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News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has ranked at 43 in Forbes' 18th annual list of 100 most powerful women. Sheikh Hasina, the longest serving Prime Minister in the history of Bangladesh, is currently serving her fourth term.

'Begum Rokeya Day' is being observed in the country today marking the 141st birth and the 89th death anniversary of Begum Rokeya Shakhawat Hossain, the pioneer for women's rights in the subcontinent. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to attend the day's function and distribute Rokeya Padak (Award)-2021 at Osmani Memorial Auditorium this morning, virtually joining from Ganabhaban. The Women and Children Affairs Ministry will organize the function with State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Fazilatunnesa Indira in the chair. President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the occasion.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stressed the need for preparing the young generation with the spirit of the Liberation War and ideal of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman aimed at building a non-communal, knowledge-and science-based progressive society to lead the country towards development and prosperity, urging the Jubo League to take the leading role in this regard. The Premier was virtually addressing a discussion marking the 49th founding anniversary of Bangladesh Awami Jubo League from Ganabhaban yesterday. The Premier further said, her government has taken multifaceted programs, including generating employment and giving training in various fields and creating scope of taking loans without collateral so that they could stand on their own feet and create jobs for others shunning the chase after jobs. Turning to the demand of the BNP leaders to send Khaleda Zia abroad for treatment, the Prime Minister said, they have shown the highest sympathy to the BNP chairperson by allowing her to stay home and take the country's best treatment despite the fact that she was convicted for embezzling orphan's money and giving patronage to the killers of Bangabandhu, deliberately celebrating her fake birthday on August 15, giving no scope for treatment of ailing political leaders and making several attempts on her life. The Prime Minister also inaugurated distribution of 61 houses, built by the Jubo League, among the homeless people.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said Bangladesh-India can be benefited by generating hydro power in Nepal and Bhutan as it will be a clean energy and cheaper also, as the visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla paid a courtesy call on her at Ganabhaban yesterday. During the meeting, Shringla said, Bangladesh and India have settled down all major issues while some small issues along the border between the two countries can be solved through holding meetings between BGB and BSF. Shringla appreciated the economic progress of Bangladesh during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Foreign Secretary also said India will observe the commemoration of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation, Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh's Independence and 50th anniversary of establishment of Bangladesh-India diplomatic relation across the globe in their missions and will project Bangabandhu among the local people of the respective countries. Along with discussing other bilateral issues, Shringla also put emphasis on reestablishing Shiliguri-Parbotipur, Dhaka-Shiliguri and Dhaka-Jolpaiguri railway communication. Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Vikram Kumar Doraiswami was present there.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid emphasis on the necessity of having a cordial relation between the owners and workers to keep running the production in the factories alongside expediting the export in this competitive world. The Premier said this while virtually addressing the Green Factory Award-2020 distribution and inauguration ceremony of eight newly constructed infrastructures including Working Women Hostel at Osmani Memorial Auditorium yesterday. The Prime Minister highlighted different measures taken by her government for the welfare of the workers, like raising the minimum wages to Taka 8,300 from Taka 4,150 for workers in 42 industrial sectors, formation of the workers' welfare fund as well as a central fund for socio-economic development of the workers of 100 per cent export-oriented garment industry and their families, enactment of different policies and Acts. The Prime Minister said that the government has so far introduced 5,673 day-care centers in various factories/institutions across the country to provide services to the children of working mothers. "We are constructing dormitories for female workers in different parts of the country," she said. Later, on behalf of the Prime Minister, State Minister for Labor and Employment Begum Monnujan Sufian, handed over the award among 30 recipients.

Speaker Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury has said that it is possible to expand Brazil-Bangladesh diplomatic relations and trade through the formation of a parliamentary alliance group. She made the remarks when Bangladesh Ambassador to Brazil Sadia Faizunnesa paid a courtesy call on her at her office yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed the formation of parliamentary alliance groups, economic diplomacy and expansion of trade and commerce in detail.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader condemning the "continuous falsehood and propaganda" of BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and other BNP leaders said, although the BNP leaders talk about democracy, they bear autocratic and anti-state spirit in their minds in disguise of democracy. In a statement the Minister further said, the BNP leaders claimed that the ruling Awami League has been isolated from people since 1971, which is a nonsense talk. All the great things of the country were achieved under the leadership of AL, a party that led the country's liberation war in 1971 and the 1952 Language Movement, he added. On the other hand, BNP, the evil force which started

politics in the country by grabbing the state power and destroying the spirit of the great Liberation War, is still involved in anti-state conspiracies, he observed.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud pointing to Dr. Murad's instance said, AL takes steps if anyone of the party makes indecent statements. While addressing a prize giving ceremony at Bangabandhu International Conference Center yesterday, Dr. Hasan further said, everyone saw the video clips of derogatory statements of BNP joint General Secretary Moazzem Hossain Alal, Ishraq Hossain and BNP President of the UK unit M A Malek. But, BNP did not take any step against them. He said, the BNP leaders are behaving indecently under the patronization of Tarique Rahman.

