

We will not accept defeat

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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

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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

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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 Yedia 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 Alam, 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

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Later, the body of the veteran AL leader was brought to Sylhet by an ambulance. He was laid to eternal rest at the graveyard 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 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-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 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 Talola 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

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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 enforced.

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 should be under lockdown. "Then we will see whether that certain area meets the criteria for being classified as red zone. If so, we will give the nod."

Asked whether an entire area would be put under lockdown 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 in 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 essential to provide them with zoning maps specifying particular areas so that they can take proper steps.

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

He pointed out that it would require at least 48 hours to enforce lockdown after they get the maps.

The mayor also mentioned that they were facing many challenges while enforcing the "experimental lockdown" in 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 yesterday extended countrywide restrictions on movement of people and "all types of activities" till June 30.

It, however, didn't clarify what it meant by "all types of activities".

No one will be allowed to leave homes from 8:00pm to 6:00am except for emergency. People must wear face masks and follow 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 "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 zone.

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 while the restrictions are in place," 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 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 put the entire Dhaka city under lockdown 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 the matter, 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 Ahmmed Sujon contributed to this report)

Situation dire due to incoordination

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personnel were resulting in almost 30 percent false negative results, it said.

The pandemic has laid bare the weaknesses in the health sector, lack of planning over a long time and absence of good governance, it added.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB, said, "This crisis in the health sector has negatively impacted socio-economic sectors."

The government claimed that there are 399 ICUs for treating Covid-19 patients across the country, but the study found less than 140 functional ones.

The government also claimed that there were 500 ventilators for Covid-19 patients, but the study found only 190.

Treatment of general patients was being disrupted in 53 percent of the hospitals while treatment stumbled due to substandard protective equipment in 71 percent.

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

Medical waste from Covid-19 units were dumped in the open by 30 percent of the hospitals.

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.

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

Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, "There has been a tendency to make bureaucratic decisions by ignoring specific opinions in all cases, including lockdowns."

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

According to the study, no preparation was taken in distribution of relief goods in 20 percent of the 43

districts whereas the list of beneficiaries were not updated in 22 percent districts.

He also said that the tendency to cover up irregularities, corruption and mismanagement through restrictions on disclosure of information encouraged corruption in various ways.

The study found that only five lakh tests were done against 1.1 crore phone calls in the hotline numbers as of June 14.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The TIB made a 15-point recommendation, including arranging adequate tests, reconsidering the decision to revoke the lockdown, coordinating different ministries and government departments, increasing the budget for the health sector by five percent, and ensuring accountability and exemplary punishment against corruption, and triage management in hospitals.

Since the Covid-19 outbreak, a total of 37 journalists have been sued in 67 cases under the Digital Security Act.

"If the government wants to tackle this crisis, the right to get and publish accurate information must not diminish," Dr Iftekharuzzaman said.

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.

Citing a flight tracker website, Sky News television said the plane circled in the area before disappearing.

2 more cops die

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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.