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News Brief

On the occasion of the Mujib Barsha, a special session of the 11th Jatiya Sangsad will begin on November 8 at 6pm. President Md. Abdul Hamid called the session exercising the power bestowed upon him as per Clause (1) of Article 72 of the Constitution.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader addressing a virtual press briefing yesterday said, BNP activists have lost confidence in their leadership. He said, immediately after the start of voting in any election, the BNP workers stage drama by boycotting the polls so that the voters do not come to the polling centres. He further said, sensing their debacle in elections, the BNP men apply all these tactics to make the electoral system questionable but general people have now understood their tricks. "The BNP leaders are raising questions about the election environment. But I would like to remind them about the local government elections held during their reign. Elections, at that time, meant conflict and loss of life", he said.

India's new High Commissioner to Bangladesh Vikram Doraiswami while calling on Agriculture Minister Dr. Md Abdur Razzaque at his ministry yesterday said, initiatives will be taken for agro-machinery manufacturers in India to set up their factories in Bangladesh and invest locally in manufacturing agro-machinery. The Agriculture Minister pointed out the recent government initiative of an farm mechanisation project worth around Tk 3,000 crore. During the meeting, the Indian High Commissioner also said onion exports to Bangladesh will increase further if the weather in India improves. The Indian Envoy also met Railways Minister Md. Nurul Islam Sujan at Railway Bhawan yesterday. The Railways Minister said, the railway line from Haldibari in India to Chilahati in Bangladesh will be launched in December. Besides, there are plans to run a passenger train from Dhaka to Siliguri on March 26 next year, the Minister added.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud's health condition is improving as he is undergoing treatment at a city hospital after a COVID-19 attack, a PID handout said yesterday. The Minister continues to sign necessary documents of the ministry as usual in the hospital. Dr. Hasan did not sit for a single day at home during the COVID-19 situation. He appeared in public every day to carry out his responsibilities of the ministry and the party risking his life, the handout said.

Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal has said, despite predictions of a decrease in remittance worldwide, Bangladesh had received US\$ 18.2 billion in remittance, the highest ever in the country's history due to the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the hard-working citizens of the country, both at home and abroad. The Minister was addressing a virtual roundtable meeting yesterday as part of the annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF. Chaired by the Finance Minister the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase yesterday approved seven proposals involving Tk 474.12 crore including purchasing 80,000 tons of urea fertilizer.

Education Minister Dr. Dipu Moni at a virtual conference yesterday said, the annual examinations at the secondary schools and madrasas will not be held this year due to Covid-19 pandemic. The students will be given promotion to next classes after evaluation through assignments, she said. The National Curriculum Board will prepare a syllabus for completing it within 30 working days for upgrading them in the next class, she said. Replying to a query, she also hinted that schools and madrasas might not reopen next month. The government will pay back part of form fill up fees collected from HSC and equivalents exam candidates, Dhaka Education Board sources said.

· Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of the Bangalee Hindu community, begins today with Maha Sashthi puja at temples across the country. President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have greeted the Hindu community in separate messages on the occasion. Amid COVID-19, the devotees have to maintain health guidelines, including social distancing, using hand sanitizer and wearing mask.

The government will clear dues of laid-off and retired workers of 25 state-run jute mills by November this year, Textiles and Jute Minister Golam Dastagir Gazi addressing a press conference at his ministry said yesterday. The dues are cleared through savings certificates and workers' bank accounts, he said.

The US has expressed gratitude to the people of Bangladesh and the private sector for quickly delivering PPE for US medical professionals in the early weeks of the Covid-19 pandemic. US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun conveyed the message at a telephonic press conference on Tuesday night, following last week's visit to Bangladesh. He also said, China 'unfortunately' did 'very little' role in comparison to what 'should be expected' from them in resolving the Rohingya crisis. The UK government is committed to continuing its role in the UN Security Council to highlight the plight of the Rohingyas, said British Minister of State Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon at a virtual high-level event on Tuesday. Meanwhile, the USA, UK, EU and the UN Refugee Agency are co-hosting a virtual donor conference today to raise humanitarian funds for displaced Rohingya refugees and host communities.

Norway has shown interest to invest in ship recycling industry in Bangladesh. The Norwegian Ambassador Espen Rikter-Svendsen expressed the keenness while talking to Environment, Forests and Climate Change Minister Shahab Uddin in a video conference yesterday.

State Minister for Information Dr. Md. Murad Hasan has said, Mostaq-Zia will be tried posthumously for their alleged involvement in the brutal assassination of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He came up with the comment while addressing a function on the occasion of the 56th birth anniversary of Shaheed Sheikh Russell in the capital yesterday.

Bangladesh and ADB have agreed to undertake a slew of 'special actions' in order to expedite the implementation of ADB-assisted projects in this country for promoting faster economic recovery. The decision was taken at a tripartite portfolio review meeting yesterday co-chaired by Fatima Yasmin, ERD Secretary and Manmohan Parkash, the Country Director of ADB.

Some 6.5 lac Bangladeshi women workers are employed in different countries across the world and some 2,560 stranded expatriate Bangladeshis were sent back to Italy, UK, Spain, Portugal, France, Greece, Saudi Arabia and Oman. The information was revealed at a meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Ministry at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

The country yesterday recorded 24 more fatalities from the COVID-19, raising the death toll from the pandemic to 5,723. At the same time recovery count rose to 308,845. The country also saw further rise in coronavirus cases with the detection of 1,545 new cases taking the total number of cases to 393,131. Planning Minister M A Mannan has tested negative for coronavirus.

Bangladesh Nourjan Sramik Federation called for a strike from Tuesday saying they will not resume work unless their demands for food and sea allowances, appointment letters, identity cards and several other benefits are met. Businesses are counting massive losses as almost 22 lakh tons of goods have been waiting to be unloaded for two days at sea and river ports across the country.



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