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### News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon people to have confidence and trust that Bangladesh wouldn't bow down to anything like the COVID-19 pandemic. The Premier made the call while addressing a function marking the 34th founding anniversary of the Special Security Force-SSF from Ganabhaban yesterday. The Prime Minister said, her government has given a special attention to keep continuing the lives and livelihoods of the people alongside ensuring their protection and education as well. The Premier urged the SSF personnel to read the book titled 'Secret Documents of Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman', saying, "the people, who are working to ensure security, should study the book to know on how to work." Besides, one could know how Bangabandhu made Bangladesh ready in phases towards the desired independence, the PM continued.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged all including party leaders and workers to plant more trees to protect the country's environment and ensure food security of the people. The Premier made the call while inaugurating a three-month-long tree plantation campaign taken by Bangladesh Krishak League on the first day of Bengali Ashar month through a videoconference from Ganabhaban last afternoon. The Prime Minister said, in the Mujib Year marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a programme has been drawn up to plant one crore trees across the country. She called upon all to make the programme successful.

The supplementary budget of Taka 46,516.11 crore for the fiscal 2019-20 to meet the increased expenditures under different ministries and divisions of the government was passed at the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday. Delivering his concluding speech on the supplementary budget in the House, Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal said, the proposed budget for the next fiscal year has been framed based on expansionary perspective. He said, in the wake of Novel Coronavirus pandemic, the proposed budget this time put priority on saving people and their livelihood from the deadly virus.

Bangladesh yesterday reported 38 more fatalities from the novel coronavirus in a daily count, raising the death toll from the pandemic to 1209. The country also saw further rise in coronavirus cases with the detection of 3,099 new cases during the same period, taking the total number of cases to 90,619. Directorate General of Health Services-DGHS came up with the disclosure at its daily health bulletin. A total of 15,038 samples were tested at 58 authorised labs across the country during that time, it added. DGHS also informed that across the country 34,027 people have recovered so far from the disease.

The government issued an order yesterday tightening restrictions on public activities and movements across the country until June 30 to check spread of COVID-19 pandemic as the previously existing nationwide control measure of identical nature expired last evening. The Cabinet Division order containing 19 directives introduced for the first time a zoning system based on coronavirus prevalence in certain areas as "red, yellow and green" saying all offices in particular spots of red zones would remain under general holiday. The health authorities in collaboration with city corporations or municipal bodies, local administrative authorities and law enforcement agencies would chalk up detailed plans to enforce the restrictions particularly in red and yellow zones. Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam talking to reporters yesterday said, the lockdown will be enforced within 48 to 72 hours after completing mapping of the red zone areas in the city. Meanwhile, the government has extended closure of all educational institutions till August 6 aiming at slowing down the further spread of the lethal coronavirus in the country.



Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain yesterday formed 13 High Court benches to hold virtual trial from today. A Supreme Court notification said, the benches would hold hearing through virtual attendance under 'Usage of Information and Communication Technology in Court Ordinance, 2020' and in line with the apex court's practice direction.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader has urged the country's people to keep trust in the courageous leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The Minister came up with the call while speaking at a virtual press briefing from his official residence yesterday. Putting emphasis on united efforts in creating mass awareness to remain safe from coronavirus infection, he said that the government has been working round-the-clock to tackle the coronavirus pandemic.

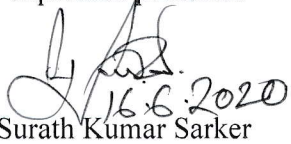
Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud has termed many reports of Transparency International of Bangladesh-TIB as one-sided, flawed and politically motivated, saying the only job of TIB is to look for faults. The Minister came up with the comments while replying to a query on TIB's criticism on government's steps over the ongoing pandemic at his Ministry yesterday. Replying to another query on BNP leaders' remarks on corona situation, the Information Minister said, the languages of BNP leaders concerning the ongoing pandemic are very much vicious. "We hope that they (BNP) will take lesson from other countries even from neighbouring India. At the very beginning of the pandemic, Indian opposition leader Sonia Gandhi wrote a letter to the Indian government offering to extend support to the government's steps. But BNP has failed to do that," the Minister said.

Bangladesh and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have agreed to bring back Bangladeshi workers home in phases ensuring their quarantine facilities upon return. Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen and his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud discussed the issue over phone on Sunday. During the discussion, Dr. Momen urged the Saudi government to engage Bangladeshi agriculture laborers in boosting agri production and fish cultivation projects in Saudi Arabia during the post COVID-19 period. Dr. Momen also observed that skilled Bangladeshi IT professionals can contribute to the Saudi Arabian development. The Saudi Foreign Minister expressed interest in engaging Bangladeshi skilled workers in the fields of agriculture and IT. Dr. Momen urged Saudi Arabia to call a foreign ministerial level virtual meeting of OIC to discuss over forming a 'COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund' to help the OIC member states recovering from their shattered economy wrecked by the pandemic.

The USA has decided to provide more than 173 million US dollars as a new funding to support Bangladesh's ongoing COVID-19 pandemic response as well as efforts over post-COVID development and economic recovery. US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl Miller confirmed this as he joined an event virtually from the US Embassy yesterday.

A total of 364 stranded Bangladeshis returned from Australia and the United Arab Emirates by two separate chartered flights yesterday amid flight suspension due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The deceased former Mayor of Sylhet City Corporation Badaruddin Ahmad Kamran was laid to eternal rest besides his parents graves near Manikpir Tila in the city after Johr prayers yesterday. His first namaz-e-janaza was held at his Chhararpar residence in the city followed by second one near Manikpir Tila. Kamran died of being infected by coronavirus at CMH in Dhaka in the wee hours of yesterday at the age of 69. President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate condolence messages have expressed profound shock at his death.



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