

RAJSHAHI MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL

High-flow oxygen, ventilators elusive

Hospital director says they've the support, but need more trained staff to operate those

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

The cries could be heard even from outside the gate of ward-15 of Covid-19 unit at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital on Sunday.

It was 1:45pm, and none seemed perturbed by the ceaseless sound.

"Probably someone died. Death has become a normal occurrence here....," said a patient's attendant.

He was right.

At the other corner of the ward's balcony, sitting beside her mother, Shampa Akter was weeping.

The tenth grader was repeatedly pushing her mother's body, lying still on a hospital bed with an oxygen mask on her face. At times, Shampa was carefully touching her face in an attempt to get a response.

But her mother Rawshan Ara (38) lay motionless.

Slowly, the harsh realisation that she is longer with them sank in.

Beside Shampa, her father Shahidul Islam was standing with his eyes full of tears. "She passed away moments ago. I couldn't save her," said Shahidul of Raninagar upazila of Naogaon.

Rawshan, a Covid-19 patient, was asymptomatic until Saturday when she

started having breathing congestion at her home.

She was taken to Atrai health complex that night and given support of cylinder-supplied oxygen there, Shahidul said.

Her condition did not improve in three hours. Doctors advised the family to take her to RMCH for better treatment as the cylinder-supplied oxygen at the health complex was not sufficient for her, Shahidul said quoting the doctors.

He took her to RMCH around 4am on Sunday when her oxygen saturation level went down to 70 percent.

But the ward where Rawshan was admitted had no high flow nasal cannula (HFNC) in place for supporting critical patients. There was only the hospital's central oxygen supply line and some oxygen concentrators, said the ward's staff members.

"We came for better treatment, but here too my wife received similar treatment," said Shahidul.

Like Rawshan, at least 40 percent of Covid-19 patients have been coming to RMCH in critical condition with their oxygen saturation level around 65 percent, said doctors and staffers.

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

HUNGER HITS HARDER THAN FEAR ... With Trading Corporation of Bangladesh resuming their fair-price sales of essentials across the country, low-income people -- who have been hit hardest economically because of the lockdown -- are flocking to the TCB trucks to get the best value for money. Social distancing was the furthest thought on their mind as hundreds waited in jam-packed lines in the capital's DIT Road yesterday.

32 more dengue cases reported

UNB, Dhaka

Amid a gradual spike in dengue cases, following the trend of previous years during monsoon, Bangladesh reported 32 new cases in the last 24 hours until yesterday morning.

The recent spike in cases has become a cause of concern when the country continues to grapple with the devastating second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

A total of 124 patients diagnosed with dengue are currently receiving treatment at different government and private hospitals across the country as of Monday morning, according to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Thirty-two new patients were admitted to different hospitals in Dhaka in 24 hours until yesterday morning, and no one was reported to be hospitalised outside Dhaka during the period.

So far, 536 patients have been admitted to different hospitals with dengue since January, and of them, 412 have been released after recovery.

Health authorities reported 1,193

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Involve flat owners' associations in anti-mosquito drive: Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday urged all DSCC councillors to incorporate all flat owners' associations in the anti-mosquito drive to make it more effective.

The mayor made the call at a virtual meeting on "Review of anti-mosquito drive at field-level to prevent dengue virus" with relevant officials and employees of the corporation.

"Talk with flat owners' associations of different buildings; ask their presidents and general secretaries to allow city corporation workers to spray adulticide and larvicide. We are observing that different containers, including plastic bottles and pots that remain at different places of a building, are playing a good role in spreading Aedes mosquitoes," the mayor said.

He said it is important to clean small open spaces in between buildings and spray insecticide there, as many discarded bottles, pots and other containers are turning into breeding grounds during this rainy season.

Aedes mosquitoes breed in the water of those containers within a few days, he said.

He also urged people to observe places at the rooftop and window ledges, where rainwater remains stagnant.

Calling upon women ward councillors, Taposh said, "You can enter any house easily. You will make scope for drive workers to enter houses that have a large number of flower tubs or rooftop gardens."

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Hasina greets Raushan, GM Quader for Eid

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday greeted opposition leader in parliament Raushan Ershad and Jatiya Party chairman and deputy leader of the opposition GM Quader on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.

GM Quader received his card from PM's protocol officer-2 M Abu Jafar Raju at his Uttara residence, according to a media release issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Raju handed over the card for Raushan to her private secretary AKM Abdur Rahim Bhuiyan at Raushan's Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban office, the release added.



Lockdown even more relaxed on sixth day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of vehicles and people increased on the city streets and elsewhere of the country yesterday -- the sixth day of the 14-day countrywide strict lockdown, defying government's instructions to stay home amid an alarming surge of Covid-19 cases.

More people were seen on the main streets as well as in the alleys compared to the past few days.

Besides, people were seen gathering at kitchen and grocery markets, disregarding health rules of wearing face-masks and maintaining social distance.

Police, Rapid action Battalion (Rab) and army personnel, deployed to enforce the strict restrictions, were seen checking movement of people and vehicles at different points of the capital.

A traffic inspector told The Daily Star that the number of vehicles is higher than Monday, as many offices dealing with emergency services remained open.

A number of people have been detained by law enforcers yesterday, as they failed to show valid reasons. Besides, more cases were also filed for flouting lockdown curbs.

