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Bangladeshi Imam dies from coronavirus in Gambia

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A peripatetic Imam from Bangladesh has died in Gambia, which officials say is the country's first death from coronavirus.

The full identity of the 70-year-old has not been disclosed.

Gambia's health ministry said the Imam was the second recorded case of Covid-19 in the country.

He preached in several other countries before arriving in Gambia on March 13.

The authorities are searching for people who he had contact with and also notified the other countries he had visited.

Gambia's health ministry said in a statement that the Bangladeshi Imam had arrived in the country from Senegal. He was given lodging in the residence of the Bundung mosque in a suburb of the capital, Banjul.

"He was said to have travelled from six other countries

where he was carrying out similar preaching," the statement said.

The Imam was suffering from diabetes. He went to a Banjul health centre and died while being transferred to a hospital by ambulance.

Gambian authorities are also looking for some 15 people who fled from a hotel where they had been quarantined as a precautionary measure after flying in from Britain, the health ministry said.

On Saturday, Gambia decided to close its air and land borders. The West African country is a deep enclave inside Senegal, with an Atlantic seaboard.

The closures have particularly affected the frontier with Casamance, an agricultural region in south Senegal that has become isolated from the rest of the country, leading to a detour of several hundred kilometres (miles) around Gambian territory.