

Help govt contain

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has increased so fast on March 29, 30 and 31 which is unthinkable," she said. "So, I would like to tell all people that we will have to check coronavirus again like exactly what we did at the first time to control everything," the PM told parliament while taking part in the discussion on a condolence motion.

The motion was placed during the first sitting of the 12th session of the current Jatiya Sangsad at the death of Awami League MP Mahmud Us Samad Chowdhury (Sylhet-3) who died on March 11.

Hasina said the government was trying to bring the pandemic situation under control. She said assistance from the people was necessary in this regard.

The leader of the House said though the novel coronavirus was largely controlled in Bangladesh initially, the country is now witnessing a sudden surge in infection rate as people are ignoring health guidelines since the launch of the vaccination campaign thinking that nothing would happen to them.

"But I had repeatedly asked people to wear masks and follow the health guidelines even after taking jabs against coronavirus. However, maintaining the health protocol has stopped."

Hasina said attending marriage ceremonies and visiting tourist spots mainly contributed to the sudden surge in the infection rate. She urged people to arrange marriage ceremonies on a limited scale following health guidelines.

"After returning home from offices or other places, people should inhale the steam from hot water by covering their head with a piece of cloth. This can work effectively against coronavirus."

She suggested that people should oil their nose with mustard oil before leaving home.

The premier said her government has already issued some directives to fight the coronavirus outbreak

effectively.

She expressed deep shock at the deaths of lawmaker Mahmud Us Samad Chowdhury, and some noted personalities, including her political adviser HT Imam, and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved families.

She described both Samad Chowdhury and HT Imam as politically conscious persons and recalled their contributions to nation building activities.

Talking about late BNP leader Barrister Moudud Ahmed, six-time MP from Noakhali-5 and Bogura-7, Hasina said he was a very talented person.

"But had it [talent] been used properly with patriotism, he could have given a lot to the country."

She said Moudud had never been appointed as a lawyer in the Agartola Conspiracy Case though he had claimed so. "However, he was with Dr Kamal Hossain and Barrister Amirul Islam at that time."

She said the BNP leader was never involved in the politics of Chhatra League and he always stayed with the ruling party.

"When Moudud returned to Bangladesh in 1969 after completing Barrister-at-Law abroad, sympathy was always showed towards him as a son-in-law of poet Jasimuddin."

Moudud was arrested in 1973 for leaking secret information on Bangladesh to others, the PM said, adding that he was released after poet Jasimuddin requested Bangabandhu in this regard.

After the discussion, the House unanimously adopted the condolence motion, moved by Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam

Sujan, Opposition Chief Whip

Mashiur Rahman Ranga, Awami

League MPs Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim,

Muhammad Faruk Khan, Jatiya Party's

Pir Fazlur Rahman, and BNP's Harunur

Rashid, among others, also took part in the discussion.

Entry ban on passengers

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CAAB made the decision after reviewing the spread of coronavirus in Bangladesh and elsewhere, the circular said.

Airlines operating scheduled flights from the aforesaid countries will be allowed to bring only transit passengers to Bangladesh, given the passengers remain inside the terminal building during their transit.

Special flights to and from Dhaka have been suspended, and depending on the situation, regular flights might also get suspended, CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman told reporters at his office.

The number of passengers on flights within Bangladesh might not be reduced since the airlines are ensuring proper health safety measures, he added.

"The airlines have assured us about maintaining health guidelines," Mafidur said.

Thanks to the precautions, air travel is much safer than traveling by other means, he added.

"We asked the airlines not to carry any more than 260 passengers in wide-bodied [with two or more aisles] planes.

"In an airplane with three seats in a row, the person sitting in the middle must wear a face shield. If that

passenger feels uncomfortable, the airlines will have to provide him or her with PPE."

The circular said everyone coming to Bangladesh must have a certificate vouching that they tested negative for coronavirus in a PCR machine before leaving for Bangladesh, CAAB said in the circular.

The test must be done no earlier than 72 hours of the flight.

Everyone arriving in the country will have to be in quarantine at home for 14 days while those detected with Covid-19 symptoms on arrival must be in quarantine at a government facility or a government approved hotel at their own expenses, CAAB also said.

Anyone who had been in the aforesaid countries in transit and had left the terminal buildings there would need a new PCR test done in that country. The test should be done no earlier than 72 hours of the flight to Bangladesh.

Besides, they would have to be in quarantine at a government facility or a government approved hotel for four days.

Swabs will be collected for another PCR test, and if they test negative for coronavirus, they will be asked to be in home quarantine for an additional 14-day period.

Nine veteran HK activists

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and Margaret Ng, a 73-year-old barrister and former opposition lawmaker.