Traffic congestion was seen in some

places of the capital. The presence of rickshaws and cars increased on different streets too.

People also thronged different areas including Agargaon, Bosila, Mohammadpur, Asadgate, Farmgate and Karwan Bazar. Many passengers had to pay higher rickshaw fares.

SM Bazlur Rashid, assistant commissioner (traffic) of Motijheel zone, said, "We are checking and taking legal measures against vehicles and drivers coming out without valid reason."

In Chattogram, the number of commuters and private vehicles has been on the rise in the port city roads since Monday. Movement was little in the first four days of the lockdown.

People were seen going out without any necessity or by giving excuses. Many were seen without face-mask. Although the administration and law enforcers are apprehending and fining many daily, it did not prove to be enough to keep people at home.

Under this circumstance, the district administration announced a joint drive yesterday, which would continue till Wednesday.

Mominur Rahman, deputy

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TOWARDS A CRIME FREE SOCIETY

Capital punishment can't be the only solution: CJ

SC commutes death sentence of two convicts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain yesterday said the society cannot be made crime-free by only giving rigorous punishments like death sentence and life imprisonment.

"Only the hanging (execution of death sentence) cannot protect the society," he said while presiding over a full bench of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court for virtually hearing and disposing of appeals in connection with some murder cases.

"The law and order situation of our country is not worse than that of India in any manner. A total of 121 death sentences took place in India in 2019 and 327 death

sentences took place in Bangladesh in that year," the chief justice said.

He also said, "Death sentence or life imprisonment are being given to husbands for killing wives in around 80 percent cases here (Bangladesh). Did the offence of killing wives reduce here? So, it's a wrong idea that the society will be free of crimes by punishments."

The chief justice, however, did not disclose any suggestion for making the society crime free.

With making the observation, the Appellate Division led by the chief justice commuted death sentence of a convicted husband to life imprisonment in a case filed for killing his wife and commuted

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

BNP: Govt trying to obstruct Khaleda's treatment abroad

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday alleged that the government is deliberately trying to obstruct the advanced treatment of its ailing chairperson Khaleda Zia.

"Our leader Khaleda Zia is seriously ill. When her family members submitted an application to send her abroad in last May, the law minister said Khaleda Zia's travel abroad was possible only if the conditions under which she was released were revised," said party organising secretary Syed Emran Saleh Prince.

Speaking at a press conference at BNP's Naya Paltan central office, he said the law minister's remarks were published in various international media, including BBC and Al-Jazeera, and also in the local media.

But now he (the law minister) is saying it's not possible to make a U-turn. It shows that the government is deliberately obstructing the treatment of our leader, he said.

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Carrying passengers on motorbikes is prohibited during the lockdown, but these two sitting on the back were going to Mawa from Sonir Akhra yesterday. This was not an isolated case. Many are hiring bikes for up to thrice the regular fare to go to village homes ahead of Eid. The two had paid Tk 1,200 for the rather risky ride.

MOGHBAZAR BLAST

Death toll now 12 as another injured dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The death toll from the Moghbazar explosion rose to 12 as another injured died in a Dhaka hospital on Monday night, nine days after the incident.

Subhas Chandra Saha (62) breathed his last around 10pm while undergoing treatment at the Intensive Care Unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said Inspector Bachchu Mia, in-charge of DMCH police outpost.

Saha was sitting in a bus when the explosion took place on June 27.

With injuries in different parts on his body, he was admitted to the hospital on that day. As his condition deteriorated, he was shifted to the ICU, said Bachchu.

Accumulated gas was behind the massive explosion, officials and experts said after primary investigation.

Police filed a case against unidentified people for deaths caused due to negligence on Tuesday but none were arrested yet. Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit of DMP is now investigating the case.



Bamboos protrude out of a gape on a major thoroughfare in the capital's Jatrabari, that sees heavy vehicle traffic ply. These have been here apparently for weeks, according to locals. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

ABDUCTING, EXTORTING BUSINESSMAN

PBI to press charges against 6 constables

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) is going to press charges against six suspended police constables of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) who were arrested for extorting money after abducting a businessman in Anwara upazila.

Investigators said arrested constable Md Masud, former bodyguard of a deputy commissioner (DC) of CMP, is the mastermind of the crime and they did it to embezzle the gambling money of victim's younger brother.

Police officials also said they found evidence against the former police personnel after recording deposition of witnesses and circumstantial evidence while investigating the case filed with Anwara Police Station.

Earlier, Anwara police arrested constables -- Abdul Nabi, Md Eskandar Hossain, Md Monirul Islam, Md Shakil Khan, Md Masud, and Morshed Billah -- after the six allegedly picking up a contractor named Abdul Mannan from his house on February 4 night and extorted money from him.

Inspector Mohiuddin Selim of PBI, also investigation officer (IO) of the case, told The Daily Star, "We are wrapping up the investigation. We have recorded depositions of around 15 persons who witnessed the incident."

"While investigating the incident and analysing evidence, police found that Masud plotted the crime while five others assisted him to carry it out," said inspector Selim.

PBI sources said Abdul Mannan's younger brother had amassed huge sums of money through online cricket gambling, and constable Masud had learned of the information.

Masud hatched a plot to embezzle the money by picking up Mannan's younger brother, but he was outside of home coincidentally that day.

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