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**News Brief**

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina held a bilateral meeting with her Italian Counterpart Giuseppe Conte at Palazzo Chigi at his official residence in Rome yesterday. The two Prime Ministers at the talks agreed to take the bilateral relations between the two countries to a new height. The Italian Prime Minister said, the visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opened a new chapter of cooperation between the two friendly countries. Giuseppe Conte highly appreciated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for giving shelter to over 1.1 million forcibly displaced Rohingya nationals in Bangladesh and gave the assurance to provide one million Euros for the help of the Rohingya citizens through the UNHCR. The Bangladesh Premier invited Italian entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh in a bigger volume. Sheikh Hasina invited her Italian counterpart to join the Mujib Borsho Programmes.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally opened the five-storey chancery building constructed on 23.9 kathas of land by unveiling its plaque in Via Dell'Antartide area in the capital of Italy yesterday. Earlier on her arrival at the chancery building, the Premier first laid a wreath at the Shaheed Minar set up on the embassy premises to pay respects to the language movement martyrs. She then paid homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing a wreath at his portrait inside the chancery building. Prime Minister's younger sister Sheikh Rehana and daughter Saima Wazed Hossain were also present.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said, her government has brought down extreme poverty rate to 10 percent and poverty rate 20.5 percent in the country. The Premier said this at a reception accorded in her honour by Awami League Italy Chapter at Parco dei Principi Grand Hotel and Spa on Tuesday evening. Not a single person will remain homeless by Mujib Borsho, she said, adding that Taka 100 crore has been allocated separately in the budget for rehabilitation of the river erosion-hit people.

President Md. Abdul Hamid has asked the graduates and students to launch a moral and social movement against the use of anti-environmental polythene as he addressed the second convocation of the Patuakhali Science and Technology University yesterday. The President called upon the students to uphold Bangladesh brightly worldwide and do the needful for the dearest motherland. A total 3,706 post-graduates and graduates students were conferred with degrees while 11 researchers were given PhD degree. The President while witnessing a cultural programme at the tourist spot Kuakata on Tuesday evening urged all concerned to uphold Bangladesh's cultural heritages to keep the young generation away from the bad sides of the foreign culture.

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed the 'Deposition of the Surplus Money of Self Governed Agencies including Autonomous, Semi-Autonomous, Statutory Government Authorities and Public Non-Financial Corporations into the Government Exchequer Bill, 2020 with a view to allowing the government for using surplus fund of different government organizations for maintaining the current ongoing development programs throughout the country.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said, criminals must be tried, no matter how powerful they are. The remark came in Parliament in a scripted reply of Sheikh Hasina, now in Italy, in response to a question in the question-answer session scheduled for the Leader of the House at Jatiya Sangsad yesterday. Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmad informed the House that the government has taken a massive awareness programme to ensure legal and safe migration for overseas employment.

Please Turn Over

State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Md. Zakir Hossen informed the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that the government is considering the construction of 1,000 new primary schools in the country.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader has said, observers did not find any evidence of vote rigging or forgery in the Dhaka city elections held recently. The Minister while briefing journalists at his ministry yesterday also said, the government has taken an initiative to issue fitness certificates of vehicles from district level. Besides, the validity of private cars' fitness certificates is going to be extended for two years from the existing one year, he added. He said, Padma Bridge construction will not be affected due to coronavirus issue. But if it is any longer than two months, there may be some impacts, he added.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal while addressing a function marking the destruction of a huge amount of narcotics including cocaine at Patenga in Chattogram yesterday said, law enforcement agencies are working relentlessly to eradicate drug abuse from the society to protect young generation from moral degradation.

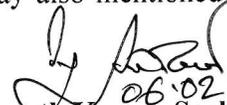
Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud while inaugurating two studios of Bangladesh Television at BTV Bhaban at Rampur in Dhaka yesterday said, the state-run television has been contributing a lot to project native culture since the country's struggle for independence. He said, Bangladesh is being digitized very fast as now there are 10 crore internet users in the country and the government is now working to reach broadband internet service to union level. State Minister for Information Dr. Md. Murad Hassan also addressed the function. While speaking at a separate meeting of TraumaLink, a community-based organization for road accident victims at the Nation Press Club in Dhaka yesterday the Information Minister stressed on giving lesson to young learners at schools on traffic rules. The Information Minister also inaugurating a book stall of Dhaka Reporters' Unity on the Bangla Academy premises yesterday urged the teachers and guardians to help develop the reading habit among youths and keep them away from being addicted to social media.

Disaster Management and Relief State Minister Dr. Md Enamur Rahman while visiting the Rohingya camp at Ukhia upazila in Cox's Bazar yesterday said, the repatriation process is going on with the help of the international community by ensuring human rights of the Rohingya people, including access to medical facilities, security and education as China, Myanmar and Bangladesh had a discussion on Rohingya repatriation with the United Nations.

Cultural Affairs Ministry in a press release yesterday announced the names of 20 eminent personalities and an organization, Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute for the "Ekushey Padak-2020" for outstanding contributions to respective fields. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will hand over the Ekushey Padak to the awardees at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka at on February 20.

The High Court yesterday asked the government to inform it by Tuesday next about its plan on Suhrawardy Udyan where Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered the historic 7th March Speech in 1971. Meanwhile, the High Court also directed the government to appoint within 60 days 38 candidates who came out successful in the 36th Bangladesh Civil Service examinations. Thirty-eight of the candidates who are yet to get appointment filed writ petitions at the High Court.

Foreign nationals working in Bangladesh are taking Tk 26,400 crore annually while evading Tk 12,000 crore in taxes, said a report of Transparency International Bangladesh. TIB at a press conference at its Dhanmondi office in Dhaka yesterday also mentioned that many foreign nationals are working in Bangladesh illegally.

  
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