



PRESS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT  
GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH  
DHAKA



Most Urgent  
For: Bangladoot, All Missions  
MSG: 161/2020-21  
Date: Thursday, 11 February 2021

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### News Brief

President Md. Abdul Hamid said, Bangladesh is ready to send more skilled manpower to the Maldives. The President also said there is an opportunity to provide higher education to more Maldivian students in Bangladesh. The Head of the State came up with the remarks when Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid paid a courtesy call on him at Bangabhaban yesterday. During the meeting, the Maldivian FM expressed his country's eagerness to explore further avenues for cooperation with Bangladesh in some potential sectors, including trade and investment. He also expressed the optimism that the existing relations between the two countries would reach new heights with the visit of the Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih to Bangladesh to attend the celebration programs of Bangladesh's Independence Golden Jubilee and Mujib Borsho.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, as the Chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum, assured that Bangladesh would extend the highest possible support to the Maldives in facing the adverse impacts of the climate changes. The Premier gave this assurance when visiting Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid paid a courtesy call on her at Ganabhaban yesterday. Abdulla Shahid highly praising the Prime Minister's leadership also said, Bangabandhu was a great leader not only for Bangladesh but also for the whole world. The FM expressed gratitude to Bangladesh for extending medical assistants to the Maldives in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked the Bangladesh Awami Juba League leaders and workers to make the organization as an ideal one being imbued with the ideology of the Father of the Nation and patriotism, saying that politics without principles never exists. Addressing a discussion, virtually from Ganabhaban, marking the organization's 48th birth anniversary, the Premier said that the country's democracy has been reestablished through many struggles and the Juba League has played a significant role in all the movements.

The plying of vehicles will begin on the Padma Bridge by June 2022, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader stated this at a virtual views-exchange meeting with officials of BRTC yesterday. If the bridge needs repairing, the timeframe will increase to June 2023 only for the construction firms, he said. He also asked the authorities concerned to take harsher steps to make the BRTC profitable.

There will be no legal complexity if the gallantry award of Late President Ziaur Rahman is cancelled, Law Minister Anisul Huq said to journalist after being inoculated with the first shot of Covid-19 vaccine at Kurmitola General Hospital yesterday. A probe body of Jatiya Muktiyoddha Council will meet soon to look into the legal aspects of revoking gallantry awards given to Ziaur Rahman and self-declared four killers of Bangabandhu-Shariful Haq Dalim, Nur Chowdhury, Rashed Chowdhury and Mosleh Uddin, the council decided at a meeting on Tuesday.

The Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase in a virtual meeting yesterday chaired by Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal approved a proposal for procuring submarine cable for expansion of rural power distribution network in four divisions of the country with a cost of around Taka 107.94 crore. Besides, the meeting approved another proposal for procuring consultancy services from Bishwo Shahitto Kendro for 24 months under Developing reading habit program implementation management services with around Taka 82.70 crore. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Finance Minister also approved a proposal in principle for following the Direct Procurement Method for holding drone show, aerial show and fireworks show to celebrate the golden jubilee of country's independence on March 26 this year. Subject to the necessary amendments to the Public Procurement Rules, the meeting also approved in principle a proposal to reduce the time in purchasing rice, wheat and other commodities on emergency state purposes.

Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen urged the developed countries to come forward to provide necessary financial, technological and technical assistances to the most vulnerable and affected countries of the climate change and the global warming. Dr. Momen was addressing a virtual program titled "Priorities for Labour, Human Rights and Health Sectors in the Context of Climate Change" organized by the

permanent mission of Bangladesh in Geneva. The CVF Thematic Ambassador Saima Wazed addressing the program said, the impact of climate change particularly will mostly affect the women, children and the people with disabilities in the three sectors – employment, human rights and public health. She urged the WHO and all respective international organizations to play a more effective role in reducing all types of health risks, including mental health, caused by the climate change.

The government is taking steps to engage the private healthcare sector in the mass Covid-19 vaccination campaign, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said this while addressing an event on the Vaccination Campaign in a city hotel yesterday.

Bangladesh and Bhutan have agreed to work together for taking quick advantages from the Preferential Trade Agreement-PTA which was signed earlier between the two friendly countries. The information was revealed yesterday at a meeting between Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi and Bhutanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Rinchen Kuentsyl in the secretariat in the city. In another meeting with South Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Lee Jangkeun, the Commerce Minister urged South Korea to provide duty free market access for increasing exports.

More than two dozens foreign Diplomats in Dhaka including EU Ambassador Rensje Teerink, German Ambassador Peter Fahrenholtz, Indian High Commissioner Vikram Kumar Doraiswami, Turkish Ambassador Mustafa Osman Turan, Italian Ambassador Enrico Nunziata, France Ambassador Jean-Marin Schuh, Australian High Commissioner Jeremy Bruer and others received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine at Sheikh Russel Gastro Liver Institute and Hospital in the city yesterday. Along with the Diplomats, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md. Shahriar Alam and Secretary Masud Bin Momen were also vaccinated there.

Palestine has named a street in Hebron city after Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Palestinian Foreign Minister Dr. Riyad Al-Malki formally disclosed this while Bangladesh Ambassador in Jordan Nahida Sobhan called on him at Palestine embassy in Amman on Tuesday. During the meeting, the Ambassador reiterated Bangladesh's support for the Palestine.

The High Court yesterday appointed six amici curiae to state their opinions on February 15 on the issue of a writ petition that sought its directive to ban broadcast of Al Jazeera, a Qatar based news channel, in the country. A special tribunal yesterday ordered further probe in a case lodged under Digital Security Act-DSA against 11 people including Zulkarnain Shayer Khan alias Sami, who appeared in an allegedly false and politically motivated report, telecast by Al Jazeera recently.

A Dhaka court yesterday handed down death sentences to 8 militants including sacked army Major Ziaul Haque, for the murder of publisher Faisal Arefin Dipan in 2015. A Satkhira court yesterday convicted 17 people and sentenced them to different jail terms in a case over the series bomb blast by JMB at five places of the district on August 17, 2005.

With the death of 10 more people yesterday, the number of deaths from Covid-19 in Bangladesh rose to 8,239. At the same time recovery count rose to 4,85,290, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. With the detection of 388 new cases, the total number of Covid-19 cases rose to 5,39,153. A total of 1,58,451 people were administered COVID-19 vaccines on the fourth day of the countrywide vaccination campaign, giving rise to the number of vaccine receivers to 3,37,769 till yesterday.

UN Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix appreciated the professionalism, discipline, dedication and bravery of the Bangladeshi peacekeepers deployed in different UN peacekeeping missions as Bangladesh Army Chief General Aziz Ahmed, who is now on an official visit to the US held meeting with him on Tuesday. On Monday, Under-Secretary-General of the UN Department of Operational Support Atul Khare in his meeting with the Army Chief, thanked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her invaluable contribution to peacekeeping, climate change, women empowerment and humanitarian issues.

Bangladesh Bank in a notice yesterday enabled mobile financial service-MFS providers to bring home the export earnings of online workers such as freelancers and exporters of information technology-related services. Earlier only banks were able to provide such remittance services.

Bangladesh is the second biggest source of online workers in Asia followed by India, said an ADB report released yesterday.

  
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