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From: PIO, PID, Dhaka
Fax: 9540553/9540026
E-mail: pidhaka@gmail.com
Web: www.pressinform.gov.bd

News Brief

The Finance Bill 2020 was passed unanimously in Parliament yesterday incorporating some minor changes paving the way for making the proposed budget for the next fiscal year an inclusive one and welfare-oriented. The changes include -- minimizing the lock-in period from three years to one year for investing black money in the capital market and depositing 20 percent of a disputed VAT amount imposed by any VAT official while filing any appeal. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her speech in the House said, her government is determined to implement the national budget for the coming 2020-21 fiscal despite the coronavirus hurdles. The Premier said, in the FY21 Taka 5.68 lakh crore has been proposed in parliament by the Finance Minister in view of meeting up the temporary needs in the health sector as well as overcoming the damages in various sectors of the economy caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal placing the Finance Bill 2020 also expressed his high optimism to implement the budget in this adverse situation of Novel coronavirus pandemic. The parliament will approve the Appropriations Bill 2020 today through which the Taka 5.68 lakh crore national budget for FY21 will be passed.

The Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman University Bill, 2020 was placed in the Jatiya Sangsad in Dhaka yesterday. Education Minister Dr. Dipu Moni placing the bill said, the proposed bill expressed enhancing of necessary facilities for the expansion of higher education and research. Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Matin Khosru placed a report on the use of Information Technology by court Bill 2020 in the House.

At least 32 people, including eight women and three children died as a launch capsized in the Buriganga River near Shyambazar yesterday morning. The accident occurred as the launch named Morning Bird carrying over 50 passengers coming to Dhaka from Munshiganj, capsized in the river after it was hit by another launch Moyur-2 near Sadarghat launch terminal. State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury immediately after the mishap visited the spot and inspected rescue operation. Shipping Ministry has formed a seven-member probe body over the incident. A three-member probe body of BIWTA was formed to look into the incident. As compensation, the families of each person died in the launch capsized will get Taka 1.50 lakh. Dhaka district administration would also give the families of each victim Tk 20,000. Apart from this, Tk 10,000 will also be provided for burial of each deceased person.

Bangladesh yesterday recorded 45 more fatalities from the novel coronavirus in a daily count, raising the death toll from the pandemic to 1,783. At the same time recovery count rose to 57,780 after another 2,053 patients were discharged from the hospitals during the period. The country also saw further rise in coronavirus cases with the detection of 4,014 new cases taking the total number of cases to 1, 41,801. A total of 17,837 samples were tested at the authorised labs across the country during that time. The United Nations World Food Programme and the Australian High Commission jointly handed over some medical supplies for COVID-19 response to the Directorate General of Health Services yesterday. Meanwhile, China also has provided more medical supplies to the Bangladesh government.

Bangladesh and the United States have renewed commitments to support the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of Rohingyas to Myanmar. Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen and US Secretary of State Michael R Pompeo expressed the vow as the US Secretary of State spoke with his Bangladesh Counterpart yesterday. Michael R Pompeo reaffirmed the importance of the Bangladesh-US relationship and discussed continued cooperation to address the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the US Department of State.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader has said, Awami League bears the heritage of staying beside people by extending helping hands to them in their dire needs throughout the party's long journey of over seven decades since its inception in 1949. He came up with the comments as he was virtually speaking at a food-distribution programme at Teacher-Student Centre on Dhaka University campus yesterday. It was informed in the videoconference that the party leaders and workers and public representatives have distributed food aids along with more than Taka 10 crore cash aid to over 1.25 crore families distressed due to coronavirus spread. Protective glasses, masks, personal protective equipment, soaps, sanitizers and sprays were also distributed, it was informed.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud at a press briefing at his ministry in Dhaka yesterday said, the government is combating the prevailing coronavirus situation appropriately despite limitations. Coming down heavily on BNP leaders for their comments on the COVID-19 situation he said, the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is working relentlessly in combating the pandemic. The death rate is less than the neighboring countries-India and Pakistan, even the rate is less than China, the USA and different European countries. Criticizing a comment of BNP leader Ruhul Kabir Rizvi on the jute mills issue, the Information Minister said, the government doesn't take any decision to shut down jute mills rather it takes initiatives for reforming the mills. He said, BNP had shut down the Adamji Jute Mills and many other mills when they were in power. For this, about 60,000 workers of the Adamji Jute Mills and thousands other workers went out of jobs.

The flood situation in ten northern, northeastern and eastern districts is further deteriorating despite the intensity of onrushing water from the upstream reduced in two major northern Brahmaputra and eastern Meghna basins yesterday. Flood situation may further worsen in six districts- Kurigram, Gaibandha, Bagura, Jamalpur, Sirajganj and Tangail on Brahmaputra basin while it may improve in Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Sylhet, Netrokona and Sunamganj till 9am today.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anisul Huq while virtually addressing the UNDP annual meeting 2020, on "Reflection on Rule of Law, Human Rights, and Social Contract post COVID-19" informed, the government is intending to convert the temporary virtual court ordinance to a permanent law. He also said, the government is considering amending Evidence Act, which can ease some of the gaps in legal proceedings. The virtual court system of Bangladesh was highly praised in the meeting.

State Minister for Labour and Employment Munnujan Sufian has urged the workers of state owned Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation to accept the closure of its 25 mills along with the 'golden handshake' for workers, peacefully. She came up with the call in a meeting with leaders of jute mill workers at 'Srom Bhaban' in the capital yesterday. The meeting was held a day after Textiles and Jute minister Golam Dastagir Gazi made such announcement on the state-owned jute mills. In future, the mills may reopen under the PPP model, or completely under private sector management.

President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate condolence messages expressed their deep shock at the death of Senior Secretary to the Ministry of Defence Abdullah Al Mohsin Chowdhury, who died from coronavirus at his 57 at a city hospital yesterday. Meanwhile, the President and the Prime Minister in separate messages also expressed their deep sorrow at the death of Laila Arzumand Banu, wife of Liberation War Affairs Minister A K M Mozammel Haque. She died from coronavirus at his 71 yesterday. The Prime Minister in another condolence message expressed deep shock at the death of eminent journalist and valiant Freedom Fighter Khandker Mozammel Huq, who breathed his last at the of 71 at a city hospital yesterday.

The government has appointed former Police Chief Dr. Mohammad Javed Patwary as the next Ambassador of Bangladesh to Saudi Arabia, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday.


Suraj Kumar Sarker
Principal Information Officer
Phone- 9546091