jam-e-Mosque around 10:30am and the former health minister was buried around 11:00am following the health guidelines to stem Covid-19 transmission.

Survived by his wife, three sons, a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death, Nasim was admitted to the hospital on June 1 as he fell ill. Later, he was tested coronavirus positive.

Iran's Zarif sees Trump favourite to win US election

REUTERS, Dubai

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Saturday that US President Donald Trump still has a good chance of being re-elected thanks to his strong support base, despite his declining support in recent months.

"The biggest mistake in human sciences is to predict, especially in fluid and grave conditions. But allow me to venture a prediction that Mr Trump's re-election chances are still more than 50%," Zarif said in an interview. "Of course his chances have seriously decreased compared to four to five months ago."

"But Mr Trump has a 30-35% base that has not moved and, as long as this base does not move, there is still a chance of his re-election," Zarif said in the live interview on Instagram with Iranian journalist Farid Modarresi, the first of its kind with a senior official of the Islamic Republic.

Relations between Iran and the United States have taken a turn for the worse since Donald Trump last year pulled Washington out of the nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions that have

crippled Tehran's economy. Iran has responded by gradually scaling back its commitments under the agreement.

Trump said earlier this month that Iranian leaders would be wrong if they expected his defeat in the November elections. Recent opinion polls have seen President Donald Trump lose ground to Democrat Joe Biden.

"Don't wait until after U.S. Election to make the Big deal. I'm going to win. You'll make a better deal now!," Trump tweeted, addressing Iran.

Iran's Foreign Ministry responded that Iran would not base its policies on internal U.S. matters, such as elections.

Zarif said in the interview that Trump himself had likely reached the conclusion that his policies of "maximum pressure" against Iran had failed.

"I don't think Trump believes anymore in talk that the Islamic Republic is about to collapse," Zarif said. "But he keeps repeating his mistakes. It seems that they (U.S. officials) know they have committed errors but don't know how to correct them."