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News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, return of the United States to the Paris Agreement on climate change would add new momentum to the climate diplomacy. The Premier said this while the US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry called on her at Ganabhaban yesterday. The Prime Minister thanked US President Joe Biden for inviting her to join the "Leaders' Summit on Climate" to be held on April 22-23, 2021 virtually while John Kerry thanked the Bangladesh Premier for accepting the invitation. As many as 40 countries will take part in the summit. During the meeting, the Special Envoy of the US President put emphasis on using alternative source of energy like the renewable ones that include solar energy alongside hydroelectricity to reduce the risk of pollution. He also said that the US will give 2 million dollars in addition to 1 million dollars to the Green Climate Fund. Kerry appreciated the Bangladesh Premier's role on climate change issues. Sheikh Hasina said that they have talked to India, Bhutan and Nepal to set up hydropower plants in a bilateral or trilateral way on regional basis. Kerry also said, they can give Covid-19 vaccines to Bangladesh if it wants, as the US demand for the vaccine will be met by the mid-summer. Later, the Prime Minister gifted John Kerry Oshomapto Atmojiboni, Karagarer Rojnamcha written by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Pakistani intelligence branch report on Bangabandhu.

The US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate said, his country is looking forward to create the pledged 100 billion US dollar global fund each year for combating climate change. John Kerry said this while making a joint press briefing with Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen at the State Guest House Padma in the capital yesterday. The Special Envoy said the US is delighted to work together with Bangladesh in the climate change front. Dr Momen said, they discussed about US-Bangladesh climate collaboration in the field of climate change adaptation and mitigation, renewable energy, waste management, technology transfer and climate financing. He said they also discussed about the environmental degradation in Cox's Bazar due to sheltering of 1.1 million persecuted Rohingyas there. While replying a question about the Rohingya issue, Kerry said, the US is focused to find out a solution to repatriate Rohingyas as well as restoration of democracy in Myanmar. Environment Minister Shahab Uddin and Special Envoy of the Climate Vulnerable Forum Presidency Abul Kalam Azad were also present there.

Later, the Foreign Minister saw Kerry off at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport last evening. John Kerry arrived Dhaka yesterday morning for brief a visit to hand over the US President's invitation to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for attending a climate summit.

The government is thinking of enforcing a weeklong complete lockdown from April 14 as the coronavirus infection rate is rising alarmingly. Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said this at a regular press conference at his residence yesterday. Turning to politics, he said BNP remains in isolation after failing in movements and election. During the coronavirus pandemic, the AL leaders and workers are standing beside the distressed people and the government aid has reached the grassroots, he said, adding that on the other hand, BNP leaders are making imaginary complaints staying at home. Meanwhile, State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain also informed the reporters that the government will enforce a weeklong strict lockdown from April 14 to contain the alarming rise in coronavirus infection rate. A notification will be issued on April 11 to this end, he added.

Railways Minister Advocate Nurul Islam Sujon visited the road extension development work in Debiganj upazila of Panchagarh district yesterday. The newly constructed road has been extended to 18 feet from 12 feet. The work of about 25 kilometers road is going on from Debiganj to Fulbari in Debiganj upazila. Earlier, the Minister inaugurated the road extension work on September 27 in 2019. The Local Government Engineering Department is implementing the construction work at a cost of Taka 31 crore 62 lakh. About 50 percent work of road has been completed.

As part of the government campaign for expansion of renewable energy sources in the country, solar home system-SHS illuminated houses of 2 crore marginal people. State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid said this to media yesterday. Being encouraged by the government's steps and incentives for expansion of renewable energy in the country, entrepreneurs have been setting up SHS, he added. He said the government will continue incentives and cooperation in expansion of renewable energy in the country.

State Minister for Labour and Employment Begum Monnujan Sufian directed all field-level officials of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments and the Department of Labour to maintain proper health guidelines at workplaces to keep the workers safe from coronavirus. She issued this directive while addressing a virtual meeting on combating the second phase of COVID-19, organized by the Ministry of Labor and Employment yesterday.

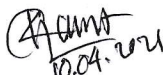
State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak said, the government is working to build digital-technological infrastructures as the world has become dependent on data and technology nowadays. He made the remarks while speaking at an international webinar titled 'Transforming Finance and Accounting with Robotic Process Automation-RPA' organized by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh in Dhaka yesterday. The world is now rapidly moving towards intelligent hyper automation, he said, adding that the RPA would streamline the process in line with business activities and regulations.

Bangladesh Finance and Investment Company signed a Memorandum of Understanding-MoU with US-based Sovereign Infrastructure Group-SIG, a global financing company that works with project sponsors and Multilateral Development Banks and national and local governments. Bangladesh Ambassador to the US M Shahidul Islam and Chairman of BD Finance Manwar Hossain witnessed the signing of the MoU in Washington DC yesterday. The MoU is expected to mobilize up to US\$2 billion for infrastructural projects in Bangladesh in the next two years. This development took place following the launching of the US-Bangladesh Business Council by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 6.

President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in separate condolence messages, expressed deep shock and sorrow at the death of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. They prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed deep sympathy to the bereaved royal family. Prince Philip, the husband of Queen Elizabeth II and a leading figure in the British royal family for almost seven decades, died yesterday at the age of 99, Buckingham Palace has announced.

Veteran politician, an Ekushey Padak winner, educationist and former member of Ganaparishad Alhaj Md Abul Hashem died at his 96 in Dhaka yesterday. President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in separate condolence messages expressed deep shock and sorrow at the death of Alhaj Md Abul Hashem.

With the death of 63 more people yesterday, the number of deaths from Covid-19 in Bangladesh rose to 9,584. At the same time recovery count rose to 5,68,541, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. With the detection of 7,462 new cases, the total number of Covid-19 cases rose to 6,73,594. A total of 69,89,924 people have so far been registered to receive COVID-19 vaccines till yesterday. Total number of vaccine receivers stood at 55,68,703. Meanwhile, the government started administering the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine from April 8 as the countrywide vaccination campaign was launched on February 7.


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