

## I don't know if there is oxygen crisis at hospitals

Attorney general tells HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin yesterday told the High Court that he does not know whether there is any oxygen crisis in the hospitals of the country.

Nobody has complained of any oxygen supply crisis in hospitals, he told the bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Sardar Md Rashed Jahangir during hearing.

The bench wanted to hear opinion from him when Ishrat Hasan, a Supreme Court lawyer, prayed to the court to permit her to file a writ petition seeking its directive on the government to ensure adequate supply of oxygen to hospitals by cutting supply to industries to save patients' lives.

Ishrat said India has stopped supply of oxygen to their factories in order to ensure adequate supply to hospitals.

Additional Attorney General Md Mehedi Hassan Chowdhury told the HC the government has ensured sufficient supply of oxygen in hospitals and there is no need to stop oxygen supply to factories.

The HC refused to permit Ishrat to file a petition and said it will allow her to do it if the situation demands later on.



Chattogram Metropolitan Police have identified a number of neighbourhoods in the port city as high-risk areas for Covid-19 transmission. However, amid lack of monitoring, shops are open and a considerable number of people are out on the street of Nayabazar, one of the marked zones.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

## Not much of a 'LOCKDOWN'

Seventh day in capital sees more people amid lax monitoring

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite the government extending the current week-long "lockdown" for another seven days, most of the main roads and intersections in the capital yesterday witnessed increasing number of people and vehicles.

Visiting some key spots like Asad Gate, Mirpur, Mohakhali, Rampura, and Farmgate, this correspondent found that the restrictions seemed to be much more relaxed.

On the seventh day, all types of transport except buses were seen plying the roads while movement of pedestrians also increased.

In some places, police were rarely stopping people for movement pass.

In the morning, a tailback was seen on Mirpur Road near the Technical area as there was a queue of private cars, covered vans, motorbikes and auto-rickshaws. There were gridlocks in quite a few places where police were controlling traffic manually.

Like the other days, rickshaws dominated Dhaka streets yesterday. The scenes at kitchen markets were as usual -- they were teeming with people.

Meanwhile, the alleys remained as crowded as ever since many shops other than groceries and pharmacies were operating their businesses. Many had their shutters half-closed.

Public movement increased in the afternoon as service holders started to head back home. Many also got out of their home to buy Ifar.

With coronavirus cases continue to rise alarmingly from mid-March, the government imposed a nationwide "lockdown" for one week from April 5 as part of its move to contain the virus' spread.

Later, a week-long "stricter lockdown" was declared from April 14, which now got extended till April 28.

## Diarrhoea cases keep rising in Barishal

Saline out of stock across the division; experts say contaminated water caused the crisis

SUSHANTA GHOSH

The diarrhoea situation in Barishal division has become "severe", with cases spreading to 18 out of 40 upazilas in six districts. On top of that, intravenous (IV) fluids like saline have suddenly gone out of stock in many places across the division.

Health officials say that contaminated water is the cause for this crisis. They have confirmed that Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) found the bacterium E coli in stools of patients.

Meanwhile, medical services are being disrupted due to insufficient supply of saline, as both the private sector and the government are finding it hard to meet demand.

According to Barishal Divisional Health Office, 32,183 people suffered from diarrhoea in the last three months in six

districts of the division. In the last month, 17,672 people got diarrhoea. In the last week, an average of 1,100 patients were admitted every day, but that has increased to more than 1,500 in the last 24 hours.

Bhola is the most affected district. It saw 8,090 admissions from the beginning of this year till yesterday, and 4,252 of them were in the last month. Among the patients, four died in Bakerganj upazila, two in Barguna and two in Patuakhali in the last week, according to divisional health office's tally till yesterday afternoon.

Dr Basudeb Kumar Das, director of the health office, said pollution of river water has increased, and as a result, people are contracting waterborne diseases.

"Although diarrhoea is a symptom of Covid-19, we are still not sure if the cases are due to Covid-19. So far, the number of

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## BITID to get five ICU beds, new laboratory to test Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

In order to treat critically ill Covid-19 patients, five ICU beds are being installed at Bangladesh Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases (BITID) in Chattogram.

Besides, a new RT-PCR laboratory is also being set up at the hospital to increase its testing capacity.

Currently there is no ICU facility at BITID, which has a 32-bed ward dedicated for Covid-19 patients.

So critical patients who need ICU support are either referred to Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) or Chattogram General Hospital (CGH), said hospital sources.

Meanwhile, the work to set up the ICU beds and laboratory started from Sunday, being implemented by Public Works Department. Officials expect the ICU beds will be set up within two weeks while the laboratory by six weeks.

BITID, located at Fouzdarhat of Sitakunda upazila, is the first hospital in Chattogram region that started Covid-19 testing in its lone RT-PCR laboratory when the pandemic broke out in the country in March last year.

At that time, samples from eight districts used to be tested there, said sources at the hospital. It is also the

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## COVID-19 SITUATION IN CHATTOGRAM

### Test numbers fall but positivity rate higher

Experts cite shutdown of int'l flights, lack of transportation for the scenario

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

In the week before the enforcement of the strict lockdown on April 14, Chattogram's rate of infection was hovering around 12 percent to 20 percent. But in the days since then, the rate has jumped up.

