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## News Brief

Bangladesh yesterday recorded 55 more fatalities from the novel coronavirus in a daily count, raising the death toll from the pandemic to 2052. At the same time recovery count rose to 72,625 after another 1904 patients were discharged from the hospitals during the period. Directorate General of Health Services-DGHS came up with the disclosure at its daily health bulletin. The country also saw further rise in coronavirus cases with the detection of 2738 new cases taking the total number of cases to 1,62,417. A total of 13,988 samples were tested at 68 authorised laboratories across the country during the time, DGHS added.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader responding to an allegation of BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has said, the identities of those who are involved in relief embezzlement and other wrong-doings, are offenders. The Minister was addressing a virtual press briefing at his official residence yesterday. He said, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already directed the authorities concerned to arrest the people involved in irregularities irrespective of their political affiliation. Despite various adversities, Quader said, the work on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's priority projects -- Padma Bridge, Metrorail Route-6, Karnafuli Tunnel, Elevated Expressway and other projects -- are now going on in full swing.

Agriculture Minister Dr. Md. Abdur Razzaque has said, the government has taken all-out measures giving utmost priority on agriculture sector by giving various incentives including subsidy to the farmers to tackle food crisis amid coronavirus situation. The Minister made the remarks while inaugurating the online assistance programme for marginal farmers affected by Covid-19 yesterday. He further said, aus paddy seeds, aman paddy seeds and jute seeds have already been distributed among farmers at the field level. Initiatives are being taken to increase production in aman and rabi seasons, he added.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud joining an inter-ministerial meeting through video conference at his ministry yesterday said, foreign social media, publicising of contents and advertisements on Over the Top-OTT platform and other related matters would be brought under tax net and modern rules and regulations. A five-member committee headed by Additional Secretary (broadcast) of Information Ministry has been formed in the meeting in this regard. Posts and Telecommunication Minister Mustafa Jabbar, State Minister for Information Dr. Md. Murad Hasan, among others, joined the meeting.

Law Minister Anisul Huq while speaking at the inauguration ceremony of online training course for judges at Judicial Administration Training Institute in the city yesterday said, virtual courts will be used only in special situations. The regular court proceedings using the constitution, the CRPC, the CPC and the act of witnesses will remain unchanged, he said.

West Bengal in India opened the border for Bangladeshi lorries last afternoon ending its three months of denial following the coronavirus outbreak as Bangladesh sent an emergency letter to the New Delhi on Friday seeking India's central government intervention, Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen told media.

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen while taking part in a virtual discussion hosted by CRI yesterday said, repatriation efforts of the forcibly displaced Rohingyas have slowed down amid COVID-19 pandemic while fresh military crackdown in Myanmar further coiled confidence of Rohingyas over safe return to their place of origin in Rakhine state. UNHCR Representative in

Bangladesh Steven Corliss, among others, took part in the discussion. The Foreign Secretary said, Bangladesh managed Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar quite well in containing coronavirus outbreak as only five Rohingyas have so far died due to coronavirus there.

The flood situation may remain steady in six central districts of Rajbari, Manikganj, Dhaka, Munshiganj, Faridpur and Shariatpur as water levels of all rivers in the Ganges-Padma basin stayed static and rivers in the Brahmaputra basin were in a reducing trend till 9am yesterday, said a bulletin of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Center.

The government has allocated Taka 58 crore with a view to paying due wages of the month of June to workers of all state-owned BJMC mills. The government also decided to stop the production of 25 state-owned jute mills under BJMC after paying cent per cent dues to nearly 25,000 workers. This was decided with a view to modernizing and reforming the mills to enable those in coping with the national and international demands of jute products.

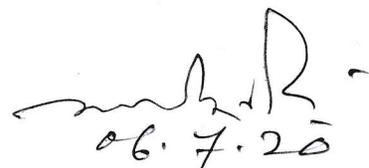
Extension of time for allowing delayed payment of electricity bills without surcharge is now under consideration after discussing the issue with Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission. Power Secretary Dr. Sultan Ahmed said this as he was briefing reporters through a videoconference about the outcome of the investigation into issuing inflated electricity bills by different power distribution companies. The Power Secretary informed that so far actions were either taken or under process against 290 staff of different power distribution companies for issuing inflated bills.

The government has brought changes in a number of senior posts with promotion and transfers. According to the gazettes of the Ministry of Public Administration, Akram-Al Hossain, Secretary to Primary and Mass Education Ministry, got promotion as Senior Secretary of the same ministry while M Badrul Arefin, Director General of Food Planning and Monitoring Unit, has been made Secretary of the Cultural Affairs Ministry. Dr. Md. Abu Hena Mostofa Kamal, Secretary to the Cultural Affairs Ministry has been transferred to Defence Ministry with the same post while Technical and Madrasah Educatin Division Secretary Munshi Shahabuddin Ahmed has been transferred as Chairman of Bangladesh Tariff Commission. Liberation War Affairs Ministry Secretary Md. Aminul Islam Khan has been transferred as Secretary to Technical and Madrasah Educatin Division and Bangladesh Tariff Commission Chairman Tapan Kanti Ghosh as the Secretary to the Liberation War Affairs Ministry.

The new Ambassador-designate of the Republic of Korea to Bangladesh, Lee Jang-keun arrived in Dhaka yesterday. Meanwhile, the government has appointed Tareq Md. Ariful Islam as the next High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka. Mr. Islam is a career foreign service officer belonging to 17th batch of BCS Foreign Affairs cadre.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has halted all its flights to Dubai and Abu Dhabi. All passengers who registered for Dubai-bound Biman flights will be sent there under special management.

Bangladesh Bank-BB has given an opportunity to the rawhide traders to reschedule their loans with a 2 per cent down-payment ahead of Eid-ul-Azha as per a BB circular issued yesterday. Traders can apply for availing the facility until July 30.



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