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## News Brief

The ECNEC in a meeting yesterday approved a total of nine projects, involving an overall estimated cost of Taka 19,844.57 crore, including a Taka 16,918.59 crore South Asia Sub regional Economic Cooperation-SASEC Dhaka-Sylhet Corridor Road Development project in a bid to ensure overall economic development by improving regional road connectivity. Chaired by the ECNEC Chairperson and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, virtually joining from Ganabhaban, the ECNEC also approved the Network development and expansion of Internet protocol of BTCL project with Taka 945.90 crore, the 1st revision of construction of first terminal and ancillary facilities for the Payra Sea Port project with an additional cost of Taka 534.65 crore, the 2nd revision of River bank protection of Halda River at Hathazari and Rouzan upazilas under Chattogram district with an additional cost of Taka 105.97 crore, the Cashew nut and coffee research, development and expansion project with Taka 211.85 crore. Besides, the meeting also approved Modernization of Bangladesh Betar, Sylhet Centre and installation of digital broadcast equipments, 1st revised with an additional cost of Taka 31.07 crore, West Gopalganj water management project, 1st phase with Taka 135.51 crore, Protecting Daulatkhan Pourashava, Chokighat and other vulnerable areas under Daulatkhan upazila in Bhola from the erosion of River Meghna with Taka 522.56 crore and installation of family nutrition gardens at the uncultivated barren land and at homesteads with Taka 438.47 crore.

At the very outset of the ECNEC meeting, the Prime Minister unwrapped the cover of the final printed version of the 8th Five Year Plan. While unveiling the cover, the Premier urged all countrymen to keep vigil against conspiracy, saying intriguers take the opportunity to hit Bangladesh when people starts livelihood with new dreams and spending happy life. She further said, the government has been working tirelessly with its limited resources to change the fate of people and offset the impacts of deadly corona virus pandemic which has hit the world economy severely.

Everyone is performing their religious rituals independently and peacefully in the non-communal Bangladesh under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Speaker Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury said this while addressing a program on the occasion of the Saraswati Puja, at Manik Mia Avenue organized by Saraswatotsab Samannay Parshad of the Bangladesh Parliament yesterday.

The government has a plan to form a commission to identify and put on trial those who were linked nationally and internationally with the killing of Bangabandhu, Liberation War Affairs Minister A K M Mozammel Haq stated while addressing a discussion marking 80th birth anniversary of internationally reputed nuclear scientist Dr. M A Wazed Miah at the National Press Club yesterday.

About 92 per cent construction works of the Padma Bridge has been completed so far, while the overall progress of the bridge project is 84 per cent, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said this to reporters after visiting the construction works of Padma Bridge at Mawa site yesterday. The bridge will be open for vehicle movement by June 2022, he said.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud said, after airing the report-‘All the Prime Minister’s Men’, the objectivity of Al Jazeera channel faced harsh question in Bangladesh and its credibility and acceptability decreased. While exchanging views with journalists at his ministry yesterday, the Minister also said, like other countries, we could have stopped its broadcasting but we did not do so since we believe in the freedom of press. About Bergman, the Minister said, he faced trial at Bangladesh’s war crimes tribunal, later, he apologized unconditionally to the High Court and left the country. The Minister further said, the main speaker of the report Sami has many names and when reports are produced depending on such a person, it causes harm to media. About the BNP leader Ruhul Kabir Rizvi’s remarks on Al Jazeera’s report, he said, Mr. Rizvi frequently makes weird statements. Later the Minister presented in brief the outcomes of his recent visit to India.

Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal expressed his high optimism that the International Fund for Agricultural Development-IFAD would increase its support to Bangladesh in the coming years to

successfully implement the 8th Five Year Plan, the SDGs and to face the challenges owing to COVID-19 pandemic as he had a virtual meeting with IFAD President Gilbert F Hougbo yesterday.

The Education Act 2020 draft has been finalized banning notes and guides prepared in the form of textbooks, at a meeting chaired by Education Minister Dr. Dipu Moni yesterday.

