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### News Brief

President M Abdul Hamid called upon all concerned to carry out all types of court proceedings and preserve all its documents digitally while delivering his virtual speech from Bangabhaban on the 'Supreme Court Day -2020' on 18.12.2020. The President urged judges, lawyers and all concerned to ensure that justice seekers do not have to keep coming back to the courts for days even after the verdict in a case is announced.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina greeted their respective counterparts of the Republic of Niger on the country's "Proclamation of the Republic Day" on Friday (18.12.2020). In his felicitation message, the President said, Bangladesh and Niger enjoy excellent bilateral relations that have progressively widened over the years. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in her congratulatory message to Nigerien Prime Minister Brigi Rafini, mentioned that Bangladesh values its cordial relations with Niger both bilaterally and multilaterally and hoped that the existing ties of friendship and cooperation between the two countries would continue in the future.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed profound shock and sorrow at the death of her cousin Sadek Hossain Bablu. In a condolence message yesterday, the PM prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed profound sympathy to the bereaved family.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said, BNP takes part in elections not to win but to make the polls questionable. The Minister told the council of the Awami league's Manda Upazila unit in Naogaon district, joining through a video conferencing from his official residence on parliament premises in Dhaka, the people have boycotted BNP because of its negative politics. BNP is digging its own grave by making the polls questionable, he added.

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud said, different programmes have been taken for the persons with disabilities in the country by the prime minister's worthwhile daughter Saima Wazed. The minister also said while addressing a function on 'Persons with Disability in Agriculture, Research Finding Dissemination and Journalist Award' at the auditorium of Krishibid Institution Bangladesh (KIB) in the capital, once, people with disabilities used to be hidden, but now they (disabled people) are getting allowances in different sectors and they are coming from darkness to light. In another programme yesterday at Bangladesh Betar, the Minister unveiled 'Bangladesh Betar Apps' for mobile phones, marking the 81<sup>st</sup> founding anniversary of the Betar.

Foreign Minister Dr. AK Abdul Momen yesterday said, foreign investment flow will increase significantly in the country, contributing to job creations through government efforts to brand Bangladesh positively across the world. The Minister told reporters after inaugurating "Bangabandhu Gallery and Library" at State Guesthouse Meghna, we want to change the wrong perception about Bangladesh entirely and want to present Bangladesh to the world as a land of opportunities. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Street at Port Louis, Mauritius was inaugurated on December 17, which is a testimony of friendship between the two peoples of Mauritius and Bangladesh.

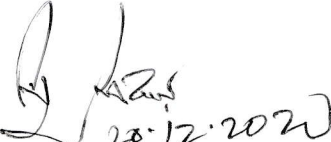
President of Portugal Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has praised the migrant Bangladeshis living in Portugal for their diligence and sincerity in work. The President said, the economic relationship needs to be enhanced and assured that the Portuguese government would consider opening a resident Embassy in Dhaka in future. He made the remarks when the newly appointed Ambassador of Bangladesh to Portugal Tarik Ahsan presented his credentials to the President at Belém Palace in Lisbon on Friday (18.12.20).

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday said, the people must remain vigilant and form a rock-solid unity in the spirit of the War of Liberation to resist the defeated anti-liberation forces. We have to remain cautious to save the country from the rise of non-communal forces, and if needed, we have to take part in another war of liberation to eliminate the pro-Pakistani forces from Bangladesh, he added. The Minister said this at a function arranged by Rangpur Foundation in Rangpur.

Expatriates Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad yesterday said, his ministry will take steps so that outbound migrant workers get corona virus vaccine on a priority basis. The Minister also said, steps will be taken to arrange corona virus tests for outbound migrant workers free of cost while addressing a mock parliamentary debate competition organised by Debate for Democracy at Bangladesh Film Development Corporation in the capital, marking the International Migrants Day.

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid yesterday said that automation in the power sector is needed to accelerate and ensure smooth customer services. The Minister also commented at the inaugural function of Bangladesh Power Equipment Manufacturing Company Ltd (BPEMC) Smart Prepayment Meter Production, smart prepayment meters will make consumers aware and economical in their use of electricity and easy access technology should be introduced in the power sector.

Bangladesh recorded 25 novel corona virus (COVID-19) deaths and 1,267 fresh cases in the last 24 hours. The recovery count rose to 4,35,601 after another 1,987 patients were discharged from the hospitals during the period. With this, the total death toll rose to 7,242 from the pandemic in the country.

  
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