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News Brief

The ongoing restrictions has been extended till 6 am on April 14 to contain the spread of COVID-19, the Cabinet Division issued a notification in this regard.

Inter-district buses will not be allowed to run on Monday (today) and Tuesday across the country before the all-out lockdown is set to be imposed for a week from Wednesday, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said while addressing a press conference yesterday. He urged all, except those involved in emergency services, to stay home during the complete lockdown from April 14 in the greater interest of mankind. He said, the government is continuing its efforts to keep the wheels of livelihood running side by side safeguarding the life. About BNP's allegation that AL is creating history of its own, the Minister termed the allegations as absurd, saying BNP has distorted the history of the country's independence and distortedly presented incomplete history of previous and post independence periods by avoiding the super hero of the Liberation War. Earlier, the Minister virtually joined a view-exchange with the BRTA officials. In his address, he said, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has taken different initiatives for the betterment of BRTC including induction of over a thousand buses and trucks in its fleet fleets.

President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate condolence messages expressed profound shock and sorrow at the death of Ekushey Award-winning Rabindra Sangeet artist Mita Huq, who breathed her last while undergoing treatment at a city hospital yesterday suffering from COVID-19 at the age of 59.

The government will take tougher action against extortionists to keep the price of essential commodities under control ahead of the month of holy Ramadan, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal gave the warning while speaking at a webinar on the law and order situation and controlling price of essential commodities ahead of holy Ramadan, organized by Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry yesterday. The Minister also urged the businessmen to provide information to law enforcement agencies about the extortionists. Speaking on the occasion, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh said the DSCC has already formed a committee comprising of nine counselors for market monitoring. DSCC is regularly conducting mobile courts, he added.

The areas and sectors which are associated with the lives and livelihood of common people like rural infrastructures, agriculture and health sector would get priority in the next budget for FY22 in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic situation, Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal said that while briefing reporters virtually after holding a pre-budget meeting for the next fiscal year (FY22) in zoom platform with the leading economists of the country. He said, the next budget is unlikely to be a usual budget, rather it is likely to be a budget of "exceptional time." He also indicated that the government may consider reducing corporate tax rates for listed firms in the upcoming budget. Asked about the possible measures of the government to support the low-income group people who are hit hard during the countrywide lockdown during this pandemic situation, he said, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina herself is looking over the matter and she would do whatever is necessary for keeping up the lives and livelihood of people.

Local Government Minister Md. Tajul Islam said that communication through information technology is pragmatic and time-befitting approach for overall development of the country. He was virtually speaking at the policy conference on "Rural to Global e-Commerce Policy Conference 2021", organized by e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh-e-CAB. State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak, who also attended the conference, in his address said, around 11 crore consumers of the country have been able to be connected with e-commerce in the last 12 years due to the correct implementation of the directives of the Adviser to the Prime

Minister on Information and Communication Technology Sajeeb Wazed. Three digital platforms-One-Pay, One-Service and One-Shop have been launched at the initiative of A2I of the ICT department to connect product manufacturers and buyers, he added. The State Minister assured loan assistance of up to Taka one crore to hundreds of e-CAB member entrepreneurs for transporting e-commerce goods by air at minimum prices and in equity share model.

Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen while addressing a seminar arranged by Bangladesh Army yesterday said, the meaningful mutual cooperation, increased participation of women and enhancing healthcare emergencies are essential to address the challenges induced by the unprecedented global coronavirus pandemic in establishing global peace. Bangladesh Chief of Army Staff General Aziz Ahmed read out a keynote paper at the seminar.

Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution-BSTI intensified its anti-adulteration drives through mobile courts across the country to ensure safe food during the holy month of Ramadan, Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun said this in a virtual media briefing yesterday. Apart from Dhaka city, he said, the anti-adulteration drives would simultaneously be conducted at different upazilas across the country. BSTI has already collected samples of 661 food items, largely consumed during the fasting month of Ramadan, from the markets for tests to ensure their qualities and check adulteration and out of those samples, 438 have been found okay, he added. He also informed that the country has adequate storage of sugar and salt.

Banks will remain open from 10am to 3pm while the transaction will be made between 10am and 1pm from today amid the lockdown to halt sharp rise of COVID-19 in the country, a Bangladesh Bank circular said yesterday. The new time will continue until April 13, the circular added.

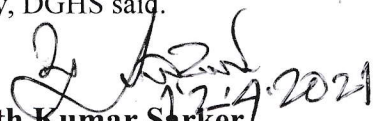
The NBR has waived 4.0 per cent advance tax-AT on import of soybean oil and palm oil, to keep the prices of essentials affordable to the consumers ahead of the holy month of Ramadan. The VAT policy wing of NBR issued a Statutory Regulatory Order-SRO yesterday in this regard.

Civil Aviation Authority, Bangladesh-CAAB has decided to impose a ban on all commercial international and domestic flight operations for one week from April 14 to check the new spike of COVID-19, CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman informed media yesterday. No restriction will be imposed on the movement of chartered flights, cargo flights, air ambulance and special flights, he said.

Efforts are underway to identify and arrest the culprits by monitoring social media's video footages of violence which was recently carried out by the Hefazat-e-Islam, Additional Superintendent of Police of Narayanganj District Police Hafizur Rahman yesterday said. Siddhirganj and Rupganj police arrested two persons on Saturday night as a special team of district police investigated and analyzed the video footages and personal writings related to violence of Hefazat-e-Islam posted by various parties on Facebook, he said.

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has tested positive for COVID-19 as her sample was collected on Saturday and tested at ICDDR,B, which confirmed her infection, the Health ministry informed yesterday. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir at a media briefing acknowledged the test result saying her health condition is stable. She has not showed any symptom yet, he said.

The country yesterday recorded 78 novel coronavirus deaths, the highest number in a single day since its first detection on March 8 last year while 5,819 fresh cases were reported during the period. With this the number of deaths reached to 9,739 and the tally of infection surged to 6,84,756. At the same time recovery count rose to 5,72,378, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. A total of 1,65,691 people were administered the second dose of the vaccine across the country yesterday, DGHS said.


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