



PRESS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH
DHAKA



Most Urgent
For: Bangladoot, All Missions
MSG: 214/2019-20
Date: Thursday, 23 April, 2020

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News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will join a virtual conference starting today at 7pm titled 'Enhancing regional cooperation in South Asia to combat COVID-19-related impact on its economics' from her official Ganabhaban residence arranged by the World Economic Forum (WEF). PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim said the Prime Minister will deliver her opening remarks on "Bangladesh-Building Regional Resilience to fight COVID-19" in the conference.

The country's Covid-19 death toll hit 120 after 10 more patients died and 390 people tested positive for corona virus in 24 hours taking the total number of detected cases to 3772 till 2:30 pm yesterday, said Additional Director General (Administration) of Directorate General of Health Services Prof Nasima Sultana in a virtual media briefing at her office. She said a total of 32430 samples have so far been tested since the detection of first COVID-19 cases adding 3096 were tested in 21 labs across the country in the past 24 hours. Meanwhile, 5 more patients recovered in 24 hours, which brought the total number of cases of recovery to 92. Among the 10 fatalities, 3 are in their 60s, 2 in their 50s, 3 in their 40s and 2 in their 20s whereas seven of them are male and three female. Nasima said 78,119 people are now at both home and institutional quarantine and 900 people have now been kept in isolation. She said a total number of 3,24,902 PPE are now in stock.

Agriculture Minister Dr Muhammad Abdur Razzaque yesterday while exchanging views with the local administration on combating COVID-19 and harvesting paddy at Dhanbari upazila auditorium, Tangai urged all to implement the government's directives at the field level properly to fight the corona virus. He said none remains out of the purview of humanitarian assistances and relief programmes across the country amid the COVID-19 situation. He said different agricultural equipments, including about 800 combine harvesters and 400 reapers, at cost of Taka 100 crore, have been reached to the farmers. He later in another occasion distributed relief goods among destitute families at a school in Tangail.

Information Minister and Awami League Joint General Secretary Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday while giving an address to media from the AL President's Dhanmondi political office urged all the political parties, including BNP, to stand by people amid coronavirus pandemic and do politics unitedly for protecting them from the lethal virus. He said along with the government, we have to work together so that the situation does not worsen. Hasan said the ruling Awami League alongside the government has been working to protect people from the virus. He said since the beginning of this crisis, the AL relief sub-committee has been distributing relief goods following the instruction of AL President Sheikh Hasina. He said the relief distribution programme will continue.

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen yesterday while addressing a foreign ministers level videoconference of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Executive Committee on 'Consequences COVID-19 Pandemic and Joint Response' urged the OIC to adopt holistic approach for protecting migrant workers residing in OIC member states especially in the Middle East amid COVID-19 pandemic. The Foreign Minister said OIC member states need to provide utmost importance on the issue of job retention of domestic and resident migrant workers so that sudden shock of unemployment can be cushioned and the social balance can be preserved. He urged the more developed OIC states to assist the LDCs, and other developing OIC member states — to supply medical equipments and supplies — in treating the COVID-19 patients. Momen proposed for creating a voluntary COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund by the willing OIC Member Countries through Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and Islamic

Solidary Fund (ISF). He said IDB could actively consider deferral and cancellation of loan payments of the OIC borrowing countries especially from the LDCs.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Malek yesterday while speaking as the chief guest at a meeting of the National Steering Committee organized on the occasion of "National Nutrition Week-2020" with district and upazila level health officials through video conference in the conference room of the health department urged all in the health sector to work tirelessly for the people in COVID-19 crisis without being disappointed by any criticism.

Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder yesterday while exchanging views with officials of Naogaon district through a video conference from his residence in the city issued directives to follow during paddy harvesting and rice procurement. He said the government will procure 8 lakh metric tons of paddy and 11.5 lakh metric tons of rice starting from April 26 simultaneously across the country during the current season. The Food Minister also asked the officials to remain vigilant so that the farmers do not face any hassle during the supply of paddy to the government warehouses.

The Communist Party of China (CPC) in a message to the Bangladesh Awami League (AL) yesterday reiterated that China will always stay beside Bangladesh and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to fight the coronavirus situation, an AL press release said yesterday. The Communist Party of China also provided 50,000 pieces of masks for the AL, the release said.

Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih yesterday called Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and expressing gratitude thanked her for sending medical equipment and relief materials to the Maldives to combat the corona virus situation, said PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim. The Prime Minister assured that Bangladesh will keep up their cooperation and assistance to the friendly and neighbouring countries for their any needs.

Posts and Telecommunications Minister Mustafa Jabbar yesterday while launching Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) initiated free telemedicine service for all amid the ongoing corona virus transmission crisis said any citizen can avail the service from anywhere across the country round the clock at fully free of cost where a total of 34 specialized doctors would provide the service


State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday at a meeting with representatives of the Cargo Vessel Owners' Association on cargo handling amid the corona virus situation at his office in the Secretariat said goods transportation will continue through the inland waterways with the help of cargo vessel owners, container ship owners and River Police without lives of the cargo workers exposing to threats, said a press release.

The government through Disaster Management and Relief Ministry has so far allocated 94,667 metric tonnes (MT) rice and over Taka 47.35 crore in cash for the low-income groups across the country as they remain without work following the restrictive measures taken to battle the corona virus, said a Press Information Department (PID) handout yesterday.

The Fisheries and Livestock Ministry has issued a notification asking the field level officials to take necessary measures to ensure the marketing of marginally-produced fishes, dairy, eggs and poultry amid the ongoing corona virus pandemic.

Bangladesh yesterday brought back its 168 Bangladeshi nationals from Chennai, India and 185 others from Singapore stranded there due to flight suspension amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Civil Aviation Authority, Bangladesh (CAAB) spokesperson M Sohail Kamruzzaman told media that all returnee will be sent to 14-day institutional quarantine if they fail to show medical certificate at the airport on their arrival here.

Dr Saadat Hussain, former Cabinet Secretary and PSC Chairman, passed away at United Hospital in the capital on last night at 10:49 pm. He was 73.


23.4.2020
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