However, although the rate of infection has increased, the gross number of positive cases has decreased this week, creating confusion in city dwellers as to whether the pandemic's severity is intensifying or diminishing.

But experts say it's neither. According to them, the situation this week is almost the same as the previous week. The numerical dilemma is caused by some other factors, they say, such as fewer number of people getting tested.

For example, one of the things that

changed this week is that patients with mild symptoms have stopped coming for testing due to the unavailability of public vehicles, experts said. Only those who are quite certain of their symptoms are coming to medical facilities for testing.

On the other hand, sample testing of international returnees has decreased due to the shutdown of regular international flights. Back when flights were running, all inbound passengers were being tested upon landing, which meant more tests and more negative cases.

Yesterday, 347 positive cases detected out of 1556 samples, at a positivity rate of 22.3 percent. On Monday, 293 people tested positive out of 1,138 samples, putting the rate of positivity at 25.74 percent. On

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## Nine Bangladeshis make 'Forbes 30 under 30 Asia'



TOGGLE DESK

For the first time, a total of nine Bangladeshis have made the "Forbes 30 under 30 Asia 2021" list.

Launched in 2011 by the business magazine Forbes, the annual list picks movers and shakers of different industries among thousands of candidates who are under the age of 30, with 30 honorees selected for each of the 10 categories.

From 2016 till 2020, a total of nine Bangladeshis got themselves listed for their outstanding work. This year alone, nine Bangladeshis got listed for their work in three sectors: enterprise technology, social impact, and retail and e-commerce.

The nine are Mir Sakib (28), founder of the start-up Cramstack; Shehzad Noor Taus Priyo (24) and Motasim Bir Rahman (26), co-founders of the start-up Gaze; Shomy Chowdhury (26) and Rijve Arefin (26), co-founders of non-government organisation Awareness 360; Ahmed Imtiaz Jami (27), founder of Obhizatrik Foundation; Rizvana Hredita (28) and Md Zahir

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## ROAD ACCIDENTS

### Five killed, 17 injured in three districts

STAR REPORT

Five people were killed and at least 17 others injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Cumilla, three people were killed and at least 15 injured when a Dhaka-bound container trailer hit a truck parked beside a road at Atgram in Chaudagram upazila.

Following the collision, the truck overturned and the trailer crashed into a roadside restaurant after running over a motorcycle, said highway police.

The deceased were identified as trailer driver Peyar Ahmed (37), trucker's helper Alamgir Hossain (35) and a 35-year-old motorcycle rider, said Sub-inspector Md Ayiub of Mia Bazar Highway Police Outpost.

Highway police said Peyar and Alamgir died on the spot and the biker succumbed to his injuries at Cumilla Medical College Hospital.

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Lines of people wait on both sides of a walkway near Central Shaheed Minar, inside the circles drawn for maintaining social distancing, to get food being distributed by some organisations. At a time when livelihoods are disappearing, such kind initiatives are of paramount importance.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



With a heat wave sweeping the country, day temperature is nearing 40 degrees Celcius, and many low-income people are finding it hard to cope with the weather. A timber trader takes a nap at his shop as business also remains slow, due to the double whammy of Ramadan and lockdown. The photo was taken yesterday from Sanarpur area on the outskirts of the capital.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## Those who saved lives at the cost of their own

A tale of the medical team of then Sylhet Medical College during the Liberation War

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

"Don't just chant slogans and hold processions; form an emergency first-aid squad and prepare for massive bloodshed."

These were the instructions of Dr Shamsuddin Ahmed for his students on March 21, when then East Pakistan was preparing for a long struggle for freedom.

The doctor, then head of the department of surgery at Sylhet Medical College, was almost certain that something bad was about to happen, and it did. Pakistan army's genocide started on the night of March 25.

Dr Shamsuddin, intern doctor Shyamal Kanti Lala, ambulance driver Korban Ali and nurse Mahmudur Rahman were among the few healthcare providers at the hospital in the early days of the

Liberation War.

And for their loyalty to the service, they were brutally killed at the hospital by Pakistan army on April 9, 1971.

Their heroic tale has been engraved at Sylhet's Martyred Intellectual Graveyard and in many articles, including "Ora Daktar Mereche (They Killed Doctors)", published in Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni's edited "Banglar Bani" newspaper in 1972. It was then included in one of the eight volumes of "Bangladesher Swadhinata Juddher Dalilpatra".

Sylhet Medical College, which was later named after General MAG Osmani, was at Chowhatta area, presently where Saheed Shamsuddin Ahmed Hospital is located.

After March 25, numerous

injured patients used to get admitted to the hospital, and the team of Dr Shamsuddin put their heart and soul into treating them.

Meanwhile on March 27, 1971, a resistance army of people from different backgrounds was formed under the leadership of retired Lt Col Mohammad Abdur Rab, Major Chitta Ranjan Dutta and politician Manik Chowdhury.

The resistance defeated Pakistan army in several frontline battles, and by April 7, freed all of Sylhet division, except Sylhet town.

When the freedom fighters started attacking Pakistan army to free Sylhet town, more casualties were being reported.

In those days, whenever gunshots were heard, ambulance driver Korban Ali rushed to the spot,

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