

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

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.

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

Sylhet city ex-mayor Kamran

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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.

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 Chharpur of Sylhet city.

He was elected Sylhet municipality

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.



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.

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 Yeadia Zaman stood for Dr Sheikh Abdullah Al Mamun and other lawyers, who are petitioners, placed arguments in support of their own petitions.

Attorney General Mahbubul Alami, Additional Attorney General Murad Reza and Deputy Attorney General Amit Talukder represented the state during the virtual hearing on the petitions.

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.

MP Shahid 'spills the beans'

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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.

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

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.