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### News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged the people to celebrate the forthcoming Eid-ul-Fitr at their present locations to stop the further spread of coronavirus throughout the country. The Premier made the call while addressing the launching ceremony of different types of vessels of the Shipping Ministry and house handover under the rehabilitation project at Paira Port, joining virtually from Ganabhaban yesterday. About the passengers' safety in waterway communication, Sheikh Hasina urged the operators, businessmen and passengers of the vessels to remain careful and vigilant over their safety and lives. She emphasized on bringing all the vessels under the registration system, as it creates problems to identify the vessels in the time of compensation process due to lack of registration. Briefly highlighting the development carried out by her government in this sector, the Prime Minister said the government wants to revive the waterways communication as a strong means of transportation. The infrastructures and water vessels that the Premier inaugurated include TS Ilia Ahmed Chowdhury Dada Bhai Training Ship, 20 cutter suction dredgers, 83 dredger-auxiliary vessels, newly-constructed dredger base in Narayanganj, special inspection vessel 'Paridarshi,' two passenger vessels 'MV Tajuddin Ahmad' and 'MV Ivy Rahman', and four marine academies in Pabna, Barishal, Rangpur and Sylhet. Besides, the Prime Minister inaugurated the distribution of 500 pucca houses, constructed under a rehabilitation project in Paira Port, among the families affected by land acquisition.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in a congratulatory message on Wednesday extended her heartfelt congratulations to the Trinamool Congress Chief Mamata Banerjee on taking oath as the Chief Minister of West Bengal for a third straight term. The Prime Minister hoped that the relations between Bangladesh and West Bengal will be closer that would help build a prosperous future for the people of two Bangla under the dynamic leadership of Mamata Banerjee.

Today (May 7) is the day of Sheikh Hasina's return to Bangladesh to restore democracy. On this day in 2007, Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, returned to Bangladesh after undergoing treatment in the United States during the state of emergency declared by the then caretaker government. Earlier, the then caretaker government banned Awami League President and current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from returning to the country. But he ignored the ban and announced his return to the country. On his return home, the then caretaker government was forced to lift the ban under the pressure of his determination, courage and pro-democracy people.

President Md. Abdul Hamid received the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine at Bangabhaban yesterday. Earlier on March 10, 2021, the Head of the State received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

Liberation War Affairs Minister A K M Mozammel Haque said, the anti-liberation forces killed veteran freedom-fighter, labour-leader, teacher and former lawmaker Ahsanullah Master. He said this while addressing a virtual discussion organized by Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master MP Smriti Parishad on the occasion of the 17th death anniversary of Ahsanullah Master to be observed today. Mentioning that the verdict in the murder of Ahsanullah Master has not been executed yet, he demanded immediate execution of the verdict.

The instance of humanity Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina set after 1975 would be remembered forever and the country's people are aware of what Sheikh Hasina is doing for them. Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader made the remarks while speaking at a function through videoconferencing yesterday. The Minister urged BNP to be alert in dealing with coronavirus, shunning the politics of blame game. He asked the AL leaders and workers to remain alert so that no misappropriation takes in relief distribution. The third wave of coronavirus could be more devastating, so all must be aware of it despite having limitations, he added.

The government has taken an initiative for quick extension of the newly innovated paddy variety as the yield of the variety is 31 maund in a bigha or nearly a maund of paddy is being produced in per decimal land. Agriculture Minister Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque said this while attending a farmers' rally and BRRI-81 crop cutting in Chapainawabganj yesterday. The Minister said, the high yielding variety BRRI-81 will significantly increase paddy production as the variety plays an important role in facing food security challenge.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud said, presently there is no other politics of Awami League except standing beside the common people as per the directives of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The Minister stated this while addressing a function of distribution of food and clothes among the affected people due to COVID-19 pandemic in city's Darus Salam on behalf of the Prime Minister yesterday. Dr. Hasan Mahmud said, Mirza Fakhru Islam told that the government didn't understand the Coronavirus from the very beginning. But the reality is that no one died due to starvation in last 14 months for the farsighted leadership and time befitting steps of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He said according to the World Health Organization, Bangladesh's position is on top in tackling the COVID-19 situation in South Asia. And the position of the country is 3rd among the 20 countries across the globe with its positive GDP growth, he added. Later, the Minister handed over food and clothes among about 1000 affected people.



Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anisul Huq while talking to the reporters yesterday said, a letter asking for permission for BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia's departure abroad for better treatment has been received, opinion on the matter will be given as soon as possible.

Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen said, he urged the United States to provide as high as 20 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine while seeking immediate release of 4 million doses as Bangladesh is desperately trying to get more inoculation. He said this while talking to the reporters after holding a meeting with US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl Miller at the Foreign Ministry yesterday. The Foreign Minister said Dhaka has already sent a letter to the US seeking four million doses of vaccine immediately. The US Embassy in Dhaka is working sincerely to help Bangladesh provide vaccines, he said. The Foreign Minister urged Bangladeshi expatriates and diaspora residing in the US to make a strong lobby with the Washington DC so that Bangladesh could get a portion of the US's surplus COVID-19 vaccine. On Wednesday, Momen said according to Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Li Jiming, the Chinese government is supposed to start delivering 5 lakh doses of China Sinovac vaccine as gift before Eid-ul-Fitr. He said Russia is also interested to give vaccines to Bangladesh and sent documents to have a government-to-government agreement.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque, reaffirming that the government is making all-out efforts to collect Covid-19 vaccines from different sources said, they are now at the stage of signing a deal with Russia to procure Sputnik-V vaccine. He informed this at a virtual discussion on "Public-Private preparedness and emergency oxygen management to face second wave of COVID-19 yesterday. The government has stocked 900 tonnes of oxygen to treat COVID-19 patients while at present, the daily demand of oxygen is 70 to 80 tonnes for both general and coronavirus patients in the country, he said.

Greece is keen to recruit agricultural workers from Bangladesh. Greek Minister for Migration and Asylum Notis Mitarachi expressed interest to make some arrangement for recruiting agricultural workers from Bangladesh on short-term basis. During a meeting with Bangladesh Ambassador Ashud Ahmed at his office in Athens yesterday, the minister also promoted regular and safe migration.

Officials yesterday handed over 10000 vials of Remdisivir injection to India as medical assistance on behalf of the Bangladeshi people at the instruction of Prime Minister Sheikh for COVID affected neighbours. Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner in Kolkata handed over the medical assistance to the representative of Indian government at the Indian border port of Petrapole, the Foreign Ministry said.

The government has distributed Taka 2.5 crore as incentive among 50 thousand 300 corona-affected extremely poor families in Rajshahi district, officials said. State Minister for Water Resources Zaheed Farooque distributed foodstuffs among 1,500 low-income poor, floating and indigent people in Barishal yesterday. As part of the Covid-19 response, Eid gifts continue to be distributed among the unemployed people in the districts of Rangpur division. Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief in Chattogram distributed 3 crore 35 lakh 58 thousand taka among 64,492 distressed families and benefited 3,22,460 marginalized and unemployed people. Out of the 4 crore 64 lakh 25 thousand taka allocated as relief assistance in Mymensingh district, 35 lakh 50 thousand taka has been distributed so far. Cash and food items have been distributed among unemployed people in Khulna, Jessore, Magura, Kushtia, Meherpur, Satkhira and Narail districts of Khulna division. Khulna City Corporation Talukder Abdul Khaleq distributed relief materials among 200 low-income working people in the 13th ward of Khalishpur North-West Power Generation Company Limited. Following the instruction of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Awami Swechhasebok League yesterday handed over Eid gifts to 500 distressed and helpless poor families in the city's Kalabagan Krira Chakra ground.

The country recorded 41 fatalities from COVID-19 yesterday, taking the death toll to 11,796. With 1,822 fresh cases, the tally of infections surged to 7,69,160. At the same time recovery count rose to 7,02,163, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. A total of 10,29,15 people were administered the second dose of COVID-19 vaccines yesterday, taking the total number of vaccine receivers given the second dose of vaccine to 33,13,424. Registration for the Covid-19 vaccination program will remain closed until further notice.

  
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