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News Brief

The Cabinet in a virtual meeting yesterday approved the draft of “the Civil Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2021” aiming to raise the financial jurisdiction of the Judges of the lower court for disposal of civil cases. Chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who joined the meeting from Ganabhaban, the Cabinet also approved in principle a bill to establish Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Science and Technology University in Pirojpur district. Moreover, the Cabinet ratified the Preferential Trade Agreement signed between Bangladesh and Bhutan on December 6 last to boost bilateral trade between the two countries. The Cabinet also cancelled its previous decision taken on July 29, 2013 over increasing the number of trawlers in the exclusive economic zone in the Bay of Bengal.

During the Cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, Bangladesh, which was once used to be known for natural calamities and poverty, has now been established as a role model of development in the world as Awami League government has been in power for a long time. Terming 2021 a very important year for the country due to the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation and golden jubilee of independence, the Premier said, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman wanted to build a poverty and hunger-free Bangladesh.

The Cabinet also approved the drafts of the three amendment bills, scheduled to be placed in the Parliament in the very first sitting of its upcoming session, so the HSC results can be published within January 28, as in the existing laws, there is no provision to publish the results of HSC and equivalent evaluations without holding examinations, Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam said this while briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal while talking to media said, criminals, wrongdoers, troublemakers and religious fanatics, who are involved in creating panic and anarchy in the country, would be dealt with iron hand. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is committed to build Bangladesh as a safe haven for all people though stamping out terrorism, militancy and their sinister forces, he said.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud said, BNP never did anything for the welfare of drivers rather they killed over one hundred drivers setting them on fire and throwing patrol bombs at buses and trucks in the name of movement in 2013, 2014 and 2015. The Minister was addressing a memorial meeting at the AL office in city’s Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday on late Md. Shahjahan Mollah, the former personal driver of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He also mentioned that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged the vehicle owners not to let the drivers to drive vehicles over eight hours a day otherwise they may fall as well as face accident due to stress and lack of rest.

The government secondary school admission lottery for the students of Class-1 to Class-9 started across the country yesterday. Education Minister Dr. Dipu Moni inaugurated the virtual program at the International Mother Language Institute. The lottery program in government secondary schools will be held at 390 government schools across the country, the Minister said, adding that it will initially be held at different schools in the capital. Later, the process will begin in district and upazila level.

Rohingya repatriation could not be started because of the lack of cordiality of the Myanmar government, Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen said this to reporters yesterday after inaugurating Bangabandhu Adventure Festival in Rangamati marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Dr. Momen said, a repatriation talk with Myanmar is scheduled for Jan 19 at the mediation of China. Replying to a question, the Minister said, India had repeatedly assured that they would give Bangladesh Covid-19 vaccine whenever they would use them.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi, terming India as a tested friend of Bangladesh said, there is ample scope for further boosting the bilateral trade between Bangladesh and India through addressing the

trade barriers. The Minister said this when Indian High Commissioner to Dhaka Vikram K Doraiswami met him at his ministry yesterday. The Indian High Commissioner reiterated the same. Official data showed, Bangladesh exports goods worth US\$1,096.38 million to India in the last fiscal year against the imports of goods worth US\$5,774 million. The Commerce Minister while meeting Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Rizwan Rahman said, SMEs are contributing about 26 per cent to the country's GDP.

A legal notice was served on the government on behalf of Abdul Kaiyum Sarkar, Principal of Vawal Mirzapore Public School and College yesterday requesting it to reopen all the educational institutions including schools and colleges across the country from January 16, stating that the shutdown of the institutions was extended eleven times so far and therefore students have been facing adverse impact.

The first shipment of Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine is likely to reach Bangladesh between January 21 and 25. Officials of the Directorate General of Health Services-DGHS said this at a press briefing yesterday. The government is going to launch online registration for Covid-19 vaccine recipients from January 26, DGHS said. Vaccination may start countrywide from February 27. The government has decided to give jabs to 50 lac people in the first phase, DG of DGHS Abul Basar Mohammad Khurshid Alam said at the briefing.

The High Court yesterday directed United Hospital authorities to pay Taka 30 lac to each of the families of four victims, who were killed in a fire at its isolation unit on May 27 last year, within 15 days. The court also issued a rule asking the authorities to explain in four weeks why they should not be directed to give Taka 15 crore to each victim's family as compensation.

Meanwhile, the number of deaths from Covid-19 in Bangladesh rose to 7,803 with the death of 22 more people yesterday. At the same time recovery count rose to 4,67,718, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. The daily infection rate stood at 6.02 per cent, with the detection of 849 new cases, raising the total number of Covid-19 cases to 5,23,302.

National Board of Revenue in a notification issued yesterday extended the timeframe for providing duty-free facility on import of COVID-19 protective materials including masks, kits and other personal protective equipment-PPE for another six months, till June 30 this year.

The newly appointed High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka Tareq Md. Ariful Islam presented his Credentials to Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa at the President's House in Colombo yesterday. During the meeting, the Sri Lankan President showed keen interest to increase cooperation between Dhaka and Colombo in the areas of agriculture, agro-based products, regional tourism, investment promotion, ICT, high tech industry and education.


The Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata released an Audiovisual on the occasion of the auspicious Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Embassy of Bangladesh in Brussels also organized a panel discussion titled 'Bangabandhu's Vision of an Independent Bangladesh' marking the Day.

The Department of Environment-DoE will demolish about 700 illegal brick kilns, one of the major sources of air pollution in the country, officials said. About 500 illegal brickfields were demolished last year and the DoE has so far removed nearly 200 illegal brick kilns this year, the sources said.

The mobile phone subscribers in Bangladesh reached 17.01 crore at the end of December 2020 which is around 45 lac higher than in January in the same year, according to the BTRC.

The Ministry of Food has so far allowed private traders to import 4,87,000 tons of rice to boost supply and bridle the escalating prices in the country. In a notice yesterday, 72 companies were authorized to import 141,000 tons of rice.

DSEX, the prime index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange witnessed an upward trend yesterday, as it went up by 84.70 points or 1.50 per cent to settle at 5,718.75, highest in the last 22 months.


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