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News brief

The Cabinet yesterday approved a proposal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to give formal recognition to the Republic of Kosovo as an independent and sovereign state by Bangladesh. The approval came from the regular weekly meeting of the Cabinet held at Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair. Bangladesh would be the 114th country to have given formal recognition to Kosovo. The Cabinet also approved the draft of the Jubo Niti (Youth Policy), 2017 and drafts of two acts, the Marine Fisheries Act, 2017 and the Sheikh Hasina National Youth Development Institute Act, 2017, and two agreements for avoiding double taxation and tax evasion.

Parliament yesterday passed the child marriage prevention law with a provision allowing it in 'special circumstances'. According to the law, the minimum age for the marriage of females is 18 and for males it is 21, other than the 'exceptions in special circumstances'. The Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2017 was passed in voice vote when State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroz Chumki placed it before the MPs.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday said that implementation of the new VAT and Supplementary Duty Act-2012 would come into effect from 1 July 2017. The Minister said this after a meeting with Deputy Managing Director of International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mitsuhiro Furusawa at the Finance Ministry. The Minister said, IMF lauded Bangladesh as the country is moving forward to become a developed one. About the demand of the business community, the Finance Minister said, the government has already taken various steps, including increasing the limit of exemption, to make the law business-friendly.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed said, the government has selected leather as the product of the year. He said, the government has increased the amount of cash incentives given on the export of different goods including leather and leather goods. The Minister also focused on diversifying both products and markets to increase the value and volume of exportable goods. The Minister said this while handing over CIP (Commercially Important Person) cards to some 164 businessmen for the year 2013 under export and trade categories at a programme at a city hotel yesterday.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain yesterday said the local government bodies would be strengthened to implement the present government's pledge for power decentralization. The Minister said this while presiding over the 45th meeting of National Institute of Local Government (NILG) management board. The Minister said the NILG would be restructured in light of experiences of local government system of neighboring countries and training would be given to people's representatives so they could contribute more to changing lot of the people.

Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal has said the government is unable to fully utilise the total allocation of project assistance in the Annual Development Programme (ADP) of the current fiscal due to the impact of terrorist attack on Holey Artisan Bakery on July 1 last year. The Minister made this comment while briefing the reporters at the Planning Ministry in the city's Sher-e-Banglanagar area yesterday. The Minister however said the foreigners later came back and joined their work as the government had ensured their security.

Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor yesterday said Mangal Shovajatra, a festival during Bengali New Year celebrations inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, will be organized across the country. He said it in an inter-ministerial meeting at Shilapkala Academy.

Aiming to launch digital insurance services through countrywide digital centers, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Access to Information (a2i) Program of Prime Minister's Office and Jiban Bima Corporation at PMO Special Security Force (SSF) briefing room in the city.

DSEX, the prime index of the DSE, settled yesterday at 5620.26 points.

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