



Dhaka: One more new coronavirus (COVID-19) positive case was detected in the country over the last 24 hours, while no death was reported after March 25, according to Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

“One more COVID-19 case was detected in the last 24 hours meaning the total number of positive cases has stood at 49,” IEDCR director Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora told a virtual media briefing at her Mohakhali office here yesterday.

Joining the media briefing online, Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque said his ministry has prepared 200 ICU units for COVID-19 patients, while 11 labs have been set up for testing samples of suspected coronavirus cases.

“As many as 17 more labs will be set up as part our efforts for expanding COVID-19 test facilities across the country,” he said.

Referring to the meeting with WHO through a videoconference, the minister said said both the WHO and United Nations lauded the initiatives of Bangladesh to fend off the lethal disease.

Maleque urged the medical professionals to remain present at their respective workplaces during such a critical time of the country to provide healthcare facilities to the people.

“After detection of coronavirus cases in China, we have taken necessary preparations since the first week of January this year to contain the disease in the country,” he added.

The minister elaborated various government initiatives to stem the outbreak of the deadly virus

in Bangladesh.

The measures, he said, include quarantine arrangements, treatment protocol, providing training for medical professionals and health technologists.

Maleque said Bangladesh has a sufficient stock of kits to carry out tests of COVID-19. “Now we’ve 45,000 kits.... and we will get 85,000 kits very soon,” he said.

The minister said the government has already distributed three lakh Personal Protective Equipments (PPE) at different hospitals. “We’re distributing 20,000 to 30,000 PPEs to doctors and nurses every day, and by April, we will get nearly 5 lakh PPEs,” he added.

At present, the country has 500 ventilators, Maleque said, adding that many developed countries do not have sufficient number of ventilators.

At the media briefing, the IEDCR director said after confirmation of the novel coronavirus cases in the country, the number of recovered patients stood at 19.

In the last 24 hours, she said, four coronavirus infected people have recovered, and among them, one is 80-year old and other two is above 60 years.

“So, COVID-19 infected people of ageing group can get recovered,” Dr Flora added.

“We observed that COVID-19 infected patients have taken maximum 16 days for their recovery.... we provide treatment to them as per their symptoms,” she said.

The IEDCR director pointed out that among the recovered patients, one has kidney ailments and “We’ve provided kidney dialysis alongside other necessary treatments for his recovery.”

Since the confirmation of coronavirus positive cases in the country, five people died, the IEDCR sources said.

Prof Flora said IEDCR teams are collecting samples from different hospitals for detecting coronavirus case, and from now on both government and private hospitals will send samples to the IEDCR.

“At the initial stage, only IEDCR performed COVID-19 tests... but the government is now expanding testing facilities in the country for quick detection of the virus cases,” she added.

The IEDCR director said Bangladesh Institute of Tropical and Infectious Diseases (BITID) at Faujdarhat in Chattogram has already started testing of collected samples for quick conformation of coronavirus positive.

As part of the precautionary measures, Prof Flora advised the people to follow social distancing alongside maintaining individual hygienic habits to limit the spread of the COVID-19.

She also called upon the people to strictly follow the directives, particularly to ‘stay at home’, given by the organizations concerned to check the spread of the disease.

“As part of the countrywide measures, we have set up control rooms at the district level to ensure quick access of the people to healthcare facilities” Dr Flora said.

The IEDCR director said foreign countries including China and Singapore, as well as different development partners and local companies and organizations are extending their helping hands by providing various protective equipment and hygienic materials for identifying coronavirus positive cases side by side containing the spread of the disease.

“At the initial stage, we tested only foreign returnees.... now we’re expanding our examining areas. All potential groups of people including professionals, who have to maintain contact with the people, have been brought under testing facilities to detect COVID-19 cases,” she said.

“We have so far tested 1,338 samples with 153 samples in the last 24 hours. The number of total people, who were kept isolation, was 284...now 62 people have been kept in isolation,” Dr Flora said.

The IEDCR director said a total of 36 people were kept at institutional quarantine. “After testing COVID-19, results of all 36 were negative and they were released from quarantine,” she added.

Dr Flora urged to call only the two numbers – 01944333222 and 10655 – which will connect to the other toll-free numbers.

“We have to avoid going outside, most importantly wherever there is a chance of coming in contact with unknown people,” she further said.

The IEDCR director said the people can get their required COVID-19 related information through e-mail iedcrcovid-19@gmail.com and facebook account-ledcr.