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## News Brief

Bangladesh yesterday recorded the highest number of deaths reporting fifty-three more fatalities from the novel coronavirus in a daily count, raising the death toll from the pandemic to 1,262. At the same time recovery count rose to 36,264 after another 2237 patients, the highest in a single day, were discharged from the hospitals during the period. Directorate General of Health Services-DGHS came up with the disclosure at its daily health bulletin. The country also saw further rise in coronavirus cases with the detection of 3,862 new cases during the same period, taking the total number of cases to 94,481. A total of 17,214 samples, a record number in a day, were tested at 61 authorised labs across the country during that time, DGHS added.

The government has introduced the zoning system to prevent the spread of coronavirus in the country. In consultation with the DGHS, the zoning system was initially introduced in Gazipur, Narayangani and Narsingdi districts, Purba Rajabazar of Dhaka North City Corporation and Wari of Dhaka South City Corporation on experimental basis, a PID handout said yesterday. Once the zoning system works effectively to contain the spread of coronavirus, it will be introduced in other areas of the country, the official handout added. According to the Infectious Diseases (Prevention, Control and Elimination) Act 2018, the district civil surgeon has been given the authority to declare a zone in a specific area. The zoning activities would be implemented with support from local public representatives, civil administration, law enforcers, army personnel and volunteers. Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh in a press briefing yesterday said, lockdown will be enforced in a coordinated way after consulting with all stakeholders on the basis of zone wise mapping. The 21 day- long lock-down has been imposed at number 10 Uttarkattaoli ward of Chattogram City Corporation since 12:01 AM last night. Apart from Uttarkattoli, rest red zone declared nine wards of CCC will be imposed lockdown step by step. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Army in an ISPR press release said, it is enhancing vigil in red zones of the country to enforce government instructions properly.

Amid the outbreak of COVID-19, Bangladesh yesterday resumed international flight operation on limited scale after nearly three months of flight suspension for containing the pandemic. Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman said, they took all preparations to operate the international flight as per a set of health guideline prepared following the instruction of International Civil Aviation Organization. All the returnee passengers would have to be sent to a 14-day institutional quarantine if they fail to show COVID-19 negative certificate or to pass the medical examination at the airport on their arrival here and 14-day home quarantine is made mandatory for all returnee passengers after their arrival here, he added.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader coming down heavily on BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir for his claim that media is in apprehension to speak the truth said, BNP is out to make ill efforts to use media as shield since the party is now on the back foot and carrying on its politics of rumor by misusing social and other media. In the online statement he also said, mass media is always fearless in revealing the truth. Responding to the BNP leaders' frequent allegation that there is no democracy in Bangladesh, the Minister said, "If there was no democracy, how could they get scopes to spread rumors against the government?" Forming of Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (Bakshal) was the beginning of the voyage towards the establishing of democratic culture and BNP founder himself was an executive member of Bakshal, he said.


The Foreign Ministry yesterday in a press release asserted that Bangladesh has no provision to allow British citizen Shamima Begum, who had fled the UK to join ISIS, to enter into its territory as she is not a Bangladeshi citizen.

Bangladesh has secured second position with accessing 8 per cent power from off-grid solar solutions under the current government. According to REN 21 Global Status Report (GSR) released yesterday, Nepal was in the top position with 11 percent access to electricity from off-grid solar solutions, while Mongolia and Bangladesh jointly secured second position. The report also revealed that Bangladesh has experienced rapid gains in electrification, the rate of access to electricity in Bangladesh reached 85 per cent in 2018, up from only 47 per cent in 2010. In this regard, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid said, the power generation capacity reached 23,436 MW and 97 per cent people now have access to electricity. Bangladesh is now generating 627.92 MW electricity from renewable sources of which 393.99 MW power comes from solar system, he said.

More than 6.74 crore people from over 1.50 crore families have been benefited by the government relief assistance throughout the country amid the ongoing coronavirus situation, an official release said yesterday. The government has so far distributed 1,75,035 tonnes of rice out of 2,11,017 tonnes sanctioned among the people across the country. A total of Taka 81,77,15,702 has been distributed among 3,85,90,443 individuals as the government so far allocated Taka 95,83,72,264 cash. Apart from this, baby food of Taka 22.55 crore out of Taka 27.14 crore allotted by the government has been distributed among 15.27 lakh people.

Australian government and the UNFPA are supporting Bangladesh in strengthening the provision of life-saving services for women and girls amid COVID-19 pandemic by installing two tents at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and OGSB Hospitals in the capital to screen patients, including pregnant women, for COVID-19 to mitigate risks of infection, a press release said yesterday. Additionally, 4,172 dignity kits will be distributed among women and girls of reproductive age and the third-gender community in Bangladesh which were officially handed over during a virtual meeting yesterday held among Australian High Commissioner Jeremy Bruer, UNFPA Representative Dr. Asa Torkelsson and Member of the National Technical Advisory Committee on COVID-19 Professor Dr. Rowshan Ara Begum.

The government has appointed Noor-E Helal Saifur Rahman, currently serving as Deputy High Commissioner in Karachi, Pakistan, as the new High Commissioner of Bangladesh to South Africa.

  
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