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News Brief

A total of 36.25 lac poor families will get financial assistance as gift from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the occasion of the upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader revealed this at a regular press conference yesterday. As the continuation of different measures taken by the government to ensure financial security of the distressed and vulnerable people who became jobless in the wake of coronavirus outbreak and due to lockdown, 1.25 crore families will get food aid, he said. Turning to BNP's politics, he urged BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir to establish democracy inside the party at first before making different comments on the country's democracy. Earlier, the Minister virtually joining a review meeting of the Bridges Division on different development works informed that the progress of the Padma Bridge construction stood at 85 per cent till Saturday. The Minister further said, the progress of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel beneath the Karnaphuli river is 66.50 per cent so far.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will provide Taka 2500 as financial aids to each of around 35 lac low-income families and Taka 5000 to each of around one lac farmers families, who became victims of coronavirus pandemic and natural disaster, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim said to media yesterday. The government will spend a total of Taka 930 crore in this regard, he added.

The government has already taken various steps, including an incentive package of Taka 42 crore and assistance program to help farmers affected by the high temperature and heat shock across the country. At the same time, the government is emphasizing on developing high yielding rice varieties which can tolerate the high temperature, Agriculture Minister Dr. Md. Abdur Razzaque said this while paying a surprise visit to the research field of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute-BRRI in the capital yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has taken Bangladesh to new height of international diplomacy with her characteristic conviction and patience, Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen stated in a video message marking the Foreign Service Day observed yesterday. The geo-political significance of Bangladesh's economic rise and development credentials are now unmistakable to foreign policy pundits, he said.

The historic Mujibnagar Day was also observed in Bangladesh missions abroad, including the missions in Kolkata, United Nations, Jordan, Ottawa and Washington DC with due solemnity and fervor. The flag of Bangladesh was first hoisted on foreign soil at 12:41 pm on 18 April 1971 at the Bangladesh Mission in Kolkata, India. On 17 April 1971, at BaidyanathTala in Kushtia, now Mujibnagar, the day after the first government of Bangladesh was sworn in, the Pakistan Mission in Kolkata was launched as the 'Bangladesh Mission'. To commemorate the day, the officials of the Sub-High Commission in Kolkata marched around the Sub-High Commission building with the national flag of Bangladesh yesterday. At the virtual program marking the Mujibnagar Day, celebrated at the Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the United Nations on Saturday, Ambassador Rabab Fatima called upon the new generation to highlight the history of Mujibnagar government and the history and significance of the great liberation war. In Bangladesh Embassy in Jordan, a webinar was organized along with other programs marking the Day. Ambassador Nahida Sobhan spoke at the webinar. The High Commission of Bangladesh in Ottawa and Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC observed the historic Mujibnagar Day in a similar manner.

Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun urged the private sector and foreign investors to set up spare parts and tools manufacturing units in the country's Economic Zones as he was speaking at a webinar yesterday organized by Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Minister also said, if needed, a comprehensive policy will be pursued especially for this industry. Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh Ito Naoki taking part at the webinar said, Bangladesh has a strong possibility to establish its own local automobile industry. He informed that Japanese Mitsubishi Motors showed interest to invest in Bangladesh in the CKD assembling plant.

The country's largest Covid-19 dedicated hospital-Dhaka North City Corporation hospital with 1000-bed capacity was inaugurated yesterday with all necessary facilities to treat coronavirus patients. Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque formally opening the hospital at a function said, 212 ICU beds, PCR-lab, radiotherapy centre and X-ray facility have been installed at the DNCC hospital. He added, at present, the government has extended central oxygen facility at 100 hospitals in the country and the process for installing central oxygen systems at 34 more hospitals is underway. As a result, nearly 12,000 beds are equipped with central oxygen facility to provide key health service for coronavirus patients, he said.

The Commerce ministry has launched a US\$7.5 million COVID-19 response fund for private enterprises to aid them in producing medical and personal protective equipment in an effort to fight the coronavirus. Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi virtually announced the fund initiated with the support of the World Bank, under the ministry's Export Competitiveness for Jobs project yesterday, a newspaper report said quoting an online portal. Any firm registered and operated in Bangladesh for more than three years can apply for grants ranging from US\$50,000 to US\$500,000, he said.

Police arrested Hefazat-e-Islam Joint Secretary General and Secretary of the Dhaka City unit Mamunul Haque from a Madrasha at Mohammadpur area last afternoon, in a case filed with Mohammadpur Police Station. Md. Harun-ur-Rashid, Deputy Commissioner of the Tejgaon Division told the journalists that Mamunul Haque has already confessed his involvement in destructive activities to the Police. He will be taken to the court today seeking remand, Harun added. A Dhaka court yesterday placed Hefazat-e-Islam Organising Secretary Azizul Haque Islamabadi, its Dhaka city President Junayed Al Habib and its Assistant Secretary General Jalal Uddin on seven-day remand each in two cases filed over violence in the capital in 2013. Moreover, another 62 Alems of the country issued a statement against the activities of Hefazat-e-Islam yesterday, calling upon the country's people to boycott the politically mischievous leadership of Hefazat. Earlier, on Saturday, 51 Alems of the country issued a statement against the activities of Hefazat-e-Islam.

Meanwhile, two cases were filed yesterday accusing 2,500 people and 72 people in another case in connection with the killing of five workers in a clash between police and laborers at an under construction coal based power plant at Gandamara Union under Banshkhali upazila in Chattogram. Besides, two separate investigation committees have been formed by the district administration and the district police to investigate into the matter.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines and other carriers resumed the special flights for stranded Bangladeshi workers yesterday. Twelve pre-scheduled flights left Dhaka on the day, carrying migrant workers to different destinations.

The country yesterday recorded the highest number of 102 COVID-19 deaths for the third consecutive day yesterday since its first detection on March 8 last year, taking the death toll to 10,385. With 3,698 fresh cases, the tally of infections surged to 7,18,950. At the same time recovery count rose to 6,14,936, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. A total 15,048 people were administered the first dose of COVID-19 vaccines while 2,14,842 received the second dose of the vaccine across the country yesterday, DGHS said. With this, the number of vaccine receivers given the first dose of vaccine rose to 57,14,090, while a total of 13,66,609 people received the second dose of the vaccine. A total of 71,16,946 people got registered till 2.30 pm yesterday to take COVID-19 vaccines, DGHS sources said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a condolence message, expressed deep shock and sorrow at the death of Tarash upazila Awami League President and former lawmaker Freedom Fighter Gazi M M Amzad Hossain Milan, who passed away at a hospital in Sirajganj yesterday at the age of 72. Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud also condoled his death.


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