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News Brief

The government is considering resuming the public transports on conditions and maintaining health guidelines in public interest amid the ongoing lockdown over COVID-19 pandemic, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said this while speaking at a virtual view exchange meeting with officials of Barishal Road Zone of BRTC and BRTA yesterday. The Minister warned that those who will take more than the fixed fare after leaving half the seats vacant in public transports will be penalized. He further said that a political party of the country is the patron of false propaganda which is being spread at home and abroad using social media. About the digital security, he said there is no reason to think that cybercrime and digital security will remain out of the purview of the government action.

Shops and shopping malls across the country will remain open for seven hours every day from today amid the ongoing 'strict lockdown', enforced from April 14 to stem the spread of Covid-19, strictly maintaining the health guidelines. Considering the life and livelihood of most of the country's people, the Cabinet Division on Friday issued a circular allowing the shops and the shopping malls to remain open from 10am to 5pm.

Meanwhile, a Press Information Department-PID handout said that it is seen recently that many people are uploading various statements and pictures on Facebook with fake IDs in the name of Road Transport and Bridges Minister and General Secretary of Bangladesh Awami League Obaidul Quader. It is legally a punishable crime, the handout added. The handout informed that Obaidul Quader has a verified Facebook ID. The Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges has requested not to be confused by statements, pictures or any other content disseminated from all fake IDs except the Minister's verified ID.

In the next 10 years, Bangladesh will be self-sufficient in granular food and the production of fish, poultry, milk, eggs and meat output would be surplus within next three to five years, Agriculture Minister Dr. Md. Abdur Razzaque said adding that the present government is trying to ensure nutritious food for the people of the country. The Minister was speaking at a virtual discussion meeting yesterday organized by Bangabandhu Veterinary Council on the occasion of World Veterinary Day 2021.

The arrested Hefazat leaders admitted BNP-Jamaat's active involvement and financing in the mayhem carried out on March 26-28 last, Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud came up with the information while talking to newsmen yesterday. Dr. Hasan said, Indian newspaper the Economic Times and some Bangladeshi newspapers reported that BNP-Jamaat actively took part and financed in the countrywide mayhem carried out under the banner of Hefazat during that period in collaboration with Pakistani intelligence agency. Ruination of heritages and antiques and even attacks on temples of other religions are not merely stray incidents, he said. So, those who were involved with the anarchy and who extended support will not be spared by any means, he said. Earlier, the Minister virtually inaugurated food aid distribution for 2000 low income group families at his home constituency of Rangunia in Chattogram under his personal initiative.

Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen played down the shortage of much needed COVID-19 vaccine, saying Bangladesh completed all preparations to get the vaccine from AstraZeneca as well as other alternative sources. It is only a matter of time before the process starts, he said while talking to a private TV channel yesterday. He further said, it is difficult to get the vaccine from India as the situation of Corona deteriorated there and politicians and people are not permitting export at this moment. New Delhi never said it will not give, the Minister said adding that government is in constant touch with India to get the promised vaccine from Seram Institute.

Passenger trains will start plying as per the hygiene rules once public transport is resumed, Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon said to reporters at a briefing yesterday.

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid underscored the need for finding out effective ways of energy storage considering economic and technical aspects and environmental challenges for the country. Necessary fund for research in this regard can be collected from Bangladesh Energy and Power

Research Council and logistic support from Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority-SREDA, he said. He was addressing a webinar on Storage Applications in Bangladesh Power System arranged by 'Energy and Power' magazine yesterday. There is no alternative to think of energy storage to get the full benefits of renewable energy, he said.

State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak said, there was no alternative to online marketing during the era of COVID-19 pandemic. He was speaking at a virtual meeting on health management, relief activities and law and order in Natore district yesterday to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

'Anondomela', an online marketplace initiated by the UNDP for small and medium enterprises, will organize the largest online fair for Eid during the COVID-19 pandemic in partnership with Joyeeta Foundation from April 24 (yesterday) to May 6, from 8 am to 8 pm.

Mentioning Bangladesh, a very attractive country for foreign investors, the Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh Naoki Ito said, the Japanese big companies are very keen to invest more in the country's special economic zones. While addressing a webinar yesterday, he added, around 300 Japanese companies are operating in Bangladesh at present.

The Joint Commissioner of the Detective Branch-DB of Police Md. Mahbub Alam yesterday said, Hefazat-e-Islam has formed an organization called 'Rabetatul Wa-e-Zin' to spread extremism across the country through Waz-Mahfil. A syndicate, formed with its own leaders and workers, is controlling the organization, he said, adding that the organizers of Waz -Mahfil are being forced by the so-called syndicate to hire the Hefazat-leaders to different Waz-Mahfil in the country. He said, there have been several cases of sabotage all over the country, including Dhaka, against them. A total of 53 cases were filed in connection with the incident of violence and sabotage at the Shapla Chattar rally of Hefazat in 2013, he added. Meanwhile, DB Police has arrested Prof. Ahmad Abdul Quader, central Nayebe-Amir of Hefazat-e-Islam from Agargaon in the capital last evening. Another religion-based organization Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, terming Hefazat-e Islam an "extremist militant group", demanded a ban on the radical Islamist outfit over violence. As many as 551 Alems of Ahle Sunnat raised the demand in a statement issued by their Chairman Shaikhul Hadith Quazi Muhammad Muinuddin Ashrafi and Secretary General Syed Mosihuddaula yesterday.

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed June 10 for the submission of investigation report in the case filed against eight people, including the owner of the building 'Haji Musa Mansion' in Old Dhaka's Armanitola and the chemical go-down owners, in connection with the fire that broke out on Friday.

The deadline for online application of the first year honours admission test in Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology-BUET in 2020-21 academic year, scheduled to end yesterday at 3pm, has been extended till May 3.

The government has cut the 14 days duration of mandatory institutional quarantine to three days for international travellers. The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh-CAAB yesterday in a notification, which will come into effect immediately until 11:59pm on April 28 said, upon completion of the institutional quarantine, samples will be collected from them for the Covid-19 PCR tests. If the test results come negative, they will be released to complete a total of 11 days' home quarantine which will be supervised by the local administration. In case of positive results, the passengers will have to go for isolation at the government nominated facilities at their own expense, it said. The authorities also said, the arriving passengers, who already have received two shots of Covid-19 vaccine and possess PCR-based Covid-19 negative certificates along with the proof of vaccination, will have to complete a 14 days' home quarantine under the supervision of the local administration. Besides, all incoming or outgoing passengers will mandatorily possess PCR-based Covid-19 negative certificates and the tests will be done within 72 hours of the flight departure time. The authorities also asked the airlines concerned to issue boarding passes, upon confirmation, to the passengers who already are fully vaccinated and possess the Covid-19 negative certificates along with the proof of vaccination.

The country recorded 83 fatalities from COVID-19 yesterday, taking the death toll to 10,952. With 2,697 fresh cases, the tally of infections surged to 7,42,400. At the same time recovery count rose to 6,53,151. A total 20,194 people were administered the first dose of COVID-19 vaccines while 1,87,321 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 57,98,880, while a total of 21,55,296 people received the second dose of the vaccine. As many as 72,04,301 people got registered till 2.30 pm yesterday to take COVID-19 vaccines.


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