

We will not accept defeat

FROM PAGE 1

Hasina said she was taking the advantage of digitalisation of the country for reaching to the masses and talk to them to boost their confidence. "I want people maintain their trust and confidence."

She said the government has given special attention to saving lives and ensuring food, treatment, and education for all.

"For that I am requesting the people of the country to strictly follow the health guidelines. Everybody has to protect others by keeping himself protected."

The PM said the whole world has become stagnant due to the fear from this invisible virus. She blamed Covid-19 for stalling the country's progress.

Terming 2020 a very important year for Bangladesh, Hasina said the government had taken up various programmes to celebrate the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman.

"But we can't celebrate that as per the plan because of this coronavirus," she said.

Talking about the ever-changing technology and crimes with the advancement of the world, she said technology is used for both good and bad activities.

"Keeping that in mind, the people who are involved in providing security have to attain knowledge on modern technology. They have to enrich their knowledge on what type of criminal activities are going on and how to prevent those," the PM added.

She put emphasis on acquiring necessary training in this regard.

Earlier, SSF Director General Maj Gen Md Majibur Rahman delivered the welcome speech.

On behalf of the SSF personnel, the director general handed a cheque, amounting Tk 1 crore, of a day's salary of the force to the Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund.

90,000 cases in 100 days

FROM PAGE 1

A total of 15,038 samples were tested in 58 labs across the country in those 24 hours, Dr Nasima said, adding that 34,027 infected people recovered from Covid-19 so far.

Till Sunday, the number of recoveries was 18,730.

Regarding the jump in recovery, she explained there were people who recovered from the infection at home. They have added one of those people after getting information from the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

According to the IEDCR, about 71 percent of those infected are male and the rest are female.

Younger people seem to make up the majority of those infected, as 54.7 percent of detected patients are aged between 21 and 40.

The death rate is also higher among men. Of the total reported deaths, 77 percent were male.

Don't send away any patient: HC

FROM PAGE 1

and that they do not charge extra or unreasonable fees.

The authorities must ensure that the hospitals concerned continue providing dialysis and other necessary treatment to non-Covid-19 patients.

The HC directed authorities concerned to fix the retail price of oxygen cylinders, as well as their refilling price, and to display the prices at the outlets and shops so that the customers are not charged extra.

The authorities can take necessary measures to stop selling oxygen cylinders without prescription from registered doctors, the HC said in the directives.

The HC bench asked the commerce ministry and Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection to strengthen monitoring of supply and sale of oxygen cylinders.

The HC bench also asked the government to make a countrywide list of private hospitals with 50 or more beds and get data on the number of Covid-19 and non-Covid-19 patients to whom they have provided treatment after the DGHS directives were issued on May 24. The authorities concerned will then have to inform the court whether the private hospitals have taken legal action against those who failed to comply with the directives.

The court asked the health secretary and director general of DGHS to submit separate detailed reports after complying with the directives to the court in 15 days.

It, however, refrained from passing any order on a writ petition seeking its directives on the government to lock down all of Dhaka city to contain the spread of Covid-19 as the government

Sylhet city ex-mayor Kamran

FROM PAGE 1

at the shrine of Hazrat Manik Pir in Sylhet around 3:00pm yesterday after two namaz-e-janazas were held.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock at the death of the former Sylhet mayor.

In a condolence message, she said Kamran would remain alive in the hearts of the masses through his works.

She prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

The first namaz-e-janaza of Kamran was held at a mosque in Sylhet city's Chharapar area after Juhur prayers. Only a few family members and relatives of the deceased took part in it.

The second janaza was held at the shrine of Hazrat Manik Pir, which was attended by some politicians, including Sylhet Mayor Ariful Haque Choudhury, and senior officials of the district administration and Sylhet City Corporation.

Although the local administration and Kamran's political colleagues had planned to arrange the namaz-e-janazas following the Covid-19 health guidelines, several hundred people gathered in front of the graveyard before the funeral prayer.

According to family members, Kamran's wife Asma Kamran, general secretary of Sylhet City Mahila Awami League, also tested positive for Covid-19 on May 27. She is now undergoing treatment at her city home.

