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News Brief

President Md. Abdul Hamid will address the Jatiya Sangsad today highlighting Bangabandhu's life and works. Earlier, for the first time in the history of Bangladesh, a special session of the 11th Jatiya Sangsad marking Mujib Barsha, the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, began at 6pm yesterday. The 'Narcotics Control (Amendment) Bill, 2020' was placed in the Parliament yesterday dropping the provision of setting up separate Narcotics Control Tribunals to pave the way for competent courts to try narcotic-related crimes. Besides, a bill titled 'Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board Bill, 2020' was placed in the House to replace an ordinance of 1978 in this regard. The much-talked-about 'Women and Children Repression Prevention (Amendment) Bill, 2020' was also introduced in the Parliament, stipulating the death penalty as the maximum punishment in rape cases. At the onset of the session, the JS unanimously adopted an obituary reference over the deaths of Attorney General Mahbube Alam, former Attorney General Barrister Rafiq-ul-Haque and a number of other noted personalities.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has declared Border Guard Bangladesh a "three-dimensional force" after the induction of two helicopters named after Bir Shreshtha Nur Mohammad and Bir Shreshtha Abdur Rouf into it. The Premier virtually addressing a programme for induction of the helicopters into the Air Wing of BGB at the BGB Headquarters, Pilkhana yesterday said, the government has passed the BGB Act-2010 to make the BGB a modern and time-befitting border force. Initiatives have also been taken to formulate 'Border Guard Bangladesh Vision-2041' she said adding that there is a plan to recruit 15,000 more members in the force which will be implemented in three steps by 2022.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday administered the oath of office to the newly-elected chairmen of Madaripur, Faridpur and Moulvibazar District Council. Speaking on the occasion, she said, the government has given special importance to the continuation of the country's socio-economic advancement alongside facing the Covid-19 pandemic. The Premier highlighted the different steps taken by her government to fight the COVID-19 impact on economy and society including the announcement of 21 stimulus packages, appointment of 6000 nurses, 2000 doctors and so on.

President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate messages have congratulated United States President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. The President in his message expressed the hope that the existing relations between the two countries would reach a new height in days to come with the expansion in various fields, including trade and investment. In the messages to Biden yesterday, the Premier said, "Indeed, I look forward to working closely with you ... in effectively confronting the evils of terrorism, violent extremism, hatred, forced displacements as of the Rohingyas, and for the realization of a safer and a better world." The Premier also extended invitation to Biden and first lady Dr. Jill Biden, Kamala Harris and Douglass Emhoff to visit Bangladesh.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader castigating BNP Secretary General's comment that the country became independent for the second time on November 7, 1975 said, distorting the history of the country's independence is BNP's democracy. The Minister while addressing a press conference yesterday also said, the defeated forces of independence took their revenge by carrying out the August 15, 1975 carnage and BNP considered the day as independence for the first time. He said, had the conspiracy to assassinate Sheikh Hasina through the grenade attacks on August 21, 2004 been successful, BNP leaders would say the country became independent for the third time.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud pleading for raising voice against any ill-attempt to destroy the country's inter-communal harmony has expressed the vow to build communal harmony-driven "Sonar Bangla" as dreamt by Father of the Nation resisting all conspiracies. No ill attempt to

destroy inter-communal harmony will be tolerated in this country of communal harmony, he said as he was addressing an online workshop on pre-primary education based on pagoda on Saturday.

Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen hoped that ties between Dhaka and Washington DC would further strengthen under the upcoming Biden administration. Talking to reporters, Dr. Momen expected positive multilateralism approach from the US under the Biden administration on climate, immigration, trade and investment issues that was relatively missing during the Thump tenure. The Biden administration will be more vocal in resolving Rohingya crisis as the democrats focus more on human rights issues, he hoped. State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam while talking to reporters said, Bangladesh will continuously urge the US Administration to send back Bangabandhu's killer Rashed Chowdhury to execute the court verdict.

The number of deaths from Covid-19 in Bangladesh rose to 6,067 yesterday with the death of 18 more people. At the same time recovery count rose to 3,38,146. The Ministry of Religious Affairs, in a notification issued yesterday, made obligatory the wearing of masks in all religious institutions, including mosques, temples, churches and pagodas in view of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Khulna district's law enforcement committee in a meeting yesterday decided to action like imprisonment, fine if people go outside without mask, through operating regular mobile court led by executive magistrate from today.

The number of internet users in Bangladesh expanded by 3.3 crore between 2010 and 2019, bringing another 20 per cent of the population online, according to a report published by GSMA last week. Post and Telecommunication Minister Mustafa Jabbar said, Bangladesh is ready to roll out 5G services before March 26 next year, the golden jubilee of the independence. State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak while addressing a function on the occasion of sixth anniversary of e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh said, more than five lac people will get jobs in the country's e-commerce sector in the next five years. He said, financial assistance of Taka 10 lac to Taka five crore would be provided to the entrepreneurs for e-commerce in the name of Venture Capital. State Minister for Water Resources Zahid Farooq yesterday inaugurated 162 digital services with a view to modernizing the system of the ministry terming it a landmark achievement in digital advancement, in the 'Mujib Year'.

The Chinese Embassy in Dhaka yesterday said, its visa office remains open, and Bangladeshi nationals with special and urgent needs for traveling can still come for visa application. The government of Malaysia has decided that foreign nationals from 23 countries, including Bangladesh, who are holders of long term work passes, are subject to a temporary entry ban into Malaysia until further notice. An exception is only allowed based on case-to-case basis and emergency cases. Malaysian High Commission in Dhaka said this yesterday.

State Minister for Information Dr. Md. Murad Hassan while addressing a discussion at Jaitya Press Club in the capital yesterday said, through jail killing, the defeated forces of independence had tried to wipe out the name of Awami League from the soil of Bengal forever. But, the conspirators did not succeed. Following the ideology of Bangabandhu, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has thrown the conspirators into the dustbin of history.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has changed the name of its "External Publicity" wing into "Public Diplomacy" wing to keep it better functional in achieving goals.

Dhaka University in a Deans' Committee meeting yesterday decided to drop the undergraduate admission tests of D and E units, held for social science and fine arts faculties from the 2021-22 academic year.



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