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News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged the developed countries to formulate an 'immediate and ambitious action plan' to cut their carbon emissions to protect the planet from the adverse impact of climate change as she placed a four-point proposal at a high-level global climate summit. The Premier made the suggestions in her pre-recorded video message screened in the opening session of the two-day virtual "Leaders' Summit on Climate", convened by US President Joe Biden yesterday. In her first proposal, she said immediate and ambitious action plan should be taken by developed countries to reduce their carbon emissions to keep the global temperature rise at 1.5 degree Celsius and the developing nations should also focus on mitigation measures. Sheikh Hasina, secondly, suggested ensuring the annual target of 100 billion US dollars which should be balanced 50:50 between adaptation and mitigation with special attention to the vulnerable communities while pursuing 'Loss and Damage'. 'Major economies, international financial institutions and private sectors should come forward for concessional climate financing as well as innovation,' she said in her third proposal. In the fourth proposal, the Prime Minister said focus is needed on green economy and carbon neutral technologies with provision of technology transfer among nations. Sheikh Hasina joined the summit at the invitation of the Joe Biden. As many as 39 heads of state and government from across the world and the European Council president are expected to attend and deliver speech at the two-day virtual summit.

The overall progress of the country's first metro-rail construction work stands at 61.49 percent and the physical progress of the first phase construction of the metro-rail from Uttara to Agargaon is 83.52 percent. Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader at a regular press conference at his residence in Dhaka yesterday also informed combined progress of electrical and mechanical system and procurement of rolling stock and depot equipment is 52.22 percent. The first elevated metro-rail will have 24 sets of 144 coaches and each set will have six coaches, he said. He said the country's first six-coach metro-rail set has reached the newly constructed jetty of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited at Uttara Depot on April 21. He said the other sets of metro rail will reach here immediately. Later, the minister joined a virtual view-exchange with officials of BRTC and BRTA Gopalganj Zone.

Agriculture Minister Dr. Muhammad Abdur Razzaque said, the country's boro production is likely to increase by 10 lakh tonnes compare to the production in the last year while this year's boro output target has been set at 2.05 crore tonnes. The Minister said this while virtually addressing a review meeting on annual development programme implementation yesterday. Dr Razzaque said country's boro cultivation target has exceeded by 1.20 lakh hectares of land compare to the last year, and hybrid cultivation has also been raised by nearly 3 lakh tonnes from the last year. The government has made utmost efforts for raising rice production this year as more land has been brought under cultivation and incentive of Taka 76 crore has been given as seed assistance for hybrid cultivation, he said.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hassan Mahmud said those who make statements in favour of hypocrisy and liars also fall into that category. The Minister said this while responding to a question after addressing a webinar titled 'Restore Our Earth: Bangladesh Perspectives and the Way Forward' marking the World Earth Day from his residence in Dhaka yesterday. Replying to another query from a journalist, Hasan said the Awami League has been staying beside the country's people for the last one year under the directives of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and the party will remain beside them. In the first phase, he said, the AL distributed relief among them and provided cash support to 1.25 crore people.

Local Government Minister while speaking at a virtual exchange meeting with the chairmen of all the district councils in the country on the ongoing COVID-19 infection prevention and development activities yesterday said, the Social Security Program taken by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is changing the lives of the people. In view of the socio-economic condition of our country, the current situation and the overall situation, reforms and some changes are needed to make the laws timely and strong. To this end, his ministry is taking several initiatives, he said.

Bangladesh will purchase vaccines commercially from Russia apart from the co-production. Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen said this while talking to journalists at his residence in the capital yesterday. Russia and Bangladesh recently signed an agreement to manufacture Russia's Sputnik V vaccine in Bangladesh on a co-production arrangement. Bangladesh and Russia agreed on the proposal of co-production as Russia will not be able to meet the total vaccine demand of Bangladesh. But there is a condition that Bangladesh will not share the vaccine production formula with others, and we agreed, he said. The Foreign Minister also informed Bangladesh will purchase Chinese vaccine soon while Beijing have given pledge to provide six lakh doses of COVID-19 inoculates as a gift first. He said Beijing has also given a proposal to make emergency vaccine storage for six countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka for urgent use.

Meanwhile, Indian High Commission in Dhaka through What's app yesterday informed, New Delhi will continue to do its best to support the vaccine rollout in neighborhood countries.

Social Welfare Minister Nuruzzaman Ahmed said, in the current fiscal year, all the allowances will be given through mobile banking. He made the remarks while addressing an online review meeting on the progress of remittance under the 'Social Security Program' under the Ministry of Social Welfare yesterday. The Minister said, despite the outbreak of Coronavirus, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the progress and development activities of our country weren't hampered. The wheel of our economy was in motion.

State Minister for ICT Junaid Ahmed Palak said, 35,000 more modern Sheikh Russell Digital Labs will be set up in the country by 2025 to educate students in technology education. He said this while addressing a virtual roundtable meeting jointly organized by A2I, Grameenphone and Plan International on the occasion of "International ICT Girls Day" yesterday. Saying that the Curriculum for Coding and Programming will be included in the national curriculum for primary schools from the next academic year, he called upon the government as well as all concerned to play a responsible role in mentoring, coaching and monitoring the trainees.

The World Bank and the Government of Bangladesh yesterday signed a \$250 million financing to help Bangladesh create more and better jobs; recover faster from the COVID 19 pandemic; and build resilience to future crises. It supports policies to modernize the trade and investment regime; improve social protection for workers; and help youth, women, and vulnerable people access quality jobs. The agreement was signed by Economic Relations Division Secretary Fatima Yasmin and World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh Mercy Tembon on behalf of the government and the World Bank respectively.

Lower courts and tribunals across the country in the last seven working days disposed of 23,784 bail pleas and granted bail to 13,607 accused after hearing their pleas virtually, Supreme Court sources said yesterday.

The country yesterday recorded 98 COVID-19 deaths, taking the death toll to 10,781. With 4,014 fresh cases, the tally of infections surged to 7,36,074. At the same time recovery count rose to 6,42,449, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. A total of 16,784 people were administered the first dose of COVID-19 vaccines today while 15,19,88 received the second dose across the country during the same period. The number of vaccine receivers given the first dose of vaccine rose to 57,78,686, while a total of 19,67,975 people received the second dose of the vaccine. As many as 71,82,202 people got registered until yesterday to take COVID-19 vaccines, DGHS sources said.


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