Kamran was born on January 1, 1951 at his ancestral home in Chharapar of Sylhet city.

He was elected Sylhet municipality's youngest commissioner in 1972 when he was a college student. He served as

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A suspected Covid-19 patient holds the hand of his wife while a youth tries to comfort him with a hand-fan at the coronavirus treatment unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. The man was admitted to the unit earlier in the day after he suffered a stroke at his home in Narsingdi. His wife was about to get some food, but he requested her to stay a little longer.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Confusion reigns supreme

FROM PAGE 1

Technical Group under the DGHS prepared a primary list of colour-coded zoning of areas all over the country and identified 45 areas in Dhaka North and South City corporations as red zones.

It also identified as red zones 11 areas in Chattogram city, the entire Gazipur district, and several upazilas in Narsingdi and Narayanganj.

According to the meeting minutes of the committee, if 60 or more people per one lakh in a city are infected within 14 days, it will be declared a red zone.

Once finalised, the public administration ministry will issue a gazette notification mentioning when the lockdown will be ordered.

Asked about the list of areas, DGHS Director General Prof Abul Kalam Azad said, "No, it has not been finalised yet. It's a draft."

About enforcing lockdown, he said, "I cannot say when such lockdown will start. It could take two or three days. But we don't think that many areas will be put under lockdown at the same time."

The authorities concerned will find which area can be locked down. "Then we will see whether that certain area meets the criteria to be classified as red zone. If so, we will give the nod."

Asked whether an entire area would be locked down at one go, the DG said, "Is it logical if the entire Bangladesh is put in the red zone at the same time? It will not happen simultaneously. It is a continuous process."

To check the spread of coronavirus, the government had earlier decided to categorise areas into red, yellow and green zones on the basis of mortality and infection rates. High-risk areas will be in red zone, moderate-risk ones in yellow zone, and low-risk ones in green zone.

The government has already

started enforcing lockdown on a pilot basis in some areas of four districts, including Dhaka. In the first phase, two areas of the capital -- East Rajabazar and Wari -- were put under lockdown with strict restrictions.

"WE SOUGHT SPECIFIC ZONING MAP"

DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam said it's very necessary to provide them with zoning maps, specifying particular areas so that they can take steps properly.

"We sought specific zoning maps from the authorities concerned as areas like Uttara and Mirpur are very big," he told The Daily Star.

It would require at least 48 hours to enforce lockdown after they get the maps, he added.

The mayor also mentioned that they were facing many challenges during the "experimental lockdown" at East Razabazar.

"We will have to know how much food is needed [for the residents] before enforcing lockdown," he said, adding that they would hold discussions with councillors and take steps after getting the maps.

DSCC Chief Executive Officer Shah Md Emdadul Haque said they received a letter from the DGHS about the red zones but were yet to get any instructions.

A lot of things need to be done before enforcing lockdown in a specific area, he said.

RESTRICTIONS TILL JUNE 30

The government announced countrywide restrictions on movement of people and all types of activities from today till June 30.

No one will be allowed to leave homes from 8:00pm to 6:00am except for emergency. People must wear face masks and maintain health guidelines outside their homes, said the revised circular issued by the Cabinet Division yesterday.

The officials and employees of all military or paramilitary, government, semi-government, autonomous,

semi-autonomous, and private offices in the red zone will enjoy a general holiday during the period, it mentioned.

This will also be applicable to the residents of these areas, who work in any of the aforementioned offices outside the red zones.

The public administration ministry will take necessary steps in this regard.

However, the government, semi-government, autonomous and private offices in the yellow and green zones will remain open on a limited scale.

"No one will be allowed to leave their workplaces during the restrictions," said the circular.

Those who are sick or at health risk and pregnant women living in these zones will be on leave.

The offices of law enforcement agencies and emergency services and the movement of their staffers and vehicles will remain outside the purview of the restrictions.

Markets, groceries and shopping malls must close by 4:00pm and social distancing has to be maintained in those places during the opening hours, said the circular.

