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News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon all to avoid large gatherings as three patients were tested positive for the novel coronavirus in Bangladesh. The Premier made the call as she was presiding over a cabinet meeting yesterday. The Premier simultaneously urged the countrymen not to be panicked as the country is well-prepared to prevent the lethal virus. The Prime Minister at a meeting of AL Central Working Committee at Ganabhaban yesterday said, the birth centenary programmes of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will be celebrated in such a way so that the people do not fall in risk due to the outbreak of the coronavirus. The Prime Minister said, the government has suspended issuing on arrival visas for the people of those countries where coronavirus broke out.

Meanwhile, Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque speaking at a press briefing at his ministry yesterday said, educational institutions will not be shut down now as the coronavirus situation is still under control. The Minister urged the Bangladeshi expatriates not to return home without any urgency. The Minister said, home comers — especially from Italy and South Korea — will be put under special supervision and if required, they will be kept quarantined. He said, 400-bed units and medical equipment have been kept ready to face the new coronavirus while the doctors and nurses also remain prepared to tackle any situation. Large number of protective gloves has been preserved for their use. IEDCR at a press briefing in Dhaka yesterday said, no new coronavirus case was detected in the past 24 hours since it announced the first three cases while the condition of the three infected persons are stable as they are being monitored at a hospital.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi deferred his planned Bangladesh visit on March 17 to join the inauguration of Mujib Year as Dhaka revised plans for its opening in view of the coronavirus outbreak across the globe, Indian External Affairs Ministry in a statement said this yesterday. According to the statement, Dhaka informed India that the planned grand opening of the celebrations was revised “on account of detection of cases of coronavirus in Bangladesh and the larger global public health situation in this regard.

The cabinet has approved in principle the draft of a protocol to be signed for getting assistance from Russia over the operation and maintenance of the Ruppore Nuclear Power Plant following its construction. The cabinet meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair yesterday approved the draft of 2nd Addendum to the Protocol on Inland Water, Transit and Trade between Bangladesh and India for increasing trade between the two neighbouring countries utilizing the waterways. The cabinet also approved in principle the draft of “Bangladesh National Museum Act, 2020,” to specify further the formation and functions of Board of Trustees of the Bangladesh National Museum.

Visiting French Minister of Armed Forces Florence Parly has called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her Office in Dhaka yesterday. The French Minister said, her country will continue to support to Bangladesh on the Rohingya issue. Talking about Bangabandhu Satellite-1 which was developed by French company Thales Alenia Space, Florence Parly informed Sheikh Hasina that it is working as expected. The French Minister also called on Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen yesterday.

Speaker Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury addressing a seminar titled “Bangladesh in Women Empowerment: Contributions of Sheikh Hasina” marking the International Women’s Day at National Museum in Dhaka yesterday underscored the need for involving the

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countryman in the women's advancement introduced under the prudent leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud has said, BNP is concerned about Khaleda Zia's health instead of coronavirus and the health condition of the countrymen. He said this while talking to the media after attending a meeting of Media and Publicity Subcommittee of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Birth Centenary Celebration National Implementation Committee at the International Mother Language Institute in Dhaka yesterday.

The Mujib Year programmes would be launched through electronic and social media under the revised plan in view of coronavirus outbreak across the world. Chief Coordinator of Bangabandhu's Birth Centenary Celebration National Implementation Committee Dr. Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury told media this yesterday. He, however, said, a function would be held later at a convenient time at the National Parade Ground, the original inauguration venue, as part of the celebrations. Programmes at Dhanmondi 32 and Tungipara would be held on March 17 in line with the original plans.

The Directorate General of Health Services yesterday fixed prices of hand sanitizers as vendors started selling them at high prices after the detection of coronavirus cases in the country. The government agency also ensured that there is a sufficient stock of hand sanitisers and its raw materials. It also ordered the retail vendors not to sell more than one sanitizer to a person and refrain from stocking them. It also issued highest alert in Benapole Land Port and international check post yesterday.

The construction work of Muktijoddha complexes in 63 districts and 378 upazilas has been completed in the country. Apart from this, construction of the complexes in Dhaka district and 22 upazilas is going on as the government has a plan to set up freedom fighters' complexes at 470 upazilas across the country. The information came from a meeting of the Annual Development Program with Liberation War Affairs Minister A K M Mozammel Haque in the chair at his ministry yesterday.

The Government has decided to appoint Shahabuddin Ahmed, a former Secretary as the next Ambassador of Bangladesh to Japan, a Foreign Ministry press release said in Dhaka yesterday.

Dr. Khitish Chandra Mondal, former State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman-led government passed away at his 84 at Pirojpur yesterday. Fisheries and Livestock Minister A S M Rezaul Karim and State Minister for Cultural Affairs K M Khalid have expressed deep sorrow at the death of Khitish Chandra Mandal.

Holi, a Hindu religious festival also known as Dol Purnima was celebrated across the country yesterday with due religious fervour and much enthusiasm. The festival signifies the victory of good over evil and a festive day to meet others.


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