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**News Brief**

The ECNEC yesterday approved a total of six projects including one for upgrading Sylhet-Tamabil highway into four-lane, involving an estimated cost of Taka 3,586.04 crore to boost Bangladesh's trade and commerce, export and import by establishing sub-regional road connectivity with India, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and China. The approval came from ECNEC meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina virtually presiding over. The other projects approved in the meeting are-Motlob-Meghna-Dhonagoda-Beribadh road development project with Taka 121.93 crore, Ponds and Canals development throughout the country, 1st revised, with an additional cost of Taka 422.52 crore, Constructing modern food silos, 2nd revised, with an additional cost of Taka 1,648.98 crore, Drainage system development of Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra area, 2nd phase, 1st revised with an additional cost of Taka 741.71 crore and Extension of fish farming technology services at union level, 2nd phase, 2nd revised, with an additional cost of Taka 107.80 crore.

Bangladesh would provide 50,000 tons of fertilizer to Nepal. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said this responding to a call yesterday by her Nepalese counterpart K. P. Sharma Oli seeking help as the landlocked country exposed to severe shortage of the fertilizer. During the 20 minutes long telephonic conversation, the Premier Sheikh Hasina also assured the Nepalese Premier of providing rail transit to Nepal. Both leaders simultaneously expected the two neighbours to ink a bilateral preferential trade agreement-PTA soon to boost trade and commerce.

One-day national mourning is being observed across the country today in respect to the memory of former Indian President Pranab Mukherjee by keeping the national flag hoisted half-mast at all government, semi-government and autonomous offices, educational institutions and all government and non-government buildings and at all missions abroad. Special prayers are being offered at the concerned places of worships across the country. Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Muhammad Imran, on behalf of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, showed last respect to Mukherjee by placing a wreath at his portrait before the funeral in New Delhi yesterday.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader while addressing a virtual views-exchange meeting with Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority yesterday, warned that stern actions will be taken against the public transports which will not abide by the government directives. The Minister urged the BRTA authorities and the transport owners' association to display government-approved fare chart in the public transports. He also directed all to maintain hygiene and not carry any passenger excess of their seat numbers.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud castigating a comment of BNP over democracy issue said, BNP itself is a barrier to democracy. They should stop patronizing the war criminals and militants if they want to talk about democracy, he said. The Minister made the comments while talking to newsmen prior to a meeting with the leaders of Sampadak (editors) Parishad at his ministry yesterday. Information Secretary Kamrun Nahar was present in the meeting. In the meeting, the Minister also informed that the online versions of the daily newspapers would get priority to online news portal registration.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anisul Huq in a webinar on Monday said, the government would form a national commission to identify those who were behind the brutal killing of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members on August 15 in 1975. He further said, BNP founder Ziaur Rahman was the topmost beneficiary of Bangabandhu killing.

The body of 1971 Liberation War Sector Commander Major General (retired) C R Dutta, Bir Uttam was cremated yesterday at Rajarbag Cremation Ground with state honour. Earlier, the body was taken to the Dhakeshwari Temple premise where last tribute was paid to the war hero. On behalf of President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, their Military Secretaries paid the tribute.

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid while addressing the inaugural function of Smart Pre-Payment Meter Installation in Jashore through video conference yesterday said, enhancing use of technology in power sector is necessary to ensure transparency and accountability.

Bangladesh has established diplomatic ties with Saint Kitts and Nevis, an island country in the West Indies. Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA Mohammad Ziauddin and Saint Kitts and Nevis Ambassador to the USA Thelma Phillip Browne inked a joint communiqué, in this regard on behalf of their respective countries at the Bangladesh embassy in Washington, D.C. on Monday.ss

Government representatives from 46 Food and Agriculture Organization-FAO Member Nations, including Bangladesh have convened a four-day virtual meeting, hosted by the Royal Government of Bhutan, to closely examine the present situation of the region's food security, with a particular emphasis on implications of the coronavirus.

Bangladesh yesterday recorded 35 more fatalities from the novel coronavirus in a daily count, raising the death toll from the pandemic to 4,316. At the same time recovery count rose to 2,08,177 after another 3,290 patients were discharged from the hospitals during the period. The country also saw further rise in coronavirus cases with the detection of 1,950 new cases taking the total number of cases to 3,14,946. A total of 12,209 samples were tested across the country during the time.

The Power Division has given 600 pieces of N95 masks and one set HFNC-high flow nasal cannula-for the Government Employees Hospital in the capital. Power Division Secretary Dr. Sultan Ahmed handed the masks and HFNC to Public Administration Secretary Sheikh Yusuf Harun yesterday.

A total of 29 Indian sailors, who were stuck in Bangladesh due to commercial flight suspension amid COVID-19, returned home yesterday by a chartered flight.

A Dhaka court yesterday sent 81 returnees from Vietnam and two returnees from Qatar to jail, for their involvement in different crimes there.

The government has promoted 120 officials, who were merged with the admin cadre after demolishing the economic cadre, with the rank of Senior Assistant Secretary to the rank of Deputy Secretary.

The country's foreign exchange reserve has touched a new record of US\$39.04 billion amid coronavirus crisis. Earlier, the previous highest reserve amounting US\$37.18 billion was recorded on July 29 this year.

There is no possibility of flooding in Brahmaputra and Ganges basin during the next 10 days, according to the latest flood outlook of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre.



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