



Most Urgent
For: Bangladdoot, All Missions
MSG: 258/2019-20
Date: Tuesday, 23 June, 2020

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News Brief

Bangladesh Awami League's 71st founding anniversary is being celebrated in the country today in a limited scale amid the COVID-19 outbreak. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the eve of the day. To mark the anniversary, national and party flags are being hoisted atop all party offices. The programme includes placing of wreaths at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the premises of Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi in the morning. A delegation of Awami League Central Working Committee placed wreaths at the mausoleum of Bangabandhu at Tungipara in Gopalganj in the morning. Besides, doa and munajat will be offered in the afternoon seeking eternal peace of departed souls of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other martyrs of 1975 carnage, four national leaders, 1971 martyrs, martyrs of different movements and struggles, and those AL leaders who died of coronavirus infection. Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will deliver an address through video conferencing from her official Ganabhaban residence to party leaders who will remain present at the party's Bangabandhu Avenue central office at 5pm.

On the occasion of Bangladesh Awami League's 71st founding anniversary, Prime Minister and AL President Sheikh Hasina in her message greeted the countrymen along with party leaders, activists and well-wishers. The Premier recalled with respect the greatest Bengali of all times, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, AL's founding President Mawlana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani and General Secretary Shamsul Haque, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, the four national leaders and all martyrs of struggles for freedom, Liberation War and struggles for democracy and all leaders and workers of AL who had embraced martyrdom to turn the party into the largest organization of masses. Highlighting the government's different achievements, the Premier added, Awami League has a glorious role in every major achievement of the Bengali nation- the Language Movement in 1952, the Jukta Front election in 1954, the anti-Ayub movement in 1962, the restoration of communal harmony after the 1964 riot, the six-point movement in 1966 and the mass upsurge in 1969. The country finally achieved independence on December 16 in 1971 following the Liberation War conducted under the AL government, the Premier further said. Now, Bangladesh AL is leading the country with unprecedented success, the Premier said. In future Awami League along with the people will build a poverty-hunger free, happy, prosperous and developed Sonar Bangladesh as envisioned by the Father of the Nation, the Prime Minister said.

Bangladesh yesterday recorded 38 more fatalities from the novel coronavirus raising the death toll from the pandemic to 1,502. At the same time recovery count rose to 46,755 after another 1,678 patients were discharged from the hospitals during the period. DGHS came up with the disclosure at its daily health bulletin. The country also saw further rise in coronavirus cases with the detection of 3,480 new cases taking the total number of cases to 1,15,786. A total of 15,555 samples were tested at the authorised labs across the country during that time, DGHS added.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque has said, the government has started the recruitment process of medical technologists and if necessary, the government will recruit 2,000 more physicians to handle the pandemic. The Minister was speaking at a press briefing at the VIP lounge of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport where he went to see off the Chinese medical expert team. He said, the Chinese team has expressed satisfaction over the steps taken by Bangladesh government to fight COVID-19. As part of widening testing facilities across the

country, the government has intensified its efforts to collect necessary medical essentials, including kits for testing suspected virus cases, the Minister said.

The government in a gazette notification issued by the Public Administration Ministry yesterday announced general holidays for 'red zones' in some areas of five more districts in a bid to contain the spread of the highly contagious virus. The districts are -- Faridpur, Manikganj, Brahmanbaria, Narsingdi and Kushtia.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader has stressed on the need for strict enforcement of lockdown or general holiday in red zones announced by the government aiming to stop the spread of coronavirus. The Minister made the emphasis as he was giving two ICU-ventilators from his personal fund for a COVID-19 hospital set up in Noakhali through videoconferencing from his official residence yesterday. The Minister called upon all to abide by the health guidelines to prevent coronavirus transmission. About an allegation of BNP, he said, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir alleged that BNP's relief works were obstructed. "I want to say clearly...make clear where you faced obstruction and give us the evidence. If the allegation is true, we will take action," the Minister added.

Agriculture Minister Dr. Md. Abdur Razzaque has said, government is providing various incentives including subsidies of Taka 20 crore for the first time in seed sector focusing maximum importance on the agriculture sector. The privatized seed company also should come forward for the welfare of agriculture as well as the growers from the aspect of their social responsibility. The Minister was attending an online meeting on the latest seed supply situation with the public and private sector seed companies from his official residence yesterday.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud has underscored the need for bringing discipline in TRP-TV Rating Point saying unapproved TRP rating is not acceptable to the government at all. The Minister also informed that at present there is no government approved organization in the country to fix the TRP. The Minister was talking to journalists at his ministry yesterday. The Information Minister said, the government is scrutinizing how the TRP rating is determined in India, Sri Lanka and the European countries in this regard. He said that discipline would be brought in this area soon after discussing with ATCO-Association of Television Channel Owners, Broadcast Journalists Center and other stakeholders. Earlier, the Minister inaugurated an online training programme on COVID-19 for volunteers at the divisional-level organized by Awami League Science and Technology Sub-committee.

Education Minister Dr. Dipu Moni has said, a tremendous progress has been made in building Digital Bangladesh under the guidance of Prime Minister's ICT Adviser Sajeeb Wazed Joy. The Minister was inaugurating the distribution of stipend money from January to June of fiscal 2019-20 through a virtual meeting yesterday.

State Minister for ICT Division Zunaid Ahmed Palak while addressing the inaugural ceremony of National High School Programming-2020 through an online platform yesterday said, 5,500 Sheikh Russel Digital Labs will be set up at school level to promote ICT-based education.

Dhaka North City Corporation offers free dengue test at 13 maternity clinics and healthcare centres. said a press release.

Ratha Yatra, the chariot festival of Sri Jagannath Dev and one of the major festivals of the Hindu community begins today but no procession will be brought out this year in the wake of novel coronavirus outbreak.


23.6.2020
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