



PRESS RELEASE

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HIGH COURT ORDERS REGARDING EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

The High Court today gave orders in a writ filed by Saif Kamal and the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust regarding the lack of emergency medical services being provided by hospitals, clinics and doctors across the country, and the implementation of a national emergency medical service. The respondents are the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, the Directorate of Health Services and the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council.

A Division Bench of the High Court (Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Iqbal Kabir) directed the respondents to explain why the failure to ensure that hospitals and clinics, whether governmental or private, provide emergency medical services to critically injured persons should not be declared to be violation of the fundamental right to access emergency healthcare, part of the right to life.

The Court also asked the Secretary Ministry of Health and the DG Directorate of Health Services to explain why they should not be directed to require hospitals, clinics and doctors to ensure immediate emergency medical services when a critically injured person is brought to them, to forward such persons to the nearest emergency department, and to set up a complaints system.

The Hon'ble Court also issued interim directions

- on the Secretary Ministry of Health and Secretary Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges to report within 3 months on progress on ensuring emergency medical services for traffic accident victims, in particular on including emergency services under the National Road Safety Strategic Action Plan 2014-2016
- on the Secretary Ministry of Health and Secretary Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges to propose guidelines for managing emergency medical services, including running an emergency reporting number, and for creating public awareness of such services through the print and electronic media
- on the Ministry of Health and the DG of the Directorate of Health Services to issue necessary guidelines for protection of "good samaritans" for hospitals, police and others.

The petition was filed by BLAST and by Saif Kamal, a social entrepreneur, who as a 'good samaritan' had tried to ensure emergency medical services from local hospitals for a young man called Arafat, a bus helper, who was killed after being critically injured when a bus ran over him on the Airport Road near Banani Dhaka, and there were no emergency medical services available.

Ms Sara Hossain, with Ms Rashna Imam, Ms Anita Ghazi Islam, Ms Sharmin Akhter and Mr Rezaul Karim, Advocates appeared for the petitioners. Mr. Motahar Hossain Saju, DAG, appeared for the state.

For further information, please contact:

Mahbuba Akhter, DD Advocacy and Communications : mahbuba@blast.org.bd