Sheikh Hasina Weaving Village is being constructed at Shibchar in Madaripur district and Jajira in Shariatpur adjacent to Padma Bridge. Textile and Jute Minister Golam Dastagir Gazi said these while visiting the Cox's Bazar Basic Center yesterday. He added, the contribution of the weaving sector to the national economy in terms of value addition is Taka 1227 crore.

The second of three brand new Dash-8 aircraft purchased from Canada's De Havilland will arrive in the country on February 24, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism M Mahub Ali informed this while inaugurating the Commercial service of Biman's Dhanmondi sales center in the capital yesterday. Through the efforts of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, a total of 13 state of the art aircrafts, including 12 brand new Boeings and a Dash-8, have already been added to the fleet, he said.

Meanwhile, with the death of 13 more people yesterday, the number of deaths from Covid-19 in Bangladesh rose to 8,298. At the same time recovery count rose to 4,88,621, DGHS. With the detection of 396 new cases, the total number of Covid-19 cases rose to 5,41,434. Besides, a total of 2,26,902 people were administered COVID-19 vaccines across the country yesterday, giving rise to the number of vaccine receivers to 13,59,613. As many as 22,48,299 people got registered to receive COVID-19 vaccines.

State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak said, the prominent nuclear scientist Dr. M A Wazed Miah was a greed free and uncomplicated person. Throughout his career, Dr. Wazed has worked tirelessly with his talent and creativity for the welfare of the country, he said. He was virtually speaking at a program marking the 80th birthday of Dr. M A Wazed Miah yesterday.

In the first ever UK-Bangladesh Trade and Investment Dialogue at the Ministry of Commerce yesterday, the UK and Bangladesh agreed to develop a future trade partnership that will increase mutual prosperity and further Bangladesh's economic development. British High Commissioner Robert Chatterton Dickson and Bangladesh's Commerce Secretary Jafar Uddin led the dialogue. High Commissioner Robert Dickson said, the UK is committed to work with Bangladesh to create a trade and investment relationship that helps both economies grow.

Army Chief General Aziz Ahmed denounced Qatar-based broadcaster Al Jazeera's report titled 'All the Prime Minister's Men' and said it was published with malicious intent. General Aziz spoke to reporters about the controversial report after a program of the Army Aviation Group in Dhaka's Tejgaon yesterday. He said that various quarters with vested interests were spinning 'propaganda' to create confusion within the army and undermine the chain of command. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Army denounced the Al-Jazeera report, issuing a fresh statement by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) directorate, calling its report "baseless" and "fabricated".

Bangladesh has called for greater international efforts to ensure the safety and security of the peacekeepers by embedding emergency preparedness in the mandate setting. Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN, Ambassador Rabab Fatima, made the call on Monday while addressing the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) at the General Assembly.

Newly appointed Ambassador of Bangladesh to Oman Mizanur Rahman presented the "Letter of Credence" to Sultan of Oman Sultan Haitham bin Tariq at the Palace located adjacent to the capital city of Muscat on Monday.

A Dhaka tribunal sentenced five members, including Mohammad Ziaul Haque alias Maj (sacked) Zia of banned militant outfit Ansar al Islam to death and another to life in jail for killing blogger-writer Avijit Roy in February 2015. Besides, a Dhaka court yesterday set March 2 to hold a hearing on charge framing in Niko graft case against BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and others as Begum Khaleda Zia failed to appear before the court on health ground and made her lawyers plead for time yesterday.

Another 1021 Rohingyas reached Bhasan Char from Chattogram's Patenga Boat Club yesterday under the supervision of Bangladesh Navy as part of their relocation.

The Honours first year admission test for 2020-21 academic session of Dhaka University will begin on May 21 with the admission test of 'Ka' unit, which will be held in eight divisional cities. The online application process for the admission test will begin on March 8 and will continue till March 31. The admission test for 'Kha' unit will be held on May 22, 'Ga' unit on May 27, 'Gha' unit on May 28, and 'Cha' unit on June 5.

  
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Principal Information Officer 7-02-2021