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News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while inaugurating the nine-day SME fair in Dhaka yesterday has placed a five-point proposal for further development of the country's potential SME sector. In her first proposal, the Premier said the entrepreneurs will have to concentrate more on producing hundred percent export-oriented high-end demanding goods side by side our heritage products and secondly, the entrepreneurs will have to manufacture complementary goods to the heavy industries by the SMEs. Thirdly, flourish the Blue Economy through SMEs and fourthly, they (entrepreneurs) will have to focus more on turning Bangladesh into a partner of 'Global Value Chain' using a low cost of production in combination with modern technology. Fifthly, the country's scientists and researchers will have to give more attention towards coordination/hybridisation of three innovative sectors — digital, biological and physical — so that Bangladesh can keep pace with fourth industrial revolution. At the function, the Prime Minister handed over the "National SME Entrepreneurs Award-2020" among five entrepreneurs for their contributions to the SME industries. A total of 296 SME entrepreneurs are displaying their products at the fair at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader while addressing a function at the AL President's Dhanmondi political office in Dhaka yesterday said, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will join the celebration of Mujib Year as a representative of India. Bangladesh's relation with India is of friendship, not of slavery, he said adding those who are opposing Modi's visit to Dhaka have been behaving with India like slaves. When BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia was the Prime Minister, she visited India but forgot to discuss the water issue during her visit, the AL General Secretary added.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal has said, stringent security measures will be taken marking the opening ceremony of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary celebration on March 17. The Minister presiding over a meeting of the security subcommittee on Bangabandhu's birth centenary at his ministry yesterday urged all educational institutions to end programmes on the National Children's Day marking the birth centenary of Bangabandhu by 11am.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud addressing a function at Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka yesterday marking the launching ceremony of a book titled 'Swapner Sarathi Shah Alamgir' recalling the veteran journalist and former Director General of PIB who expired one year ago said, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government promotes freedom of the press with a view to building a 'debate-based' society. He said, though the country has witnessed a massive expansion of media, the current trend of engaging in ill competition while presenting the latest news in a hurry is reducing the standard of news. Sometimes it has not been possible to maintain objectivity because of such competition, he added.

Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen speaking at a seminar titled "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Prudent Diplomacy: A Decade of Bangladesh's Strong Presence in World Scene" at Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka yesterday said, the government of Sheikh Hasina wants to brand image of emerging Bangladesh across the world by celebrating "Mujib Year" and "Golden Jubilee" of the country's independence globally.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque addressing a function in NIPSOM in Dhaka yesterday said, three committees for each district comprising 31 members have been formed to prevent the coronavirus infection. He urged people of the country not to

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be panicked in case of any detection of coronavirus case as the government has sufficient preparation to face the outbreak of the virus. Meanwhile, Bangladesh, in a bid to control the spread of coronavirus, has restricted entry of people from four more countries– Italy, South Korea, Japan and Kuwait without the virus-free medical certificates. IEDCR gave the information at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday. Mentioning that one Bangladeshi has been detected with Coronavirus in Italy, it said the affected person is undergoing treatment at own house.

Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Ji Liming speaking at a function in Dhaka yesterday ruled out the possibility of any significant impact on ongoing China-supported mega development projects in Bangladesh including the Padma Bridge due to outbreak of novel coronavirus.

Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal addressing the opening the Sonali Bank's annual conference 2020 in Dhaka yesterday said, the government expected the banks to supplement its endeavors for fulfilling the unfinished tasks of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Meanwhile, the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase with the Finance Minister in the chair yesterday approved a total of five proposals including the proposal from the Bridges Division for the variation offer made by the consultant firm Tecnica of Spain for conducting the feasibility study and preparing initial design for constructing subway in the capital with an expenditure of Taka 317.94 crore.

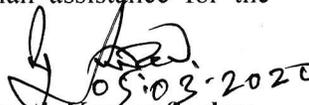
Local Government Minister Md. Tajul Islam opening a anti-mosquito drive in the capital yesterday said, the government has been working seriously to control the mosquitoes as it has increased recently and there are enough pesticides, machinery and manpower available to kill mosquitoes.

Kosovo Ambassador in Dhaka Guner Ureya at a meeting in Dhaka yesterday with the Chief Coordinator of the "National Implementation Committee of the Birth Centenary Celebration of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman", Dr Kamal Abdul Nasser Chowdhury expressed his government's interest in participating the in celebration of Mujib Year.

The Prime Minister's Office issued a set of directives to the authorities concerned to take necessary measures to address seasonal diseases and ensure smooth services for the people during the upcoming holy month of Ramadan. The directives came from a high-level meeting with Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Dr. Ahmad Kaikaus in the chair at the PMO in Dhaka yesterday.

A new gas well has discovered at Hajipur village of Nabinagar upazila in Brahmanbaria district. State-owned Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Limited which recovered the new gas well informed yesterday that the digging began on October 28 last year at Srikail East-1 which is the country's 28th gas field.

The European Commission has allocated €31million in humanitarian aid to address the Rohingya crisis. This fund will be utilized for providing critical health care, food assistance and educational emergencies of the forcefully displaced Myanmar people and also the host community, said a press release from EC in Dhaka yesterday. Meanwhile, the USA during the lunching of 2020 Joint Response Plan for Rohingyas in Geneva on Tuesday declared more than \$59 million dollars as an additional humanitarian assistance for the Rohingyas and host communities in Bangladesh.


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