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From: PIO, PID, Dhaka
Fax: 9540553/9540026
E-mail: piddhaka@gmail.com
Web: www.pressinform.gov.bd

News Brief

The United States would continue necessary assistance to Rohingyas including those now settled in Bhashan Char. The US may consider accepting a good number of forcibly displaced Rohingyas in Bangladesh as US President Joe Biden recently announced to enhance the admission of refugees in his country to 62,500 in 2021 and 125,000 in 2022. Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen expressed the optimism while US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R. Miller called on him at Foreign Ministry on Thursday, a foreign office press release said yesterday. Dr. Momen also urged the US envoy to address the difficulties being faced by a large number of Bangladeshi student visa applicants to obtain visa interview date in the US Embassy in Dhaka, as many may lose admission and scholarship due to the delay. Miller assured of doing the best to ensure that all student visa applicants get interview slots on a priority basis once the lockdown is over, so that they can join their academic sessions in US universities on time. At the meeting, the main point of discussion was on the process of acquiring AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine from the US to meet the growing needs in Bangladesh to address the present shortfall.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader speaking at a regular press conference at his residence recalling Sheikh Hasina's homecoming on May 7 said, the country's people are the key strength of AL President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's politics. He said May 7 is a memorable day to the democracy-loving people of Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina's father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was her political mentor and she loves the people as like as his father, he mentioned.

About 100 percent boro paddy has been cut in Haor. Boro paddy is being harvested in a happy atmosphere all over the country this year. Hopefully, rice harvesting can be completed successfully across the country. Agriculture Minister Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque said this while speaking at a function organized by Madhupur Krishak League in Tangail yesterday.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan after visiting the houses damaged by the Hefazat mayhem at Madhupur of Sirajdikhan in Munshiganj said, Islam never allows any violence as it is a religion of peace. The main intention of those who create anarchy in the name of religion is to gain political advantage, he said.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud said, democracy was reestablished in the country after the homecoming of Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in 2007. He said this while exchanging views with journalists at the Awami League President's political office at Dhanmondi in Dhaka yesterday. The Information Minister said, Sheikh Hasina then uttered that she wanted to face those cases at court and the restriction on her home return was never acceptable. Despite sensing threats to her life, he said, the daughter of Bangabandhu took risk and returned home.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee thanked Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen for his recent congratulatory message to her. Acknowledging Dr. Momen's letter with gratitude, Mamata hoped that the love and affection between the people of Bangladesh and West Bengal will further be strengthened in the days to come. Meanwhile, the Foreign Minister, in a tweet yesterday condemned the dastardly attack on Mohamed Nasheed, former President of the Maldives. Dr. Momen wished Nasheed and the other injured early recovery. He hoped that the perpetrators will be brought to justice.

Three eminent educationists have been appointed as national professors for five years. They are – Prof Emeritus and former vice chancellor of Chittagong University Alamgir Mohammad Sirajuddin, Diabetic Association of Bangladesh President Prof AK Azad Khan, and Bangladesh Gastroenterology Society President Prof Mahmud Hasan, a gazette notification was issued on Thursday by the Ministry of Education.

The government has issued several directives on wearing face masks out of home for health protection amid the coronavirus pandemic. The instructions were given in a statement on Thursday saying it is best to use a multi-layered surgical mask, which should be used once. It also said that many people cover their faces with their noses open when wearing masks, which is not correct. Instead, the upper part of the metal of face masks should be curved by being pressed with the nose and the lower part should be covered with both sides under the chin.

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief in Chittagong district yesterday so far disbursed Tk. 4,27,190 marginalized, unemployed people. So far 1677 more families have received relief assistance in the district through 333

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helpline, officials said. Under the VGF program, 7500 families in Bhurungamari upazila of Kurigram, 16700 families in Nageshwari upazila, 9500 families in Fulbari upazila, 7500 families in Sadar upazila and 3387 families in Chilmari upazila have been provided cash assistance at the rate of Tk 450. Cash worth Tk 10.25 lakh has been distributed among 4,874 people from 1,392 families in Bhola district. Besides, relief materials have been distributed among 815 people from 233 families through 333A call. At the initiative of Chuadanga district administration, foodstuffs were distributed to distress people as Prime Minister's assistance.

The USA and the UK have cofounded an advocacy project with the Dhaka North and South City Corporations to reduce different rivers pollution in Dhaka district. The new anti-pollution advocacy project called "Promoting Democratic Governance and Collective Advocacy for Environmental Protection in Dhaka City," was developed by Water keepers Bangladesh Consortium and in collaboration with Counterpart International. The project is co-funded by the US Agency for International Development and the UK's Foreign Commonwealth, and Development Office designed to advocate for clean Dhaka rivers, a press release said yesterday. Prime Minister's foreign affairs adviser Dr. Gowher Rizvi, Deputy Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Habibun Nahar, Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam and US Embassy in Dhaka's Deputy Chief of Mission JoAnne Wagner participated in the virtual launch of the project.

The University Grants Commission on Thursday gave clearance to public universities to hold examinations online as an attempt to reduce session jams amid the closure of educational institutions for the Covid-19 outbreak. The clearance was given after the UGC held a meeting with the representatives of public universities based on a committee report that gave guidelines for public universities to maintain a minimum standard.

Former Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin has once again been appointed as an Ambassador-at-Large with the rank and status of a minister. The government issued a gazette notification Thursday confirming his appointment.

Bangladesh Bank issued a guideline for trust fund management in payment and settlement services for mobile financial services, payment service provider and payment system operator to protect the interests of customers, BB sources said. A trust fund will comprise any such money that creates a liability of the service providing entity to its customers and, or participants in the process of mutual business arrangement.

Today is the 160th birth anniversary of Biswakabi Rabindranath Tagore, who reshaped Bengali literature and music as well as arts of Indian subcontinent with contextual modernism. On the occasion, President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages paying rich tributes to the poet. Bangladesh Television and other private television channels and Bangladesh Betar will air special programmes highlighting the life and works of Rabindranath.

The World Thalassaemia Day is being observed today in the country as elsewhere in the globe to raise awareness about the disease. This year's theme of the day is "Addressing Health Inequalities across the Global Thalassaemia Community". Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued a message on the occasion. The Premier, in his message said about 18,000 community clinics and union healthcare centres were established in the country to ensure health services of rural people. The government is providing Taka 50,000 as assistance to every thalassaemia patient alongside the cancer, kidney and liver cirrhosis patients for their treatment, she added.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in a condolence message yesterday expressed profound shock and sorrow at the death of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra artiste, founding member of the Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha and eminent music composer, Anup Bhattacharya, who breathed his last at his 77 in Dhaka on Thursday.

After banning Indian nationals from entering, Malaysia yesterday extended the ban to cover travelers from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka following to prevent coronavirus infection.

The country recorded 37 fatalities from COVID-19 yesterday, taking the death toll to 11,833. With 1,682 fresh cases, the tally of infections surged to 7,70,842. At the same time recovery count rose to 7,04,341, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. A total of 33,13,424 people were administered the second dose of COVID-19 vaccines till yesterday. Registration for the Covid-19 vaccination program will remain closed until further notice.


Principal Information Officer
Phone- 9546091