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News Brief

The Cabinet at a meeting at the Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday gave final approval to the draft of "Bangladesh Patent Bill, 2021" aiming to upgrade the century-old patent law. Chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, joining virtually from Ganabhaban, the Cabinet also approved the draft of Bangladesh Industry-Design Bill, 2021 in principle aiming to protect the intellectual property rights of any industrial design. The Cabinet cleared draft of Bangladesh National Archive Bill, 2021 upgrading the National Archive Ordinance, 1983. The meeting approved the proposal for ratification of agreement to establish International Vaccine Institute-IVI. The Cabinet endorsed the draft of the proposed agreement on cultural cooperation between Bangladesh and Qatar. Besides, the meeting also apprised of signing of MoUs between Father of Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Museum and National Museum, New Delhi.

During the Cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister directed authorities concerned to review the situation whether the environment is created to reopen the educational institutions amid Covid-19 pandemic. Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam said this at a media briefing after the Cabinet meeting. An inter-ministerial meeting will be held within 5-6 days to review the situation regarding reopening of educational institutions.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina quoted Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's speech, he delivered on February 20 midnight in 1971 after placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar as saying, "The 1952 movement was not only limited to the Language Movement. This movement was for establishing the social, economic, cultural and political rights." The Prime Minister reiterated the same while presiding over a discussion marking the Shaheed Dibosh and International Mother Language Day organized by the AL at its central office at Bangabandhu Avenue, joining virtually from Ganabhaban yesterday. The Prime Minister also urged everyone to receive coronavirus vaccine shots and maintain proper health guidelines.

All the public and private universities across the country will reopen on May 24 while dormitories will reopen on May 17, Education Minister Dr. Dipu Moni said this at a virtual briefing yesterday. Dr. Dipu Moni said, all the residential students of the public university halls, teachers and employees of different public universities should receive vaccine before reopening of the dormitories. No examination will be taken before reopening of classes in the classrooms, but online classes will be continued, she added. The decision on reopening schools and colleges will be taken after 28 February, the Minister said. Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen left Dhaka last night on a 3-day visit to the USA. During his visit he will have series of meetings including one with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken tomorrow.

Singapore will recruit 10,000 Bangladeshis while Romania will recruit 2,000 Bangladeshis soon, the Foreign Minister informed this while talking to newsmen at his ministry yesterday. He also said, Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar will visit Bangladesh soon. Regarding the UNHCR's appeal for the immediate rescue of a group of Rohingya refugees in distress on the Andaman Sea, the Minister urged the other countries and human rights bodies to come forward to share the burden of Rohingyas, saying that Bangladesh has done enough. Mentioning that around 84,000 people live in per square kilometre at Kutupalong Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar, he questioned, "Do you see it anywhere in the world?"

Bangladesh has taken ecosystem-based approaches, more broadly, nature-based solutions for climate-resilient development, Environment, Forests and Climate Change Minister Md. Shahb Uddin said this while virtually addressing the Fifth Session of UN Environment Assembly held in Nairobi, Kenya yesterday.

Railways Minister Md. Nurul Islam Sujan while inaugurating the newly constructed high and extended platform of Thakurgaon Road rail station yesterday said the government has decided to connect

Cox's Bazar to Panchagarh by rail, giving importance on tourism, the Minister said. The government is also recovering the railways resources from the illegal occupation, he added.

Post and Telecommunication Minister Mustafa Jabbar unveiled a commemorative stamp worth Taka 10, an opening envelope worth Taka 10, a data card worth Taka 5 and a special seal at his ministry yesterday marking the jail free day of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the Agartala Conspiracy Case. Recalling Bangabandhu's Jail free day on February 22, the Minister said the day is a historic event behind achieving the independence of the country through creating mass upsurge.

UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay said, UNESCO will celebrate a decade of "indigenous languages" from 2022 through 2032 and appreciated the commitments to this effect made by Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt and Jordan. She was addressing a webinar marking the observance of the International Mother Language Day with the theme "Fostering Multilingualism in Education and Society" organized by Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, DC on Sunday. Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA M Shahidul Islam made welcome remarks in the webinar. Former US Ambassador to Bangladesh Harry K Thomas, addressing the webinar, praised Bangla language, culture and heritage as well as recent accomplishments including the launch of Bangabandhu communication satellite.

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa has expressed his appreciation to the government of Bangladesh and the High Commission for promoting the values of multilingualism among Sri Lankan students. He conveyed it through the pre-recorded video message on the occasion of International Mother Language Day celebration program arranged by the Bangladesh High Commission in Colombo on Sunday. The government of Sri Lanka partnered with the High Commission in the observance.

The United Arab Emirates has lauded Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's wise and visionary leadership in managing the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic. The appreciation was made when State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md. Shahrar Alam held a bilateral meeting with his UAE counterpart Ahmed Ali Al Sayegh in Abu Dhabi yesterday. During the meeting, the entire gamut of bilateral relations, UAE's support in Rohingya repatriation were discussed. The State Minister is now visiting the UAE to attend IDEX and NAVDEX-2021 as the representative of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

A tripartite memorandum of understanding-MoU was signed yesterday among Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority, Startup Bangladesh Limited and Korean Export Processing Zone-KPZ with a view to increasing private investment. State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Lee Jang-keun, among others, were present on the occasion. The State Minister said, currently, KPZ has more than 25,000 jobs. He said, the declaration of the Korean EPZ as a private high-tech park would create investment and more than 20,000 jobs.

The Agriculture Ministry has so far distributed Taka 372 crore among 57 lac farmers in 2020-21 fiscal year for increasing crop production as floods and global corona outbreak have created negative impact on country's food production, an official release yesterday said.

Parliament membership of independent lawmaker from Laxmipur-2 constituency Mohammad Shahid Islam alias Papul, who was convicted in Kuwait over criminal offence, has been cancelled as per the provisions of Article 66 (2) (d) of the Bangladesh Constitution, which got effective from January 28, 2021, the date of his conviction. Bangladesh Parliament Secretariat's Legislative Support Wing yesterday issued a gazette in this regard saying that his seat turns vacant as per Article 67 (1) (d) of the Constitution.

A Dhaka court yesterday set March 22 for holding hearing on charge framing in Barapukuria Coal Mine graft case against BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia and others, accepting a time plea from the main accused-Begum Khaleda Zia.

The government has appointed Mohammad Sarwar Mahmood, the incumbent Director General of the South Asia Wing of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the next Ambassador to Spain.

Meanwhile, with the death of 07 more people yesterday, the number of deaths from Covid-19 in Bangladesh rose to 8,356. At the same time recovery count rose to 4,92,059. With the detection of 366 new cases, the total number of Covid-19 cases rose to 5,43,717. A total of 2,25,280 people were administered COVID-19 vaccines across the country yesterday, giving rise to the number of vaccine receivers to 23,081,57. As many as 34,44,908 people got registered till 2.30pm yesterday to take the COVID-19 vaccines. Twenty lac doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine from Serum Institute of India reached the country early today.


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