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### News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, special measures taken by her government in view of Covid-19 pandemic to protect people's lives and tackle the economic crisis have helped Bangladesh escape the ongoing global financial setback. The Premier said this in a question-answer session in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday. The Prime Minister said, Bangladesh would be the 25th largest economy by 2035 if its present economic evolution continues, according to the Economic League Table of the British economic research Organization-Centre for Economics and Business Research. As per the index of 2020, Bangladesh is now the 41st largest economy globally. The Premier said, in 2020, Bangladesh registered a 5.24 per cent growth rate while 8.15 per cent growth was posted in 2019, which was the highest in the country's history.

In reply to a question in the House, the Prime Minister said, the government has taken various measures to create new job opportunities and sent the migrant workers to different countries, especially those who were terminated and stranded in the country after return during the Covid-19. The Premier while replying to another question in the Parliament said, Bangladesh has attained self-sufficiency in fish boosting up the production by over 50 per cent in last 11 years following the effective and time befitting measures of her government. The Premier further said, Bangladesh is now in second position in producing fresh water fishes according to FAO.

Meanwhile, A Bill titled "The Iodized Salt Bill, 2021" was placed at the Parliament yesterday, aiming to ensure proportionate mix of iodine in salt and regulate the salt market in the country.

The Prime Minister is expected to inaugurate an international conference titled 'Celebrating the 100 Years of the University of Dhaka: Reflections from the Alumni – International and National' at 6:00pm virtually at Dhaka University today on the occasion of the university's birth centenary.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said, the BNP leaders predicted that thousands of people would die on the streets without food and treatment during the coronavirus pandemic. But, due to the far-sighted leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and by the grace of Allah, such thing did not happen yet, he said. The Minister was virtually addressing a discussion organized by the AL Sub-Committee on Labour and Manpower at party's Central Office at the city's Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday. He said, BNP conducted a propaganda in advance over the COVID-19 vaccine as their politics is to make any work for the welfare of the country and its people questionable.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, mentioning that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has adopted a zero tolerance policy towards drugs, directed the law enforcement agencies to take stern actions against drug smuggling. He made the directive while addressing a function to destroy a huge amount of drugs worth around 535 crore Taka, at the BGB regional headquarters in Cox's Bazar yesterday. Besides, terrorism and militancy must be combated with an iron hand, he said.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud coming down heavily on BNP's comments over coronavirus vaccine issue said, BNP sees looting in everything as it is a party of plunders. He said, BNP thought that the government could not combat the COVID-19 pandemic properly, but it did not happen. For this, after being disappointed, BNP spread rumors through wrong news that vaccine would not reach at the proper time, he said. The Minister was talking to newsmen after a view-exchange meeting with the leaders of Bangladesh Sangbadpathra Parishad at his ministry yesterday.

The government has completed all preparation to hand over 66,189 houses to homeless and landless families in the first phase on January 23, Saturday, under a special initiative marking the Mujib Borsho with a slogan- "None will be left homeless.". Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will virtually

inaugurate the distribution of houses, Project Director of Ashrayan-2 Md. Mahub Hossain told media yesterday.

Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal told Parliament yesterday that despite the effects of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic on various fronts of the economy, Bangladesh has been on the right track and is giving signals of a turnaround, due to the government's timely initiatives and implementation of stimulus packages. He also said, COVID-19 vaccine would be provided to all Bangladeshi citizens, aged above 18, for free.

Bangladesh wants to move fast in a coordinated way to explore opportunities in "contract farming", in the Middle East and greater African landscape utilizing different bilateral and multilateral channels, especially the platform of OIC, Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen said this at a lecture at Foreign Service Academy yesterday. The Minister also said, Bangladesh will get 20 lac of COVID-19 vaccine doses from Indian government as a gift today while some countries, including Russia and China have also expressed their interest to send vaccines here. Dr. Momen further said, another consignment of 50 lac of vaccine doses from Serum Institute of India through arrangement of Beximco Pharmaceuticals will arrive here later this month.

Secretary of Health Service Division Abdul Mannan said, COVID-19 vaccine receivers will be given telemedicine services, if side effects are found after administering the vaccines. He was talking to journalists at Prime Minister's Office yesterday. He said, initially, 500 to 600 medical professionals of four hospitals -Kurmitola General Hospital, Kuwait Bangladesh Friendship Government Hospital, Mugda Medical College and Hospital and Dhaka Medical College Hospital will be given these vaccines and they will be observed for seven days. After completing seven-day observations, other listed people will be vaccinated, he added.

Meanwhile, with the death of 8 more people yesterday, the lowest daily count in eight months since May last, the number of deaths from Covid-19 in Bangladesh rose to 7,950. At the same time recovery count rose to 4,74,472, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. With the detection of 656 new cases, the total number of Covid-19 cases rose to 5,29,687.

Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Md. Atiqul Islam said, under a project worth Taka 4,025 crore, 29 km of 13 canals in the extended wards of DNCC will be recovered, re-excavated and made green and modern where facilities like embankments, cycle lanes and walkways will be available. He was talking to reporters at Namapara after inspecting Sutivhola canal and Kadda canal in Bhatara, Satarkul and Badda areas in the capital yesterday.

Atomenergomash, a part of machine-building division of Rosatom, has shipped internals- an 11-meter Core Barrel, Core Baffle and Protective Tubes Unit, of nuclear reactor for the first unit of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

The members of Armed Police Battalion-APBn detained five Rohingya men with firearms in their possession from a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila early yesterday, reports said quoting SP Md. Tarikul Islam, Captain of APBn-16.

The government has postponed Dhaka International Trade Fair-2021 considering the risk of getting infected by the COVID-19. The Ministry of Commerce took the decision yesterday.

Bangladesh secured an easy six wickets victory against visiting West Indies in the first ODI of the three-match series at Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a felicitation message, greeted all the players, coach and officials of the National Cricket Team as well as Bangladesh Cricket Board officials concerned for beating West Indies.

  
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