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News Brief

Dhaka is set to hold the 10th D-8 Summit virtually today aiming to seek more investment and trade from the member states. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will lead the Bangladesh delegation while her counterparts of the rest seven D-8 member states will head their respective sides at the summit. At the summit, Turkey, the current Chair of D-8 will hand over the Chairmanship to Bangladesh for the next two years while “D-8 Decennial Roadmap 2020-2030” and “Dhaka Declaration 2021” are likely to be adopted.

Bangladesh would like to explore all avenues for economic recovery through collaboration among the D-8 member states to minimize the worsening effects of Covid-19 on the world economy. A D-8 incubation initiative might be a good option to consider, Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen said this adding that Bangladesh strongly believes in enhancing knowledge-sharing and connectivity amongst D-8 Member States in this regard. The Minister was virtually addressing the D-8 19th Council of Ministers-COM, as the Chair, attended by all his counterparts of seven other D-8 member states yesterday. During the COM, Turkish Foreign Minister handed over the COM Chairmanship to Foreign Minister for the next two years. Meanwhile, the State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel took the charge of D-8 Youth Forum as its Chairperson.

Bangladesh’s existing social support system, strong ICT infrastructure and robust community-based health services helped many families of the children with autism cope with the challenges they face, said Saima Wazed, National Advisory Committee on Autism and Neuro-developmental Disorder Chairperson. Saima Wazed, also the WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Autism in South-East Asia Region, was addressing a virtual roundtable titled ‘Autism at the Covid-19 Pandemic: How Technology Can Support Equitable Global Response and Recovery’ as a panelist on the occasion of the World Autism Awareness Day, 2021. Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the UN, along with the Permanent Missions of Brazil, Kuwait, Poland, Qatar and Korea, UN DESA and Autism Speaks, organized the event on Tuesday. The event was co-chaired by Ambassador Rabab Fatima, permanent representative of Bangladesh to the UN along with the Permanent Representative of Qatar.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader about plying of public transport amid the ongoing countrywide lockdown said, the government took the decision to allow plying of public transport in divisional cities, including Dhaka, considering the public interest, to cut people’s sufferings and there is no way to create confusion to this end. Some people have been spreading propaganda and misleading information about resumption of long distance bus service, but it is not true at all, he added. Referring to the mayhem carried out by the extreme communal force Hefazat-e-Islam, he said, there is a limit to the patience and tolerance of the country’s people and the exceeding of limit will bring a dire consequence. By preparing a list of instigators of terrorism, anarchy and communal forces, those would be dealt with politically, he told a press conference yesterday.

The Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase-CCGP at a virtual meeting yesterday chaired by Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal approved a number of proposals, including one to procure 50,000 metric tons of non-Basmati boiled rice from India with around Taka 174.66 crore in a bid to meet the growing demand. The meeting also approved a proposal for procuring 33.60 lac MMBtu LNG from Switzerland with a cost of around Taka 243.30 crore. Prior to the CCGP meeting, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in a meeting chaired by the Finance Minister approved a proposal for procuring one lac metric tons of non-Basmati boiled rice from India on G to G basis under Direct Procurement Method for emergency state purpose. The meeting also approved a proposal in principle from the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications for allowing the SEA-ME-WE-6 consortium to follow their own procurement method on emergency state purpose under the project for establishing 3rd submarine cable by the Bangladesh Submarine Cable Company Limited.

High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh, Imran Ahmed Siddiqui hoped to work jointly with the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority-BEPZA to increase more Pakistani investment in the EPZs, as he visited BEPZA Complex in the city yesterday. Executive Chairman of BEPZA Major General Md. Nazrul Islam urged Pakistani investors to come forward and explore the investment potentiality of Uttara, Ishwardi, Mongla EPZ and BEPZA Economic Zone as well to invest on diversified products.

The US Chamber of Commerce-USCC showed its confidence to create new opportunities for US companies in Bangladesh while launching US-Bangladesh Business Council on Tuesday focusing to strengthen the bilateral commercial partnership between the two nations. "The United States is one of Bangladesh's most important trading partners, and over the past decade we've seen an impressive growth trajectory that we are confident will create new opportunities for US companies," USCC's Executive Vice President and head of International Affairs Myron Brilliant said at the launching ceremony of the Council. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, made the inaugural remarks at the launching program while Prime Minister's ICT Affairs Advisor Sajeeb Wazed Joy, among others, addressed the function.

US Congressman Ted Deutch, an influential member of the US House Foreign Affairs Committee, expressed his interest in bolstering Bangladesh-US cooperation on wide-ranging issues, including climate change, counterterrorism and Rohingya crisis, when Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States M Shahidul Islam met him at the latter's Boca Raton office in Florida, said the Bangladesh Embassy yesterday. Congressman Deutch praised Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for giving shelter to over one million persecuted Rohingyas.

The private-sector businesses involving foreign loan or supplier credit would now get deferred payment time limit beyond one year. Any eligible importer might submit an application to the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority-BIDA for extension of period or refinancing to be allowed by suppliers or lenders against permissible deferred imports with credit exposure to the importers beyond one year, as per a Bangladesh Bank circular issued on Tuesday.

Religious Affairs Ministry in an emergency circular yesterday said that no meeting or rally will be allowed before prayers and after munajat in mosques or any other place of worship. The decision was taken considering the increase in Covid-19 cases across the country at an alarming rate, the circular said. The ministry said that the Tarabi prayers will be held following social distance and health guidelines.

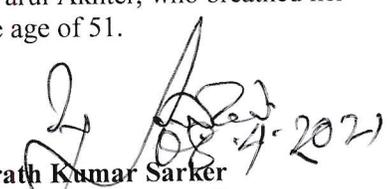
The nationwide roll-out of the 2nd dose of Covid-19 vaccine begins today while the administering of the 1st dose of the jab will continue simultaneously. People will be informed about their dates of receiving vaccine through SMS, Prof. Dr. A B M Khurshid Alam, Director General of the DGHS, said to media.

The number of COVID-19 cases in Bangladesh hit a record daily high since the outbreak of the pandemic with 7,626 new infections being reported yesterday, pushing the nationwide coronavirus tally to 6,59,278, so far. The death toll rose to 9,447 with 63 new fatalities. At the same time recovery count rose to 5,61,639, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. A total of 13,028 people were administered COVID-19 vaccines across the country yesterday, giving rise to the number of total vaccine receivers to 55,68,703. A total of 69,73,946 people got registered till 2.30pm yesterday to receive the vaccine, DGHS said.

The government has changed the names of Faridpur Medical College and Faridpur Medical College Hospital to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital, after the name of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Country's famed weightlifter and SA Games gold medal winning Mabia Akhter Simanta clinched gold with new record in 64 kgs weight category event of the Bangabandhu 9th Bangladesh Games held in Mymensingh District gymnasium yesterday. Mabia, a lifter of Bangladesh Ansar, smartly clinched the event's gold medal with new national mark lifting total 181 kgs-80 kgs in snatch and 101 kgs in clean & jerk.

President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate condolence messages expressed profound shock and sorrow at the death of country's eminent folksinger, Ekushey-award recipient and Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra artiste Indramohan Rajbongshi, who breathed his last at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital yesterday at the age of 75. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also expressed profound shock and sorrow at the death of Bangladesh Mahila Awami League Vice-President Parul Akhter, who breathed her last in the early hours of yesterday while undergoing treatment at a city hospital at the age of 51.


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