

Article 19 lauds tax break for transgender citizens

UNB, Dhaka

Article 19, a UK-based human rights organisation, has appreciated the special tax exemptions for transgender citizens in the proposed budget for 2021-22 fiscal. Initiatives like this will help inclusion of transgender people by increasing their employment opportunity, living standard, and socioeconomic security, it said in a press release yesterday. Faruq Faisal, Regional Director of Article 19 Bangladesh and South Asia, said, "This will increase employment opportunities for transgender persons in the private sector and change the social attitude towards them."

Increasing

FROM PAGE 3 He stressed that policymakers need to take special care to ensure address implementation efficiency. Toufiq Maruf, president of Bangladesh Health Reporters' Forum, emphasised on implementation efficiency and called for restructuring the system. Dr Ubaidur Rob, member of BHW and country director of Population Council, said, "Bangladesh will require approximately USD 1.5 billion to vaccinate citizens adequately. The government can easily opt to take a loan from the reserve without hurting the macroeconomy." Discusants also emphasised having special allocations to confront the recent outbreaks of Covid-19 in border areas. Shishir Moral, special correspondent of Prothom Alo, said the issue of International Health Regulations have been ignored, and policymakers should start thinking about interborder disease control related issues.

MARCH 26 VIOLENCE Hefajat leader Sharafat on two-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A virtual court in Dhaka yesterday placed Mufti Sharafat Hossain, a joint general secretary of then Hefajat's central committee, on a two-day remand in a case filed with Paltan Police Station over the violence occurred centring the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 26. Metropolitan Magistrate Morshed Al Mamun Bhuiyan passed the order after Md Kamrul Hasan Talukder, an inspector of Detective Branch of Police and also the case's investigation officer, produced him before the court with a 10-day remand prayer. Earlier in the day, Mufti Sharafat, also Khelafat Majlish's joint secretary, was shown arrested in the case even though his name was not included in the first information report. Before showing him arrested, the magistrate sent a virtual link to the Keraniganj jail authorities, who are custodians of the accused. In the remand prayer, the IO said Mufti Sharafat was directly involved with the recent violence in Dhaka and he needs to be remanded to find out vital clues about the incident. No lawyer was virtually present to defend him. A team of DB arrested Mufti Sharafat from Mirpur on April 21. He was placed on a five-day remand in a case filed with Paltan Police Station over the 2013 mayhem in Dhaka. Police have so far arrested 22 Hefajat leaders in connection with the recent violence and the 2013 mayhem in Dhaka.

Man arrested

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On January 23, Faruk closed down his three offices including the one for the agent banking and went into hiding, the Rab official said. A victim filed a case with Mirpur Police Station on February 2 in this regard. According to Rab, Faruk, who studied up to SSC, arrived in Dhaka in 2014 and started working as an employee at a shop of mobile financial service in 2014. One year later, he started a shop of his own and in 2018, he ran an agent banking service in Mirpur-2 through which he misappropriated Tk 10 crore.

Release jailed

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Hossain Selim and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim came up with the order during hearing an appeal filed by Kulsuma challenging her conviction handed by the trial court concerned and a petition filed on behalf of Minu seeking necessary directives including that of release and compensation. During yesterday's hearing, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin told the HC bench that the perpetrators need to be identified and punished. Lawyer Iqbal Hossain, who moved the appeal, told the HC bench that he does not know Kulsuma and her family, but he received the appeal of Kulsuma from Public Prosecutor MA Naser, his junior lawyers and lawyer-assistant. On March 22, the court of Chattogram's 4th Additional Metropolitan Session Judge Shariful Alam found that Minu, now 33, from Sitakunda upazila in Chattogram, has been in jail since 2018 instead of convicted Kulsuma, from Lohagora upazila of the same district, in a case filed for killing one Kohinur Begum. Kohinur, an RMG worker, was killed in her rented house in port city's Rahmatganj area on July 9, 2006 following an altercation over a mobile phone. A case was lodged over the murder with Kotwali Police Station and police arrested one Kulsuma Akhter and sent her to jail in 2007. She later came out of jail on bail. On November 30, 2017, a court in Chattogram sentenced Kulsuma to life-term imprisonment in absentia after trial. During yesterday's hearing, Minu's lawyer Shishir Manir prayed to the HC to direct the authorities concerned to conduct a judicial enquiry to find out how she was allowed to serve jail sentence instead of convicted Kulsuma, who are responsible for the incident and to release Minu from jail immediately. He also urged the HC to order the law enforcers to arrest Kulsuma and ask the jail authorities to introduce biometric fingerprint system for the purpose of properly identifying convicted or accused persons.

Indian variant

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In Khulna, there was a central oxygen system with 5 kilolitre (kl) capacity at Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH), which has been upgraded to 10 kl by Linde Bangladesh recently, said KMCH Director (in-charge) Dr Bidhan Chandra Ghosh. However, the capacity is still below demand at the 500-bed hospital, which sees 1,200 patients daily on average, he said. The government has provided a 5 kl-capacity central oxygen system. Once it is installed, the demand would be mostly met at KMCH, said Dr Bidhan. In a recent visit to KMCH, our Khulna correspondent found that the oxygen tank for the system has been lying there for around six months. Installation of the second oxygen system will start soon, as the process of sanctioning Tk 97 lakh for that purpose is underway, said Ashutosh Karmakar, executive engineer of Health Engineering Department, Khulna. KMCH has a 20-bed ICU unit and 14 high-flow nasal cannulas, said sources. Dr Rashida Sultana, director (health) of Khulna division, said the division's treatment facilities are sufficient to tackle the new Covid-19 threat. However, according to respective civil surgeons, only Khulna, Satkhira, Meherpur, Kushtia, Chuadanga and Narail have central oxygen system. The division has a total of 49 ICU beds and 304 high-flow nasal cannulas, said Dr Rashida. But this correspondent found 46 ICU beds operational, and the division has only 88 active high-flow nasal cannulas. Five districts -- Jhenidha, Magura, Chuadanga, Bagerhat and Narail -- have no ICU facility, said civil surgeons concerned. After the border was closed, some people were detained by Border Guard Bangladesh while they were entering the country through bordering areas in Jhenidha, Kushtia and Satkhira. A total of 40 Covid-19 patients have so far been identified with the Indian variant as of yesterday, according to the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR). Almost all the patients infected with the Indian variant are from Rajshahi and Khulna divisions, they added. Eight of them had no recent record of visiting India, suggesting local transmission, according to health officials. Asked, Prof Ridwanur Rahman, a medicine and infectious disease specialist, told The Daily Star, "We need to take steps to reduce the rapid spreading of the deadly virus as well as the death rate." "Lockdown should be imposed immediately in the respective district when the infection rate rises above 15 percent," he said. Besides, he said capacity and oxygen supply of the hospitals of those districts, currently vulnerable to mass spreading of the virus, must be increased. [Our correspondents from Khulna, Bagerhat and Jhenidha contributed to this report]

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