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**News Brief**

The ECNEC has approved nine projects with the total estimated cost of Tk 75.39 billion, including a Tk 25.11 billion project to expand the scope for science education in some 200 government colleges across the country. The approval came from the regular weekly ECNEC meeting held at the NEC in Dhaka yesterday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked the authorities concerned to open girl guides unit in every female educational institution to strengthen and expand their activities across the country. The PM gave the directive while speaking at a Shapla Cub Awards Distribution Ceremony at Ganabhaban in Dhaka yesterday. At the function, the PM inaugurated seven projects including the newly built 10-storey building of Girl Guides. She also laid the foundation stone of 'Shatabdi Bhaban' of Bangladesh Scouts.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid tributes to Awami League MP from Khulna-4 constituency S M Mostafa Rashidi Suja by placing wreaths on his coffin at the South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday. S M Mostafa Rashidi Suja died at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore on Thursday night.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has congratulated Bangladesh Cricket Team for winning ODI Series against the West Indies.

The voting in three city corporations – Rajshahi, Barishal and Sylhet- is going to be held today. The Election Commission has taken all-out preparations to hold the polls in the three city corporations in a free, fair and transparent manner.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed has said, the authorities concerned of the banks should run the banking activities more cautiously to help ensure better management of their respective organisations. The Minister was speaking at an award-distribution ceremony organised by the Mercantile Bank Limited in Dhaka on Saturday.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury has emphasised the need for exchanging genetic resources with other countries for developing stress-tolerant varieties of crops. The Minister was addressing at a workshop at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council in Dhaka yesterday.

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu has stressed awareness of males to build an equitable society free from gender bias. The Minister was speaking at a seminar organized by the 'Center for Men and Masculinity Studies’ of Dhaka University yesterday.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anisul Huq has invited all development partners active in supporting justice sector reform to cooperate in developing justice audit and design in Bangladesh. The Minister was addressing the launching of National Justice Audit programme at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

State Minister for Labour Mujibul Haque Chunnu has said, draft amendments to the Labour Law will be placed at the cabinet by mid-August. The State Minister disclosed this at a tripartite consultative council meeting in Dhaka yesterday.

Chinese entrepreneurs are likely to invest about US$1.59 billion in the Mirsharai Economic Zone in Chattogram. As part of the investment, Sichuan Silkroad Economic Belt Investment and Cooperation Chamber of Commerce of China signed a MoU with Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority in Dhaka yesterday.

 DSEX, the prime index of Dhaka Stock Exchange, settled yesterday at 5,280 points.

**Kamrun Nahar**

Principal Information Officer

Ph-02-9546091