HC ORDER

The High Court yesterday refrained from passing any order on the writ petition that sought a directive on the government to lock down the entire Dhaka city to contain further spread of Covid-19.

As the government has decided to categorise the Dhaka city areas into red, yellow and green zones, this court will not interfere with this, the HC said in the order.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim held a virtual hearing and passed "no order" on the writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Mahbubul Islam on June 11.

(Helemul Alam and Moudud Ahmed Sujan contributed to this report)

Situation dire due to incoordination

FROM PAGE 1

In the case of ventilators, the government claimed to have 500 ventilators, but the study found only 190 dedicated for Covid-19 patients.

Treatment of general patients is being disrupted in 53 percent hospitals due to Covid-19 while treatment is hampered due to substandard protective equipment in 71 percent hospitals.

No doctor in 25 percent hospitals and no nurse in 34 percent hospitals got PPE yet.

Thirty percent of hospitals studied are dumping waste in the open.

The study also said the private hospitals were not integrated in fighting Covid-19.

The report highlighted that the Disaster Management Act, 2012 and the Communicable Disease (Prevention, Control and Elimination) Act, 2018 were not properly followed.

"As the Disaster Management Act, 2012 and the Standing Orders for Disaster (SOD) were not used, the opportunity of utilising different institutional set up, ministries and departments could not be used; rather only a few committees at district and upazila levels were instructed to take action," it said.

The study also found that there was a lack of control over the influx of people from abroad. Delayed decisions to shut down resulted in people's influx from and to Dhaka city.

He said, "Due to lack of widespread social participation and proper information dissemination, the government failed to create public awareness which made the lockdown ineffective."

It found that information of all the deaths from the coronavirus was not available, as information of people who did not test, or did not report the death to the authorities were not included in the official data.

"There were notable deficiencies in all the seven indicators of good governance. It is still there," Dr Iftekharuzzaman said adding, "There has been a tendency to make bureaucratic decisions by ignoring specific opinions in all cases, including lockdowns."

He said, "Due to lack of widespread social participation and proper information dissemination, the government failed to create public awareness which made the lockdown ineffective."

MP Shahid 'spills the beans'

FROM PAGE 1

The Anti-corruption Authority issued a statement announcing that it had begun an investigation to unearth the whole illegal nexus.

The Public Prosecution decided to continue Papul's detention, after listening to the testimony of 11 Bangladeshis who had bribed their way into Kuwait through Papul.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh in a tweet said on Saturday that "Kuwait security is a red line, and maintaining its safety is the ultimate goal. This is what we pledged to His Highness, the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, and His Highness the Prime Minister and the noble Kuwaiti people."

In a statement issued on the same day, Al-Saleh said that this was one of the largest cases of human trafficking and residence for an Asian expatriate.

Combating human trafficking and

illegal residence is one of the main priorities of the Ministry of Interior and the efforts made by security men made a lot of progress in terms of pursuing the suspects or in terms of reforming legislation, it said.

Investigations revealed the existence of suspicious financial transactions carried out by a network of officials with weak souls in cooperation with companies that facilitated these operations, the statement added.

Be it a government official or a prominent person, if involvement is found, they will face the investigation authorities of the Ministry of the Interior and will be referred to the Public Prosecution.

Papul and a Kuwaiti citizen co-own a big recruitment company named Marafie Kuwaitia.

He is accused of charging each foreign worker, mostly Bangladeshi ones, up to 3,000 dinars in exchange for going to Kuwait.

The workers also paid huge sums to the company in exchange for renewing their residency every year.

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

Also in February, Kuwaiti media reported that three Bangladeshis were operating a human trafficking racket in the Middle Eastern country. On February 12, a report in the Arab Times 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 over 20,000 Bangladeshi workers to Kuwait in exchange for an amount believed to be more than Tk 1,391.6 crore.

Of the infected, 1,949 are from the DMP only, it added.

Police officials said the number of infected among police is on the rise as it is quite difficult for the law enforcers to carry out their duties without coming into regular contact with people.

The good news is that around 3,014 police personnel have so far recovered. The recovery rate is about 52 percent, said PHQ officials.

OIC COVID-19 RESPONSE