



HIGH COMMISSION FOR THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
CANBERRA

6 April 2020

Dear Members of the Bangladesh community in New Zealand,

We are passing through an extra-ordinarily challenging time, owing to Corona virus outbreak. Hundreds of students from Bangladesh are barely continuing online classes with no jobs for sustenance. Hundreds among our Bangladesh community (with various legal status in New Zealand) may have lost casual, part-time jobs and full-time gainful employment and may be now solely dependent on New Zealand public assistance.

In such a trying time, many of our community members and organisations have come forward with innovative ideas to extend support. These include information sharing; peer conversation, telephone consultation for medical advice, and ways to extend community mental health support; modest survival (food and essentials) packs; and even financial assistance, within the limits of local restrictions and their capacity to mobilise resources.

Efforts are also being undertaken to mitigate sufferings of the affected people in Bangladesh in particular day labourers, employed in informal sector and other vulnerable groups at a time when the global economy is entering a period of hibernation of sort. Unemployment of millions of people at home and sustaining the economy are at the focus of our immediate and medium-term measures. The gravity of our challenges may not allow our Government to extend immediate support to Bangladesh expatriates abroad and evacuate the needy ones.

In such a time of need, I encourage, and rather urge, community associations, socio-cultural entities, professional bodies and favourably situated and capable individuals to come forward and play their due role in protecting the vulnerable in whatever manner possible.

While you undertake such humanitarian initiatives and measures voluntarily to mitigate sufferings of some in desperate situation from among the Bangladesh community in New Zealand, you are requested to keep the High Commission in Canberra and Honorary Consul in Auckland and Wellington informed.

Please follow local advice, stay safe and stay connected.

Best wishes,

(Mohammad Sufiur rahman)