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News Brief

The 11th session of the current parliament begins tomorrow. Meanwhile, Dhaka Metropolitan Police has banned carrying all kinds of weapons, explosives, bringing processions and staging demonstrations from today midnight to ensure holding of the Jatiya Sangsad's session in a smooth and peaceful manner. The order will remain effective till the end of the 11th session of the parliament.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said, the people have replied to BNP's falsehood centering the polls by exercising their franchise in a huge number amid festivity and enthusiasm in the 2nd phase municipality elections. He was addressing a press conference from his official residence yesterday. Pointing to Basurhat municipality polls in Noakhali, the Minister said, elections were held in a free, fair, peaceful and participatory manner there by using EVM method for the first time and voter turnout was over 60 per cent. He said, many people dubbed the Basurhat as model for the holding of transparent polls there. Meanwhile, the second phase elections to 60 municipalities were held yesterday. Election Commission Secretary Md. Alamgir while briefing the journalists at the Nirbachan Bhaban in the city's Agargaon area after the polls said, the election was held in a peaceful manner as it ended with the cooperation and participation of all political parties.

Agriculture Minister Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque has underscored the need for exporting high-value crops, such as fruits, vegetables and herbs, to Germany and other EU countries. The Minister was addressing a virtual event on the issue on Thursday, organized jointly by Bangladesh Embassy in Berlin, Germany and German Agribusiness Alliance. He also said, due to the highest importance of the government to agricultural development, Bangladesh has achieved food self-sufficiency.

A meeting between two Dhaka city corporations next week will finalize a drainage management action plan to reduce water-logging in the capital, Local Government Minister Mohammad Tajul Islam said this at the "Bill Collection Award 2019-2020" at Dhaka WASA Bhaban in the capital yesterday.

Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen urged the filmmakers to make films patronizing the saddest stories of Rohingyas for further sensitizing world community about unimaginable atrocities that were committed against an ethnic group. Dr. Momen said this while inaugurating the 19th Dhaka International Film Festival at National Museum in the capital yesterday. Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Vikram K Doraiswami spoke at the function that will screen 226 films from 73 countries. In a message sent to Foreign Minister of Indonesia Retno L P Marsudi, Dr. Momen conveyed his heartfelt sympathies to the Indonesian government, the brotherly people of Indonesia and particularly to the members of the bereaved families at the tragic loss of precious human lives caused by the earthquake that struck Sulawesi island of Indonesia in the early hours of Friday.

Planning Minister M A Mannan said, the capacity of Bangladesh in various fields has increased a lot over the years as the country is now implementing many mega projects alongside different development schemes. He was addressing a seminar jointly organized by Daily Industry and Global Economist Forum yesterday. He also mentioned that all the countrywide rail tracks would be converted into dual gauge in phases while the work on Dhaka-Chattogram dual gauge rail track has so far witnessed 80 per cent progress. Besides, the Bangabandhu Satellite is now making round in the orbit, he added.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said, the government is trying to revive the country's trade and commerce, which was affected due to COVID-19 pandemic, through various stimulus packages announced by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The Minister came up with the remarks while addressing a virtual dialogue organized by the Centre for Policy Dialogue in partnership with Southern Voice

yesterday. He also called for a collective effort from the brands, buyers, manufacturers and the government.

Belgium's King Philippe is considering a visit to Bangladesh to see its impressive socio-economic development as the two countries seek to strengthen trade relations. The King said this when Bangladesh's Ambassador to Belgium Mahbub Hassan Saleh presented his Letters of Credence to him at the Royal Palace in Brussels on Thursday and invited the King and Queen to visit this year as Bangladesh celebrates the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the 50th anniversary of the country's independence.

Bangladesh has urged Uzbekistan to sign an agreement on avoiding double taxation for traders and setting up an Embassy in Dhaka. The two countries also discussed holding their first Foreign Office Consultations-FOC meeting in the first quarter of current year, signing agreement for visa waiver for diplomatic and official passports, resuming direct flight on Tashkent-Dhaka-Tashkent route and towards Europe and holding the third meeting of Joint Working Commission in Dhaka. All the issues were discussed as Uzbekistan Ambassador to India with concurrent accreditation to Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka Dilshod Akhatov paid a visit to Bangladesh Embassy in Tashkent and had a meeting with Bangladesh Ambassador Md. Zahangir Alam recently.

State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak while addressing a press conference to mark 12 years of implementation of Digital Bangladesh at Agargaon ICT Tower yesterday said, digitalization of 90 per cent of the public services will be completed this year. He also said, a total of 6,790 digital centers set up across the country have provided 540.85 million services to the citizens. The government is going to set up 39 hi-tech/IT parks which would be the life line of digital economy, he said, adding that the government has set up Sheikh Russel Digital Lab in 7,728 educational institutions to acquire knowledge about IT.

Bangladesh will get Covid-19 vaccine urgently from India, as soon as the Bangladesh government indicates that the arrangement is ready, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Vikram K Doraiswami said to journalists after attending the opening of 19th Dhaka International Film Festival yesterday. The government will provide Covid-19 vaccine to the citizens free of cost from the first week of February, Health Secretary Md. Abdul Mannan yesterday said while talking to reporters. The government also will determine how the vaccine can be provided through the private sector, he said. He further said, the government will allow vaccine production in the country if the interested local companies can follow the rules of the WHO. Meanwhile, the number of deaths from Covid-19 in Bangladesh rose to 7,883 with the death of 21 more people yesterday. At the same time recovery count rose to 4,71,756, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. With the detection of 578 new cases, the lowest daily infection rate after eight months, the total number of Covid-19 cases rose to 5,27,063.

The forthcoming series between Bangladesh and West Indies has been named after the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman- 'Bangabandhu Bangladesh vs West Indies Cricket Series 2021' in a bid to mark the birth centenary of Bangabandhu.

The government has again extended the shutdown of school and other educational institutions, except qawmi madrasas, until January 30 as the coronavirus pandemic shows no sign of improvement. The Education ministry announced the development in a circular on Friday.



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