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News Brief

Dhaka strongly rejected US Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo's recent 'baseless' statement mentioning Bangladesh as a place where the terrorist group al-Qaida carried out attacks, falsely apprehending similar terrorist attacks in future, by saying it is a falsification. "There is no evidence of any presence of Al-Qaida in Bangladesh," a Foreign ministry statement said. The ministry said that such irresponsible comment by a senior leader is very "unfortunate and unacceptable". Bangladesh, under the bold leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, maintains a "Zero Tolerance" policy against all forms of terrorism and violent extremism, it said.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud coming down heavily on BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and other leaders of the party's comments that the municipality polls on January 16 will not be held fairly said, when no one knows how to dance, they say that the yard is crooked. Actually, BNP said this to cover up the shame that they have won only two seats in municipality polls in the first round. The Minister was addressing a discussion program marking the Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Awami League office on Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday. About misinformation over the cost of Corona vaccine apps, the Minister said, the ICT Division and the Health Ministry have cleared that there is no cost for the apps. Responding to the report of buying vaccine from India at 47 per cent higher price he said, Bangladesh would get vaccine with the same price like India.

The Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase-CCGP in a virtual meeting chaired by Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal yesterday approved a total of five proposals with an outlay of around Taka 607.74 crore, including one to procure 50,000 metric tons of wheat through international quotation from a Singaporean company. Earlier, chaired by the Finance Minister the meeting on Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs also approved the proposal for exempting the section 68(1) of PPA 2006 and the section 76(2) of the PPR 2008 as well as the concerned local law of Greece for establishing the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Centennial School at Athens under the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment. While briefing reporters after the meetings, the Minister also said, the government will consider buying Covid-19 vaccines from sources other than India in future if Indian jabs are found costlier,

Bangladesh, Myanmar and China will hold another tripartite Secretary-level meeting on Rohingya repatriation in Dhaka on January 19, Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen told reporters yesterday. Bangladesh has handed over a list of 8.4 lac Rohingyas to Myanmar for verification, Dr. Momen said. Myanmar verified only 42,000 people, the Minister said.

A total of 11,753 homeless and landless families will get houses in two phases as a gift from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina within the 'Mujib Year' under the Asrayan-2 Project in Rangpur division, officials said.

Turkey has showed keen interest to expand its trade and cooperation with Bangladesh in textile and jute sectors. This was revealed when Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh Mustafa Osman Turan called on Textiles and Jute Minister Golam Dastagir Gazi at his ministry yesterday. They also discussed various matters related to bilateral issues and mutual interest between Bangladesh and Turkey.

Posts and Telecommunication Minister Mustafa Jabbar while addressing a webinar organised by Dhaka University Innovation Centre yesterday said, Bangladesh is moving towards tremendous transformation through entrepreneurship and innovation, setting up an example in the world, under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman has sown the seeds of digitization by nationalizing primary education as well as setting up satellite ground stations at Betbunia, forming T&T boards and gaining membership of ITU and UPU, he added.

Awami League yesterday after a meeting of Local Government Representative Nomination Board held at Ganabhaban with AL President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, announced the names of 56 mayoral candidates for the fourth phase of municipal elections scheduled for February 14. Chief Election Commissioner K M Nurul Huda yesterday pointing to the allegations of vote rigging in USA after Trump's defeat said, there have always been allegations of vote rigging globally during elections. He said this while addressing a coordination meeting on law and order at the Savar Upazila Parishad yesterday. Calling upon all parties to have faith in him, he said that fair elections are being held under his supervision and will be held in future.

Dr. Gowher Rizvi, Advisor to the Prime Minister on International Relation Affairs, while addressing a consultation said, government is the guarantor of social justice; therefore, governance is an indispensable constituent to ensure the equitable share of people's access and opportunity. The Governance Innovation Unit of the Prime Minister's Office and the UNDP, in collaboration with Centre on Budget and Policy, University of Dhaka organized the Consultation at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday.

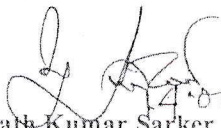
The Food and Agriculture Organization-FAO in partnership with government partners, has developed an innovative landslide early warning system for Cox's Bazar which is based on risk modeling using inputs from satellite imagery, rainfall levels and other meteorological data, a FAO press release said yesterday.

The 41st BCS preliminary examination will be held on March 19 and the special 42nd BCS preliminary examination for doctors will be held on February 26, the Bangladesh Public Service Commission decided in a meeting yesterday.

Meanwhile, the number of deaths from Covid-19 in Bangladesh rose to 7,833 with the death of 14 more people yesterday, lowest for a single day in the last two months. At the same time recovery count rose to 4,69,522, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. With the detection of 890 new cases, the total number of Covid-19 cases rose to 5,24,910. Bangladesh has so far sequenced 304 genomes of Covid-19 and submitted them to Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data-GISAID, Professor Dr. Aftab Ali Shaikh, Chairman of Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-BCSIR, said this at a press conference yesterday. Bangladesh's Beximco Pharmaceuticals will buy up to 3 million doses of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine from Serum Institute of India at about US\$8 each for sale on the private market, Beximco's Chief Operating Officer told Reuters. Serum Institute will begin deliveries of the shot later this month, he said

A Dhaka court yesterday set February 17 to submit a probe report in the case lodged over Bangladesh Bank reserve heist that took place in 2016. Shankhajit Sinha, nephew of former Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha yesterday testified in a case against him and 10 others for allegedly embezzling Taka four crore from the then Farmers Bank and laundering the money abroad.

State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Md. Zakir Hossain said, primary teachers will not have to work in the same post for the rest of their lives, as present government has taken up ample opportunities for their promotion. Addressing a two-day orientation course for the newly recruited teachers of Dhaka district yesterday, he said the Ministry of Public Administration is in the process of creating one Assistant Headmaster post in each government primary school and salary scale of the Headmaster has been upgraded to 11th grades and the salary scale of the Assistant Teachers has been upgraded to 13th grade.


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