Law Minister Anisul Haque said, justice has been ensured in the BUET student Abrar Fahad murder case verdict and it has been proved that there is rule of law in the country. The government would extend all cooperation regarding quick settlement of the case, the Minister said while talking to newsmen yesterday. Earlier in the day, a special tribunal sentenced 20 people to death and life imprisonment to five others in the murder of BUET student Abrar Fahad. About the issue of Khaleda Zia, the Minister said, there is no scope to revive the appeal that has been settled under section 401 of CrPC.

The Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase-CCGP in a virtual meeting yesterday chaired by Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal, approved a total of 16 proposals including a big one for setting up a waste-based 42.5MW power generation project at Kaultia under Gazipur City Corporation, with a cost of Taka 14,408.01 crore. Under another proposal, a 60MW solar park would be set up in Pabna with Taka 1,649.12 crore. The CCGP meeting approved another proposal to set up a 50MW solar power plant with Taka 1,322.40 crore in Chuadanga. Western Renewable Energy Pvt Ltd would set up a 3MW solar-battery-diesel driven hybrid power plant with Taka 459 crore in Bhola under a proposal and a 68MW solar power park would be set up with Taka 1,798.48 crore in Sirajganj. In four separate proposals from the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, the government would procure 30,000 tons of phosphoric acid, 30,000 tons of bulk granular urea fertilizer from UAE, 30,000 tons of bagged prield urea fertilizer from Qatar while another 30,000 tons of bulk granular (optional) urea fertilizer from Saudi Arabia. Along with other proposals, the CCGP meeting approved two separate proposals of Bangladesh Railway under which it would procure some 580 meter gauge wagon from China while another 420 broad gauge wagons would be procured from India with around Taka 288.55 crore.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs-CCEA chaired by the Finance Minister approved a proposal in principle to implement the Dhaka East West Elevated Expressway project to be built on Public Private Partnership (PPP) basis with around Taka 16,000 crore, to minimize the traffic congestion in Dhaka and adjacent areas.

Bangladesh has made unprecedented attainments in the macro economy and also in different socio-economic fields over the last 50 years since the country's independence, the Finance Minister stated this at a briefing after the CCGP and the CCEA meetings. He said that the GDP size of the country has increased by four times over the last 12 years to reach \$411 billion. He expressed his high optimism that Bangladesh would become the 25th economy of the world by 2035 while it is also expected to make its place among the top 20 economies of the world by 2041.

If anyone does anything which is not acceptable to the people will have to step down, no matter what position he holds or what political ideology he belongs to, Education Minister Dr. Dipu Moni said this while responding to journalists yesterday after inaugurating the Victory fair of Liberation War at Chandpur outer stadium.

Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen has reaffirmed Bangladesh's enduring commitment to global peace. While addressing the 2021 Seoul Peacekeeping Ministerial (UNPKM) hosted by South Korea, Dr. Momen also reflected on the contributions made by Bangladesh peacekeepers in maintaining global peace and security. The Minister underscored the need for ensuring a nationally owned and inclusive peace-building process for realizing peace-building and sustaining peace agenda in conflict-affected countries.

Dr. Momen, in a condolence message sent to his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar, expressed deep shock at the deaths of India's Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, his wife Madhulika Rawat and other co-passengers in a helicopter crash that took place last morning in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

The re-excavation of the original Buriganga River is expected to start in February next, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh came up with the information after visiting potential site for constructing a bridge over the Old Buriganga River Channel in Loharpool area of Kamrangirchar Embankment yesterday.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md. Shahriar Alam left Bangladesh to India yesterday for attending the celebrations marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh and 50th Anniversary of Bangladesh-India Maitri (Friendship).

The US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ambassador Kelly Keiderling has said that Bangladesh and India would largely drive future growth and prosperity of the South Asia region. The US greatly values its partnerships with Bangladesh and India, she said as the US government representative at a reception, jointly organized by Bangladesh and India missions in Washington DC, to celebrate the 'Maitri Dibosh' on Monday. Bangladesh Ambassador to the US M Shahidul Islam and Indian Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu, also spoke at the event.

The country yesterday recorded 06 fatalities from COVID-19, taking the total death toll to 28,016. With 277 fresh cases, the number of infections surged to 15,78,288. The positivity rate stood at 1.35 per cent as 20,549 samples were tested during the time. At the same time, the recovery count rose to 15,43,204, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday.


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