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News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked the authorities concerned to take all possible measures to stop coronavirus entering the country at any cost. The Premier gave the directive during a discussion at weekly Cabinet meeting held at her Office in Dhaka yesterday. The meeting was informed that as many as 312 Bangladeshis have been brought back from China while 171 others wanted to return home. Meanwhile, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism yesterday said, the government spent Tk 2.30 crore to bring back 312 citizens from China's Wuhan city, the epicenter of the new coronavirus outbreak.

The Cabinet approved in principle an amendment to the existing company law allowing the business entities or companies to be registered without having seals as part of government efforts to ease business regulations. The meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair also approved a draft law aimed at establishing a 'Designated Reference Institute for Chemical Measurements' as a statutory body. The cabinet also gave retrospective approval to the "Protocol on Trans-Boundary Elephant Conservation between Bangladesh and India. It endorsed as well the National Oil and Chemical Spill Contingency Plan to mitigate risks of spilling chemicals into the sea, river, and other water bodies.

The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research at a press conference at Mahakhali in Dhaka yesterday said, no case of coronavirus is found among the eight persons admitted to hospitals out of 312 Bangladeshis who returned from Wuhan of China. IEDCR has launched four hotline numbers for creating awareness among people about novel coronavirus. The hotline numbers are: 01937110011, 01937000011, 01927711784 and 01927711785, said a PID handout.

Resident Ambassador of Algeria to Bangladesh Rabah Larbi presented his credential to President Md. Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban in Dhaka yesterday. Welcoming the Envoy to Bangladesh, the President expressed satisfaction over the existing excellent bilateral relation between the two brotherly countries. During the meeting, the President recalled the Algeria's contribution to Bangladesh soon after her independence and the historic visit of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to Algiers in September 1973. Later in the evening, the newly appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to Jordan Nahida Sobhan paid a courtesy call on the President at Bangabhaban.

Vice Chancellor of Sylhet Medical University Dr. Morshed Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday evening paid a courtesy call on President Md. Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban. During the meeting, the President was apprised of overall activities, including infrastructural development and implementation of different projects of the university. Highly appreciating of setting up this medical university in Sylhet, the President said, this initiative of the incumbent government is epoch-making step to develop the country's medical education and treatment as well. Meanwhile, a delegation of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society led by the organization's Chairperson Hafiz Ahmed Mazumder submitted its Annual Report-2019 to President Md. Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban in Dhaka yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves Dhaka for Rome this morning on a four-day official visit to Italy at the invitation of her Italian Counterpart Giuseppe Conte. The Premier will reach at Fiumicino Airport, Rome at 4:15 pm local time where Minister Plenipotentiary of Italian Foreign Ministry Cristiano Cottafavi and Bangladesh Ambassador to Italy Abdus Sobhan Sikder will receive her. During the visit, the Prime Minister will hold a bilateral meeting with Giuseppe Conte on February 5. On February 7, the Prime Minister will leave Milan Malpensa International Airport for home.

Please Turn Over

The Bangladesh Olympic Association President and Army Chief General Aziz Ahmed and Secretary General Syed Shahed Reza called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in Dhaka yesterday. During the meeting, they elaborately apprised the Prime Minister of the entire preparation of 9th Bangladesh Games, which is scheduled to be held on April 1-10 in Dhaka on occasion of birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Prime Minister ensured them of extending all cooperation for organizing the games.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud has said, the voter turnout would have more in the Dhaka city polls, but BNP's negative publicity on Electronic Voting Machine discouraged voters in the election. He said this while taking part in the discussion on thanks giving motion on the President's January 9 address to the House yesterday. He also said, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina not only wants to build a developed state, but also a developed nation. Comparing to the development of Bangladesh in different indexes with Pakistan and India he said, Bangladesh has left behind Pakistan in all indexes and neighboring India in two indexes— Human Index and Social Index.

State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock M Ashraf Ali Khan Khosru informed the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that, the country is self sufficient in fish production as the country's per capita fish intake reaches to 62.58 grams against the daily demand of 60 grams. State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain while replying to a question in the House said, 3,25,082 posts in different ministries are now vacant. He also said, over 88,000 new posts were created in government services last year. State Minister for Water Resources Zahid Faruque informed the Jatiya Sangsad that the government has taken a master plan for curbing the pollution of the rivers throughout the country.

The Singapore government has assured Bangladesh that it would remain engaged on Rohingya issue and continue its efforts to find out a durable solution of the crisis. The assurance was made while Singapore non-Resident High Commissioner to Bangladesh Derek Loh Eu-Tse called on Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen at foreign ministry in Dhaka yesterday. The Foreign Minister urged the Singapore to facilitate negotiation process in ASEAN platform to convince Myanmar to create a conducive environment for ensuring a safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of the Rohingyas.

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das paid tribute to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by laying wreath at the mausoleum of the great leader at Tungipara yesterday.

Bangabandhu and Liberation War Corner will be set up at 1000 public and private libraries across the country marking the Mujib Borsho, the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid said this at a press conference in the capital yesterday.

Bangladesh Bank has doubled the limit on foreign currency that travelers can possess without declaration to the customs authority. The central bank in a circular yesterday announced that now a traveller can bear \$10,000 or its equivalent without declaration during any foreign trip.

A High Court bench while holding hearing on a writ yesterday issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain in six weeks as to why the court shall not declare illegal the practice of foetal sex determination.


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