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**News Brief**

The 6th session of Jatiya Sangsad was prorogued yesterday. Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina delivering her winding up speech announced her government's "zero tolerance policy" against rape alongside terrorism, militancy and drugs. The Prime Minister also touched on different issues like measures taken so far in the backdrop of the outbreak of deadly coronavirus in China, supply of essentials in the upcoming Ramadan, economy, mosquito menace as well as the country's development in various sectors. The Prime Minister said, the amount of forex reserve in Bangladesh is now over 32 billion dollars and moreover 18 billion dollar remittances came to the country. Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Rowshan Ershad in her address urged the government to take stern action against the unscrupulous traders across the country as they are creating 'unstable' situation in the commodity markets. The 6th session of 11th Jatiya Sangsad during its 28 sittings after beginning on January 9 passed seven bills. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a meeting of the AL Parliamentary Party at Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan yesterday directed the party leaders not to do anything excess while celebrating Mujib Borsho. Sheikh Hasina also asked the party men not to install any mural of Bangabandhu without the approval of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Trust.

The ECNEC has approved a project with Taka 6,014.62 crore for enhancing the capacity of Mongla Port. The ECNEC meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair yesterday approved a total of nine new projects with an estimated cost of Taka 13,639.01 crore. The other important projects approved in the meeting are; development of Rajshahi city, upgrading Karnaphuli Tunnel link road, modernization of Paturia and Daulatdia ports, protecting the establishments from the Padma river erosion under Charghat and Bagha upazilas.

Nepalese Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawall called on President Md. Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban yesterday. The President stressed the need for utilizing commerce and investment and strengthening the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Nepal. The President urged Nepal government to play positive role in different regional and international forums to solve the Rohingya problem. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen held a bilateral meeting with his Nepalese counterpart Pradeep Kumar Gyawali at the state guest house Meghna in Dhaka yesterday. Dr. Momen welcomed Nepal's proposal to use Saidpur Airport as part of strengthening connectivity between the two countries. The Nepalese Foreign Minister said, Bangladesh could get 500 megawatt hydropower within the next five or six years as Indian company GMR is going to start construction of a hydropower plant in Nepal soon.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader has said, BNP wants to create a political issue over the illness of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia. He said this while speaking at a joint meeting with leaders of Khulna divisional units of AL in Dhaka yesterday. About the issue of BNP Chairperson's bail Mr Quader said, it is the jurisdiction of the court to give her bail. Referring to denial of telephonic conversation with him by BNP Secretary General on Khaleda Zia's parole, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said, if now Fakhrul wants to deny the conversation, there are enough evidences to prove his conversation including its recorded version.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud yesterday informed the Jatiya Sangsad that the government formed a high level 19-member committee to prevent any rumor and propaganda against the government's development activities. He went on saying that there is

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also an 11-member cell on preventing rumor under the Press Information Department which is working to inform the media about government's statement immediately after detecting rumors in social networking sites. Responding to a question he said, a powerful board is working to stop obscenity in films and a task force in association with RAB in plain cloth is working across the country. Meanwhile, the Information Minister at a meeting with the different stakeholders related to film industry at his ministry yesterday called for combined efforts to protect the country's cinema halls, saying that the film industry and the artistes will survive, if the cinema halls survive. He said, the government has increased the amount of grant for making films to Taka 10 crore from 5 crore and the amount of grant to each film producer has also been increased to 75 lakh.

The Company (amendment) Bill, 2020 was passed in the parliament yesterday for enacting a law amending the existing Company Act, 1994. The Gazipur Unnayan Kartripakkha Bill, 2020 was placed at the Jatiya Sangsad for enacting a law with a view to making the fast-growing Gazipur city as a planned, livable and environment-friendly urban area. State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid informed the House that the government provided Tk 52,260 crore as subsidy to power sector in the last 10 years. Responding to a query he said, gas is currently being imported as LNG. At present, the LNG, equivalent to about 590 million cubic feet is imported daily, he added.

Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen and Health Minister Zahid Maleque handed over some medical kits to Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Li Jiming as a gesture of goodwill from Bangladesh to China at a function in Dhaka yesterday. The Health Minister said, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed his ministry to send the medical kits in the backdrop of the outbreak of deadly coronavirus in China. The Chinese Ambassador thanked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her generosity.

IEDCR yesterday said, no person in the country has so far been infected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) as all 72 samples of suspected cases tested by the institute so far for the virus turned out negative.

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Naoki Ito has said, the partnership between Bangladesh and Japan has shown a remarkable progress represented by the mega projects. He mentioned the third terminal of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, Dhaka MRT and Matabari-Moheshkari area development as well as the Kanchpur, Meghna and Gumti second Bridges construction. The Ambassador made the remarks while addressing a reception hosted by the Embassy of Japan celebrating the first birthday of the Emperor Naruhito after the enthronement last year. Planning Minister M A Mannan graced the occasion as the chief guest.

A six-day vaccination campaign is to begin in the capital today aiming to immune people from Cholera and Diarrhoea diseases and it will continue till February 25, said Directorate General of Health Services at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday.

A High Court bench yesterday directed the authorities concerned to set up breastfeeding corners at all mills and factories across the country within two months.

Bangladeshi expatriates, who have been living in different parts of the world, now can be able to place allegations of corruption or irregularities to the Anti-Corruption Commission directly by using the "106" hotline.

  
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