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News Brief

Bangladesh shuts its border with India for passenger travel for 14 days, starting from today, not for cargo, as the neighboring country has been hit by severe surge of coronavirus, an inter-ministerial meeting chaired by Foreign Secretary Masud bin Momen took the decision yesterday. A Foreign ministry statement, elaborating the meeting's decision, said, as exception, only the Bangladeshi citizens currently traveling to India for treatment and having visas with validity for less than 15 days could enter Bangladesh through only Benapole, Akhaura and Burimari after taking permission from Bangladesh missions in New Delhi, Kolkata and Agartala. During crossing the Bangladesh border through the land ports, they must show a mandatory Covid-negative certificate done through PCR test within 72 hours of entry, it said, adding that they must stay officially quarantined for two weeks after entering the country.

The government will be compelled to enforce strict lockdown again, if health guidelines aren't followed after the resumption of public transport services, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said this while virtually addressing a food aid and Covid-19 protective equipment distribution ceremony at the AL President's Dhanmondi political office yesterday. The Minister urged the shop owners and all others to follow the health guidelines realizing the situation and its danger. He warned that tough actions will be taken against those who will indulge in irregularities over Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's relief and cash aid. BNP is spreading propaganda centering Covid-19 vaccine, he said, adding that the people will receive the second dose of the vaccine in due time as like as the first dose.

Agriculture Minister Dr. Md. Abdur Razzaque said, the government is planning to introduce short duration variety of rice which would be harvested minimum 15-20 days ago before the flash flood in the haor areas as paddy production in these areas in most of the cases falls in major risk every year due to the flash flood. The Minister made this comments while addressing a 'Boro Rice Harvest Festival' at Mithamoin upazila in Kishoreganj district yesterday.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said, people are being arrested after analyzing video footages of Hefazat's violence that spread across districts, the law enforcement is not making any mass arrests or harassing anyone. Despite talks with the leaders of Hefazat-e-Islam, people involved in the violence will be brought to book; he came up with the remarks at a function organized by Dhaka North City Awami League at Rajdhani School premises yesterday.

The government has taken a decision to provide assistance to 2,000 more journalists with each getting Taka 10,000 as part of its financial assistance to the newsmen to help them tide over their problems amid the coronavirus crisis, Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud, also the Chairman of Bangladesh Journalist Welfare Trust, informed this to reporters after an emergency meeting of the trust at his ministry yesterday. Besides, about 200 journalists would get regular assistance from the trust this year, he added. Replying to a query about a proposal of BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir to stop the transportation of goods from India, he said, it is to create a crisis of goods in Bangladesh. Actually, the border is not open, only the transportation of goods is open, he said. Information Secretary and also trustee board Vice Chairman Khaja Mia, among others, addressed the meeting virtually. Dhaka has refloated an idea of getting a share of Indian hydropower letting the neighbor set up transmission lines from its northeastern Arunachal Pradesh to northwestern regions through Bangladesh, Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen said while talking to the national news agency yesterday. During Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent Bangladesh visit, he proposed the idea for mutual benefit as Arunachal

Pradesh and adjacent northeastern Indian regions were sources of huge quantum of untapped renewable energy. Indian Premier Narendra Modi also said, India already consulted with different financial institutes including World Bank regarding prospects of the hydropower.

The government has so far allocated Taka 584.92 crore for the humanitarian assistance of unemployed people due to the lockdown in the second wave of Covid-19, State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Md. Enamur Rahman said this at a press conference at his ministry yesterday. He also said, the needy people across the country would get relief by calling at 333. He added, the government will provide corrugated iron sheet worth Taka 40 crore for the affected people. The government also allocated Taka 973 crore under TR-Kabikha sector and the people without employment will get work under the project.

Administering of first dose of COVID-19 vaccine will remain suspended temporarily from today in the country. However, the second dose of the vaccination will continue, Directorate General of Health Service-DGHS informed this in a notice. Meanwhile, speaking at an online briefing yesterday, Director General of the DGHS, Prof. Dr. A B M Khurshid Alam said, Bangladesh will get 21 lac more coronavirus vaccine next month. COVAX will give one lac Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and Serum Institute of India will give 20 lac Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, he said. The DGHS Chief further said, Bangladesh will receive another 5,00,000 doses of Sinopharm's vaccine as a 'gift' from China. The National Technical Advisory Committee will give decision about using the vaccine, he said.

New Delhi has offered Dhaka co-production of Covaxin, a Covid-19 vaccine produced by Indian Bharat Biotech, in Bangladesh. Indian High Commission in Dhaka in a diplomatic message sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs- MoFA on Saturday conveyed the proposal to produce the jab, which has shown efficacy of over 80 per cent, in Bangladesh. In the note verbale, the High Commission informed MoFA that the supply of Covishield (Oxford-AstraZeneca) vaccine is being delayed due to a crisis of raw materials and a huge internal demand in India.

Hefazat-e-Islam Amir Junayed Babunagari last night in a video message declared the central committee of the organization dissolved, considering overall situation of the country. Babunagari said, the organization would run again with a convening committee.

The country recorded 101 fatalities from COVID-19 yesterday, taking the death toll to 11,053. With 2,922 fresh cases, the tally of infections surged to 7,45,322. At the same time recovery count rose to 6,57,452. A total 19,520 people were administered the first dose of COVID-19 vaccines while 1,71,570 received the second dose of the vaccine across the country yesterday. With this, the number of vaccine receivers given the first dose of vaccine rose to 58,18,400, while a total of 23,26,866 people received the second dose of the vaccine. As many as 72,21,806 people got registered till 2.30 pm yesterday to take COVID-19 vaccines.

Bangladesh Krishi Bank has ensured cent percent disbursement of loans under the stimulus packages meant for the farmers and small entrepreneurs who have been affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to official data, the Krishi Bank has disbursed a total amount of Taka 1,699 crore as loans under the stimulus package from April 2020 to April 2021. Apart from this, the Bank has so far released Taka 354 crore in three tranches in the CSME sector.

Admission test of all government and private dental colleges and dental units for the first year BDS course of 2020-2021 academic year will be held on June 11 instead of April 30 due to the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic, a circular said.

The 21st founding anniversary of community clinic is being observed across the country today. President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the occasion.

The first Test between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka ended in a draw at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium in Kandy, Sri Lanka yesterday.


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