Media tycoon Jimmy Lai, currently in custody after his arrest under Beijing's new national security law, was among those convicted.

Leung Kwok-hung, an opposition politician known by his sobriquet "Long Hair" who has also been detained on national security charges, was also sent down.

Others are leading members of the Civil Human Rights Front (CHRF), the coalition that organised a series of huge rallies throughout 2019.

Some struck a defiant tone outside court yesterday morning ahead of the verdict, holding banners that read "protest political suppression".

"We are very proud even if we have to go to jail for it," Lee Cheuk-yan, a former legislator and labour leader told reporters. "We will still march on no matter what lies in the future."

Seven were found guilty of organising and knowingly participating in an unauthorised assembly. Two others had previously pleaded guilty.

They face up to five years in jail.

Tufan cannot seek bail

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bail petition with the HC while a rule, issued by the same court earlier on the same case remains pending, was forgery.

Following another bail petition previously filed by Tufan, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman on September 9 last year issued the rule asking the ACC and the state to explain why Tufan should not be granted bail in the case.

Tufan submitted the fresh bail petition before the same bench on March 9 this year through his lawyer Md Shah Alam Sarker suppressing the information of the pending rule issued on September 9 last year.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman rejected both the petitions of Tufan and directed that he cannot seek bail from any court in this

case for six months.

During yesterday's hearing, Tufan's lawyer Shah Alam Sarker apologised to the HC bench for submitting the fresh bail petition.

The lawyer told The Daily Star that he was unaware of the rule issued by the HC.

"Neither Tufan Sarkar nor his family members informed me or gave me documents about the rule," he added.

The HC bench, however, pardoned the lawyer after accepting his apology.

Tufan abducted a student from her home, raped her and then asked his party cadres to make sure it was a secret on July 17, 2017, according to media reports.

In their attempt to silence the victim, they picked up the student and her mother, tortured them for four hours and then shaved their heads, the reports said.

USSR urges Yahya to stop bloodshed

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Soviet Union by the arrests and persecution of [Bangabandhu Sheikh] Mujibur Rahman and other politicians who had received such convincing support by the overwhelming majority of the population of East Pakistan at the recent general elections."

Podgorny urged for adoption of "the most urgent measures" to stop the bloodshed and repressions against the population in East Pakistan and for turning to methods of a peaceful political settlement.

PAKISTAN WARNS INDIA

Pakistan today warned India that "serious consequences" could result from Indian actions that Pakistan regarded as grave interference in her internal affairs.

The warning was delivered by the Pakistan foreign office in Islamabad through the Indian high commission there to New Delhi. It protested Indian sympathy and support for an East Pakistan "secessionist movement" that the Pakistan government is trying

to suppress. This was Pakistan's third formal protest in a week to India over the East Pakistan situation.

Today's communication was a formal protest against the adoption of a resolution by the Indian parliament expressing solidarity with and support for the Bangladesh independence movement. New charges of Indian assistance to the resistance forces were also made today in Islamabad.

JINJIRA MASSACRE

To flee the massacre in Dhaka, a large number of people fled to Keraniganj, on the other side of the Buriganga river. The Pakistan army, now in control of Dhaka city after the crackdown of March 25, marked Keraniganj and surrounding areas as a target for military operation.

The areas were also inhabited by a large number of Hindu families. The Pakistan army started to amass forces around Keraniganj from midnight of April 1. At around 5:00am, they signalled the attack by throwing flares from the roof of the mosque adjacent

to the Mitford Hospital.

The army moved into Jinjira, Kalindi and Shubbhadya of Keraniganj and opened fire on people. The massacre continued for nearly nine hours. About 1,000 people were killed in the operation. On the night of April 2, Pakistan Television broadcast news about strong military action against "separatist miscreants" taking shelter at Jinjira of Keraniganj on the other side of Buriganga.

On April 3, The Morning News came up with the headline, "Actions taken against miscreants at Jinjira".

RED CROSS AID BARRED

The International Committee of the Red Cross had been refused authorisation by the Pakistani government to send a relief team with eight tonnes of medical and other supplies to Bangladesh, a spokesman said today.

Shamsudoza Sajen is a journalist and researcher. He can be contacted at sajen1986@gmail.com

All local body polls postponed

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The commission postponed the by-polls to Laxmipur-2 constituency, the first phase of union parishad and sixth phase of municipality elections due to the coronavirus situation, EC Additional Secretary Ashok Kumar Debnath told reporters after the meeting at the EC office in the capital.

All the elections were slated for April 11.

The polls will be held after the situation improves, he added.

On March 3, the EC announced the schedule of by-polls to the Laxmipur-2 constituency as the parliamentary seat of independent lawmaker Mohammad Shahid Islam alias Kazi Papul got vacated after his conviction in Kuwait in a criminal offence.

