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News Brief

President Md. Abdul Hamid has urged the government, social representatives, political leaders, students and others concerned to create a mass resistance against the use of harmful chemicals like formalin in food, fruits and vegetables as it is an act of mass killing. The Head of the State made the call while addressing at the third convocation of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet yesterday. The President asked the graduates for continuing research to attain uniqueness in the field of technology. A total of 6,750 graduates received certificates at the convocation and twenty students received President's Gold Medal for their outstanding performance and results. Eminent literary critics and writer Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam has delivered convocation speech.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stressed upon the need for filtering the harmful digital contents properly, urging the people not to share anything on internet or social media without verification. The Premier said this while addressing at the award-giving ceremony of Digital Bangladesh Day 2019 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka yesterday. The Prime Minister also informed, the government is going to launch e-passport and e-visa and 5G mobile services very soon. At the function, Sheikh Hasina handed over awards to 14 organisations and individuals for their outstanding contributions to development of the country's IT sector.

The Cabinet has given final approval to the draft of 'The Electoral Rolls (Amendment) Act 2019' extending the timeframe for one more month to update the voter list. The Cabinet gave the approval in a weekly meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the Chair at the Prime Minister's Office in Dhaka yesterday. The meeting also decided to observe March 2 as the National Voters' Day which was earlier observed on March 1. The meeting also approved the draft of "The National Agriculture Mechanization Policy-2019" to help the farmers buy agricultural inputs at reasonable prices and get soft loan with low and no interest rate. The Cabinet also approved the proposal of announcing the "National Insurance Day (Jatiyo Bima Dibosh)" on March 1 every year.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will pay a four-day official visit to the United Arab Emirates from January 12 to 15 to participate in a number of events as well as to hold official talks with the leaders of the oil-rich Gulf country, Diplomatic sources said.

The Parliament goes into its sixth session today which will be the first session of the New Year 2020. The last session of Parliament was prorogued on November 14 with the passage of five bills.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader has said, the government has targeted to create 1.5 crore jobs for the youths. He said this while addressing at a press conference on the development activities of Road Transport and Bridges Ministry at the Secretariat in Dhaka yesterday.

Foreign Minister Dr A K Abdul Momen, in a message written to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, expressed profound sorrow and deep condolences over the death of scores of people in a Ukrainian aircraft crash in Tehran yesterday. A Ukrainian airliner crashed shortly after take-off from Tehran killing all 176 people on board.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi has sought duty free and quota free access on 36 Bangladeshi products to Thailand at six-digit level in a bid to reduce the existing trade gap between the two countries. He said this at the 5th meeting of the Bangladesh-Thailand Joint Trade Committee that concluded in Bangkok yesterday. He also handed over a list of 36 products to his Thai counterpart seeking duty free quota free market access in Thailand.

Please Turn Over

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism M Mahbub Ali has urged Nepalese to make their holidays at the world's longest unbroken sea beach in Cox's Bazar as Bangladesh's coastline is the closest beach for the tourists of that landlocked country. He made the call while visiting Nepalese Tourism Secretary Kedar Bahadur Adhikari called on him at his ministry in Dhaka yesterday.

The High Court has praised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for taking time-befitting and accurate decision in dealing with Pilkhana BDR Mutiny in 2009 while the court in the full verdict of the mutiny case including 11 recommendations published yesterday. The 29,059-page text of the verdict confirmed death penalty for 139 accused and upheld life imprisonment of 185 others for their involvement in the massacre during the BDR mutiny in 2009.

The 5th meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Information was held yesterday at the Sangsad Bhaban with committee Chairman Hasanul Haq Inu presiding. During the meeting, a report of celebrating the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 'Mujib Year-2020' was presented to inform the committee about the activities adopted by the Ministry of Information. The parliamentary watchdog also recommended taking overall decision for re-review of the license-fee on television set and the way of collecting that license fee. Information Secretary Begum Kamrun Nahar was also present there.

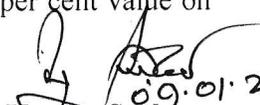
Cambodian Foreign Minister Park Sokhonn has said, his country is ready to cooperate Myanmar regarding Rohingya repatriation process. Park Sokhonn made the comment while visiting Bangladesh Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs delegation led by its Chairman Muhammad Faruk Khan held a meeting with him in Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh yesterday. During the meeting, Faruk Khan briefed a 4-point policy direction of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina regarding the Rohingya solution and sought support from Cambodia that shares same ASEAN platform with Myanmar, for early, safe and sustainable repatriation of Rohingya people.

Bangladesh will maintain a 'zero-tolerance' policy to prevent the smuggling of illicit drugs and psychotropic substances, especially Yaba, while Myanmar will continue to enforce anti-drug measures in line with its national drug control policy. The decision was taken at the 7th high-level border conference between Border Guard Bangladesh and Myanmar Police Force, which ended at Pilkhana in Dhaka yesterday through the signing of a Joint Record of Discussions.

From now on, one will be able to open a bank account from anywhere without visiting a bank branch. Bangladesh Bank issued a circular on guidelines for 'Electronic Know Your Customer' yesterday introducing the system.

Rapid Action Battalion arrested a 30-year-old drug addict for raping a Dhaka University student, saying the man was a serial rapist. A second-year student of DU was raped near in Kurmitola area of the capital on Sunday night. The rape victim's father earlier filed a case with Cantonment Police Station in the capital and later the case was transferred to police's Detective Branch.

The National Board of Revenue has relaxed conditions for availing VAT waiver by the active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) industries. From now on, the API industries will be able to avail the VAT benefit on import of raw materials by adding 20 per cent value on their imported products, media reports.


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