

‘No scope for complacency’ CDC country director warns of future pandemics

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) yesterday warned that while Bangladesh is witnessing zero deaths and a very low Covid positivity rate, there is no scope for complacency.

“Bangladesh has done very well in terms of addressing the pandemic, which can be a lesson for the rest of the world. The rate of vaccination completion in Bangladesh is more than that of the USA,” said Dr Neely Kaydos-Daniels, country director of CDC Bangladesh, at a media briefing at the American Centre.

The US government is a proud partner to this success as it has provided 61 million vaccines as well as, through CDC, supported the country, Dr Neely said.

“But being in one pandemic does not mean



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PRAYER TIMING		APRIL 28			
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4:07		12:45	4:45	6:29	8:00
JAMAAT 4:17		1:15	5:00	6:39	8:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					
SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING		APRIL		SEHRI	IFTAR
RAMADAN		26	28		6:29
		27	29	4:01	6:30
		28	30	4:00	6:30



To start their journey home to celebrate Eid with their loved ones, passengers who bought advance tickets on April 23 rushed to Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday. On the day, trains faced moderate pressure of passengers, with several north-bound trains running behind schedule. Officials said the Eid rush will pick up momentum from today.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

The journey home begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With Eid-ul-Fitr just around the corner, Bangladesh Railway (BR) yesterday started facilitating the home-goers. On the day, trains faced moderate pressure of passengers, with several north-bound trains running behind schedule.

People also left Dhaka by roads and launches yesterday. The Eid journey is likely to get momentum from today.

Government offices will go into a long holiday from Friday, thanks to the weekends and May Day. So, many will leave Dhaka after finishing office to celebrate Eid, likely to be celebrated on May 2 or 3, at their home-towns.

TRAIN SERVICES

Trains passengers, who bought advance tickets on April 23, left Dhaka mainly through Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday.

Riadul Islam, a private-service holder,

said he managed the ticket of Mohonganj Express after waiting for more than eight hours in line.

“However, I am feeling good now, as we are not facing that much hassle to board the train,” he told this correspondent from the train, which left half an hour after the scheduled time.

Some other trains going to northern districts were also running behind schedule.

Rangpur Express, Dhumketu Express, Sundarban Express, Banalata Express and Rajshahi Commuter were among the trains that got delayed by half an hour to one and a half hours, BR sources said.

Although Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan in a recent press conference told reporters that each train during Eid rush will have a separate coach for women, this correspondent did not find any such arrangement after checking four trains yesterday. BR staffers also confirmed that

no such arrangement was made.

Meanwhile, people yesterday collected advance tickets for May 1.

JOURNEY BY BUS, LAUNCH

Many people also left Dhaka by roads and launches. However, there was no major pressure.

People who used Shimulia-Banglabazar, Shimulia-Majhikandi and Aricha-Kazirhat ferry routes faced trouble yesterday due to long tailbacks there.

On Aricha-Kazirhat route, on Jamuna river, service is being hampered due to shortage of ferries. Only three ferries are playing the route. Normally, around 350 vehicles cross the river every day. The number of vehicles doubled during Eid rush, said Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) officials.

On Shimulia-Banglabazar and Shimulia-Majhikandi routes, only eight small ferries remain operational, despite the huge rush

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Don’t repeat syndication Says Civil Society for Migrants on labour migration to Malaysia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Both Bangladesh and Malaysia governments should avert repeating past occurrences, including “syndication”, that led to the closure of the Malaysian market for Bangladeshi workers, said Bangladesh Civil Society for Migrants (BCSM), an alliance of 20 organisations working on migration, in a statement yesterday.

“Instead, migrant workers should be sent through an open and transparent process so that they don’t fall victim to exploitation,” read the statement, voicing concern over a reported fresh attempt to create syndication.

BCSM also said the Malaysian government must hire workers from Bangladesh through a similar open-sourcing process that it follows for other countries.

There is no alternative to creating opportunity for all recruiting agencies instead of a syndicate to ensure transparent, regular, and safe migration

-BCSM

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Avoid syndication
- Transparent process
- Online recruitment

Besides, Bangladesh must have its own online recruitment system and medical test process so that irregularities or syndication cannot take place.

The organisation voiced concern over the lack of visible progress in workers’ recruitment although Bangladesh issued a letter to Malaysia in January over fixing the recruitment process in a joint working group meeting.

Earlier, Bangladesh and Malaysia signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in December last year over labour cooperation, more than three years after Malaysia suspended its market for Bangladesh in September 2018 on allegation of market monopoly by 10 Bangladeshi recruiting agencies.

“There is no alternative to creating

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Two workers busy repairing a car by blocking the width of this road underneath Mayor Hanif flyover. They have turned this portion of the road into a makeshift garage, adding to the heavy congestion in Sayedabad area. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

‘Gas price hike will worsen people’s plight’

CAB tells online conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Increasing gas and power price will make things worse for people, while they are already faced with inflation and price hike, said Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB) in an online press conference they organised yesterday.

They also said the current policy is being conducted in the favour of “some influentials” as the government is not emphasising exploring other options enough and is focused on importing liquefied natural gas (LNG).

In the keynote presentation, CAB vice president Prof M Shamsul Alam said Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) is about to announce a hike in gas price although the technical committee couldn’t come to a logical conclusion behind the need for a hike at the public hearing held

recently.

“We are anxious that the upcoming BERC order will turn out to be a farce,” he said.

Prof Alam said imported LNG’s re-gasification and operational charges should remain unchanged as the technical committee’s proposal to hike the charges is unfair and illogical.

“The prime minister’s principal secretary recently said the government doesn’t want to hike the gas price. However, procedures are ongoing in the meantime,” said CAB president Ghulam Rahman.

“If the government really doesn’t want a price hike, they should call for withdrawing the proposals,” he added.

“We should move to use our local gas instead of importing high priced LNG. While our neighbouring Myanmar and India are exploring gas from the sea, we

are not doing anything even after winning a great sea boundary,” he added.

Ghulam also said prices of daily essentials are already skyrocketing. “If the gas price increases, other essentials, including power, water will also increase, worsening the existing situation.”

Prof Badrul Imam, former faculty member of DU’s geology department, said Bangladesh’s gas production highly depends on the Bibiyana field, which produces 45 percent of the total production. “We need to focus on other fields to improve production by overhauling or augmentation.”

CAB organising secretary Syed Mizanur Rahman conducted the conference, participated by vice president SM Najer Hossain, general secretary Humayun Kabir Bhuiyan and joint secretary Shahnewaz Chowdhury.

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