On the same day, it was also announced that polls will be held in 371 union parishads in the first phase and 11 municipalities in the sixth phase.

Integration has a long way to go

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working as an intern office assistant at a local office of the directorate of social services.

"I used to be treated as a burden for my community. Now, I am earning and supporting my parents. My community gets to know that disorder like autism does not make a person invalid. We can work, we can earn if we are included in society," he said.

INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES
Sanzid considers himself lucky to have gotten access to these specialised learning facilities as children with autism in this society face indescribable discrimination and challenges in integrating at mainstream schools and society.

Although legislation in the country provides for equal access to quality education, children with disabilities are rejected by most schools, ultimately reducing their chances of employment.

A disability identification survey by the Ministry of Social Welfare, updated on its website as of yesterday, counts 60,983 children and adults living with autism in Bangladesh.

However, a 2017 survey conducted by the Institute of Paediatric Neuro-disorder and Autism (IPNA) of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), indicates the number of persons with autism is much higher.

Its survey revealed that 17 out of every 1,000 children aged between 17-30 months in urban areas, and 14 per every 1,000 children in rural areas in the same age group had this condition.

Salma Begum, consultant of Autistic Children's Welfare Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation run by parents of children with disabilities, said, "Inclusive education for children with autism still has a long way to go in our country."

"Most schools do not agree to enrol children with autism. They say that if

they enrol these children, their non-disabled students might be affected. Parents of non-disabled children also create obstacles when we go to enrol our children."

As a result, in most cases, parents like her have to go to special schools where their children study alongside others with various types of neuro-developmental disorders, she added.

Autism is recognised as a neuro-developmental disorder (NDD) in Bangladesh and is treated along with three other types of NDDs -- cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and intellectual disability.

More than six years on from the formation of the Neurodevelopmental Disability Protection (NDDP) Trust, a government organisation under the social welfare ministry tasked with ensuring inclusion of children with NDD, its activities are hardly visible and restricted to arranging some workshops and seminars.

NDDP Trust Chairman Prof Dr Md Golam Rabbani said, "We don't have any permanent staff yet. We are in the process of recruiting officers to become fully operational."

"I know many people with autism and other NDDs who have been employed and are doing fairly well in their workplace. They are extremely honest, diligent, and punctual; if they are taught to do a particular task, they will do it with extreme perfection."

Prof Dr Gopen Kumar Kundu, deputy director of BSMMU's IPNA and a deputy director of the autism cell at the health ministry, said, "One of the main characteristics of children with autism is they face difficulties in communication and in social interaction. Sometimes they become very angry and show repetitive behaviour."

"However, if autism can be detected within the age of three and speech and occupational therapy can be ensured timely, most of these difficulties can be overcome. In this way, a person with

has locked their NID cards. Many became voters in two places without knowing. Again, many have given different names, addresses, dates of birth in two places to become "dual voters".

In the meeting's working paper, the EC has instructed the field-level officials to lodge cases against 1,058 people who have taken two NID cards and so far cases were filed against 556 people.

In another development, the meeting also decided that it would send letters to all the registered political parties, asking them about the progress in achieving the target of 33 percent women representatives by 2020, said Ashok.

This move was made following an amendment to incorporate this provision into the Representation of the People's Order (RPO) in 2008, and failure to meet this means the EC can cancel registration of a political party, according to EC officials.

80pc turnout

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an unidentified group of people attacked Ghosh's vehicle with bricks and bamboo sticks, and also vandalised cars of media personnel, a police officer said.

Mamata, who is camping in Nandigram, visited several booths across the constituency and slammed the Election Commission for "inaction" despite her party lodging several polls-related complaints and threatened to move the law courts over it.

The Election Commission sought a detailed report from the administration in connection with an incident of violence in Boyal area in Nandigram where Mamata paid a visit to oversee the polling process.

As soon as Mamata reached Boyal, BJP supporters started chanting "Jai Shri Ram".

Supporters of Trinamool Congress and BJP then got embroiled in skirmishes and TMC leaders demanded re-polling in booth number 7, police said.

"We have lodged 63 complaints since morning. But no action has been taken. We will move the court over it. This is unacceptable," Mamata said while sitting in a wheelchair outside a booth in Boyal.

"The EC is working on the instructions of [Indian Home Minister] Amit Shah," she alleged.

From a booth in Nandigram, Mamata spoke to West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar over phone at a polling booth in Nandigram. "... They didn't allow the local people to cast their vote. From morning, I am campaigning... Now I am appealing to you, please see," she could be heard saying in a video footage.

Mamata is looking to return for the third successive term as chief minister in the face of stiff challenge from BJP which is trying to wrest power in West Bengal for the first time.

