

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 the number 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.

The IEDCR shows that 68.6 percent of the people who died from Covid-19 were aged over 50.

Eighteen of the dead were from Dhaka, 12 from Chattogram, six from Sylhet, one from Barishal and another was from Rangpur division.

Of them, three were aged between 21 and 30, three between 31 and 40, seven between 41 and 50, five between 51 and 60, 15 between 61 and 70 and the rest were between 71 and 80, the DGHS official said.

A total of 536 people were put under isolation in the 24 hours till yesterday afternoon, she added.

Dr Nasima requested people to maintain social distance and health safety to avert the risk of infection.

"Many people are dying...Health workers are getting infected and dying. So be careful to avert further loss," she said, urging people to wear masks always outside of home.

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

has decided to categorise areas of the capital into red, yellow and green zones for this purpose.

The HC bench issued the directives following five separate writ petitions filed recently as public interest litigation seeking necessary orders from it. Rights organisation Justice Watch Foundation, Deputy Registrar of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Dr Sheikh Abdullah Al Mamun, Supreme Court lawyers Mahbubul Islam and Aynunnahar Siddiqua filed a petition each.

Four Supreme Court lawyers - AM Jamil Hoque, MD Nazmul Huda, Md Mehdi Hassan and AKM Ehsanur Rahman collectively submitted another petition.

The petitioners said it has been noticed from different media reports that certain private hospitals and clinics have refused to treat patients without Covid-19 test results.

Citing the DGHS directives, the lawyers said all hospitals must have separate arrangements for treating suspected Covid-19 patients and private hospitals and clinics cannot refuse treatment to patients, Covid-19 or otherwise, if they have the requisite facilities or equipment.

Advocate Manzill Murshid appeared for Mahbubul Islam, Barrister Mahfuzur Rahman Million argued for Justice Watch Foundation, Advocate Yeadiya Zaman stood for Dr Sheikh Abdullah Al Mamun and other lawyers, who are petitioners, placed arguments in support of their own petitions.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alarm, Additional Attorney General Murad Reza and Deputy Attorney General Amir Talukder represented the state during the virtual hearing on the petitions.

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-janasas 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 Chhararpar area after Johr 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-janasas 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 Chhararpar of Sylhet city.

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

a municipality commissioner for 15 years.

Kamran was elected general secretary of Sylhet town AL in 1989. He was re-elected to the post in 1992 and 1997.

After staying abroad for several years, he returned home and won an election to become Sylhet municipality chairman in 1995.

In 2002, the municipality was upgraded to a city corporation and Kamran was made the acting city mayor.

The following year, he was elected the first mayor of the city. In 2008, he won a second term in office despite contesting the polls from behind bars.

Kamran had led Sylhet city AL from 2002 to 2019 as its president.

The ruling party leader had survived a grenade attack on a meeting of its city unit at Hotel Gulshan of Taltola area on August 7, 2004. The attack had left many injured, said media reports.

He escaped another grenade attack on December 2, 2005, during the prize giving ceremony of a badminton tournament in Sylhet city's Tilagarh area. The grenade did not blast.

Both the attacks were carried out by banned militant outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad, according to confessions by some arrested militants.

Yesterday, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun, Law Minister Anisul Huq, Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam and Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh expressed deep sorrow at the death Kamran.



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 Razbazar.

"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 risks 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 Ahmedul Sujon contributed to this report)

OIC COVID-19 RESPONSE

KSA seconds Bangladesh's plan

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Saudi Arabia has endorsed Bangladesh's proposal to form a Covid-19 Response and Recovery Plan to save lives and livelihoods in the member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud agreed to the proposal during a phone conversation with his Bangladeshi counterpart AK Abdul Momen yesterday, said a foreign ministry statement.

He told the Saudi minister that a special virtual meeting was imperative to discuss and finalise the issues for creating the fund, an idea that was floated by Bangladesh during the meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the Level of Foreign Ministers on the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic and joint response on April 22 via video conference.

Momen said Turkey, a powerful member of OIC, has already agreed to establish the fund, which is important to recover the economy, socio-economic stability, and save the lives and livelihoods.

A response and recovery plan, among others, can play a crucial role in training and jobs creation of the migrant workers who could be jobless due to the pandemic, the minister told his Saudi counterpart.

Several lakh Bangladeshi migrants could face forced return after losing their jobs in the Middle East and Southeast Asian countries.

As operations of international flights have been suspended for nearly two months, many of the passengers, especially the migrant workers, remained stranded in those countries.

Momen said as the international travellers need to go through quarantine, Bangladesh would bring its nationals, who want to return, in phases. His Saudi counterpart also consented to it.

Those who had gone to Saudi Arabia for performing umrah or hajj, students, and women domestic workers stranded there would be given priority, he said.

During the conversation, Momen said Saudi Arabia could redeploy the Bangladeshi migrants in the farming and fisheries sectors for food production as food shortage looms large because of coronavirus pandemic.

If the Saudi companies invest in agriculture in other countries, Bangladeshis can be a great help in that, he added. Besides, Bangladesh also has a huge pool of IT professionals who could be recruited by the Saudi companies, he said.

The Saudi minister has shown interest in the proposal, said the foreign ministry statement.

Momen also proposed that Saudi Arabia can import halal meat from Bangladesh.

Besides, the two countries can also go for a joint venture project in meat production. Saudi Arabia can also import vegetables and personal protection equipment from Bangladesh, Momen added.

US Air Force F-15 fighter jet crashes in North Sea

AFP, London

A US fighter jet on a training mission from a British Royal Air Force base in eastern England crashed in the North Sea yesterday.

"A US Air Force F-15C Eagle crashed at approximately 0940 (0840 GMT) today (Monday) in the North Sea," said USAF Captain Miranda T. Simmons, from RAF Lakenheath.

"The cause of the crash as well as the status of the pilot are unknown at this time, and UK Search and Rescue have been called to support."

The plane took off from the RAF Lakenheath base, near Mildenhall, in Suffolk, which hosts the 48th Fighter Wing of the US Air Force.

The BBC said the plane was believed to have gone down 74 nautical miles (137 kilometres) off the East Yorkshire coast.

2 more cops die

FROM PAGE 1

Mukul of Gopalganj's Charkhuli village left behind his wife, three daughters, and a son.

The other victim, constable Abul, tested positive while performing his duties at Azampur police outpost of DMP's Uttara division.

He was undergoing treatment at Rajarbagh Central Police Hospital and he died around 4:12am, said PHQ officials.

Abul from Netrakona's Joypasha village left behind his wife and two daughters.

The victims' bodies were sent to their respective villages and they will be buried in their family graveyards following WHO protocols.

Meanwhile, the number of police personnel contracted the virus across the country reached 7,703, according to the PHQ.

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.

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.

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 bad recruitment company named Marafie Kuwaitia.

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