West Bengal has a total of 294 assembly seats, out of which polling for 30 seats was held in the first phase on March 27.

Six more phases of polling will be held for the remaining seats in April before vote count is taken up on May 2.

UP panel

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then swiftly fled the scene.

Hearing the gunshot, locals rushed to the spot and sent him to Goalanda Upazila Health Complex. He was then shifted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital in Faridpur, he added.

As his condition deteriorated, he was referred to Enam Medical College in Savar where he breathed last around 11:30am yesterday, he further said.

"A bullet was removed from his lower abdomen but he did not survive," he said.

Mohammad Abdullah Al Taybir, officer-in-charge of Goalanda Ghat Police Station, said they visited the spot on information and were trying to detain the miscreant.

No case was filed in this connection till 5:30pm yesterday when this report was filed.

Over a lakh lose

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country went into a lockdown.

Since then he turned to his bike to provide him with the means to feed his family.

"This decision is not just bad for me, it can literally mean that my family has to starve to death," said the former RMG worker.

"I live with my wife and two kids, and I have to support my younger brother who is a college student. It is the beginning of the month, my house rent is Tk 8,000, and it is due in ten days but if I spend whatever money I have on rent, I will not have anything left to feed my family with," said Al-Amin.

His former colleague Abdul Kuddus is at a similar quandary. After losing his RMG job to the pandemic, Kuddus had taken his bike to the road.

"It feeds me, my two children and my old mother. It helps me put a roof over their heads. If I cannot ride my bike, how can I still afford that roof?" he asked.

Kuddus used to be able to earn around Tk 1,000 for 12 hours of being on the road, but has nothing in savings to tide him over this period.

According to 2019 data that different ride sharing companies submitted to the BRTA, there were some 1.23 lakh cars and motorcycles associated with different ride-hailing companies. Of them, 1.04 lakh were motorcycles.

In addition, BRTA sources said that 23,493 vehicles were enlisted with the BRTA to operate under the ride-sharing services, of which 80 percent are motorcycles.

"We are ready to adopt any and every safety measure needed to make sure our passengers are safe. We can tie rocks to our stomachs and tide this through, but will our families starve to death?" asked the secretary of the Dhaka Ride-Sharing Union Belal Ahmed, while protesting in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

"We implore the policy-makers to come up with a decision that allows us to maintain safety guidelines while earning a livelihood. If they do not want us to be on the road, they have to arrange for relief for all of us," he said.

Govt must carry out impartial investigation

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In the aftermath of the protests, at least five opposition activists were allegedly abducted by members of law enforcement agencies in conditions that may amount to enforced disappearance.

Four of them were presented before the court and charged with violence after more than 24 hours of incommunicado detention while one was freed after more than 80 hours of his disappearance, the statement said.

Activists detained in the context of the protests have also raised allegations of torture and other ill-treatment while in custody.

In addition to violently cracking down on protesters, the authorities have also restricted high-speed internet access and blocked access to social media platforms, including Facebook and Messenger, from March 26 evening to March 30 evening without any formal notice, in contravention of the right to freedom of expression and hindering the ability of people to organise protests and report human rights violations.

"The use of unnecessary and excessive force by law enforcement agencies must end immediately and all

those responsible must be identified and brought to justice in fair trials, without recourse to the death penalty," the statement said.

The ongoing crackdown and mass arbitrary arrests of peaceful protesters must stop and the allegations of torture and enforced disappearances of several protesters must be investigated, it added.

Bangladeshi authorities must respect, protect and fulfill people's human rights, including the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, and must immediately release all those who have been detained and drop all charges against them, the rights bodies demanded.

The organisations called on the UN and the international community to urge the Bangladeshi authorities to respect people's rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

The other right organisations that sponsored the joint statement are: Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM ASIA), Asian Human Rights Commission, Asian Network for Free Elections, Capital Punishment Justice Project (CPJP), CIVICUS, Eleos Justice, International Federation for Human Rights, Robert

F Kennedy Human Rights, The Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances, and World Organisation Against Torture.

Mail servers

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that they have been compromised if such malware was found.

According to Tom Burt, corporate vice president, Customer Security & Trust at Microsoft, the attacks happen in three steps: firstly, the attacker would gain access to an Exchange Server either with stolen passwords or by using the previously undiscovered vulnerabilities to disguise itself as someone who should have access. Secondly, it would create what's called a web shell to control the compromised server remotely. Lastly, it would use that remote access -- run from the US-based private servers --- to steal data from an organisation's network.

The attacker group, HAFNIUM, is primarily known for targeting US industries and businesses. They shot to fame after they started exploiting vulnerability of customer-facing servers. Their activities came to light early this year with an increase in intensity since early March.