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News Brief

The country's Covid-19 death toll hit 250 after 11 more patients died and total number of detected cases soared to 16,660 after 969 new patients tested positive in the last 24 hours, said Additional Director General (Admin) of Directorate General of Health Services Prof Nasima Sultana in a virtual media briefing. She said a total of 1,36,638 samples have so far been tested adding 6,773 tests in 38 labs across the country in the past 24 hours. She said the recovery count rose to 3,147 after 245 patients were discharged from hospitals in the last 24 hours. Among the total infections, 18.52 percent patients have recovered so far, while 1.53 percent died. Nasima said now 36,343 people are at quarantine, 2,361 people are in isolation. She said, 17, 47,846 PPE has been distributed so far while 4,09,401 PPE are in stock. Meanwhile, The Health Ministry yesterday issued three directives to ensure the treatment of non-COVID patients at all hospitals across the country. If any hospital does not follow the directives, necessary action will be taken, including revoking license, against them as per the existing provision. The Health and Family Welfare Ministry has also issued a 13-point health rules for government officials and employees to protect them from the infection of deadly COVID-19.

Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury yesterday while launching Anondomela, an online marketplace, initiated by the United Nations Development Programme, with assistance from Ekshop of a2i, said as part of the stimulus package to revamp the economy amid corona virus crisis, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) will get a Tk 20,000 crore stimulus package from the government to stay afloat. She hoped this will ease the sufferings of these entrepreneurs.

The Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday at a virtual press conference on the contemporary affairs from his official residence here said the government has taken 'zero tolerance' policy against irregularities in relief distribution. Quader, also Awami League General Secretary, said the government eased the general holidays in limited scale considering the live and livelihood of the jobless and hapless people. Quader requested all to buy products from online shops to avoid infections. He urged the physicians for opening private clinics and chambers for general patients following ensuring their safety.

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday while inaugurating the distribution of health protective equipment among the journalists at Jatiya Press Club (JPC) organized by Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) here urged the media owners to provide sufficient health protective equipment to journalists. He also urged not to terminate any journalist and pay their salaries and arrears amid coronavirus pandemic. Later, Dr Hasan, also Awami League Joint General Secretary, criticised BNP leaders for their repeated comments on Coronavirus situation in the country and said their (BNP) speeches sound like incoherent talks.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday at a view exchange meeting with Uzbekistan Deputy Prime Minister and Investment and Foreign Trade Minister Sardor Umurzakov through video conference from the secretariat said Bangladesh and Uzbekistan would form Joint Working Group (JWG) to boost bilateral trade and investment through removing different barriers. During the meeting, they discussed various issues to enhance the trade and economic relations between the two countries.

State Minister for Information, Dr Murad Hassan, yesterday inaugurated 39th PCR laboratory in the country at Sheikh Hasina Medical College in Jamalpur to test the sample of suspected Covid-19 patients.

The Planning Commission has finalized a Taka 2,05,145 crore draft Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the next fiscal year (FY21) giving highest priority to the transport sector. A Senior Planning Commission official said due to the Novel Coronavirus pandemic, the number of development projects in the new ADP will be slight less with 1,588 projects excluding those from the autonomous bodies.

The High Court (HC) yesterday in its maiden virtual hearing directed the concerned officials to take necessary measures to protect the dolphins in river Halda under Raozan upazila in Chattogram. Meanwhile, Bangladesh's lower courts have granted bail to 144 suspects after hearing more than 150 petitions via video conferencing in two days after the introduction of e-justice system amid the coronavirus outbreak.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Iqbal Mahmood said they have a plan to set up a 'special committee' or 'task-force' to bring to justice those involved in irregularities in the distribution of government relief amid the coronavirus pandemic, said a commission statement yesterday. He said the ACC has filed 15 cases and arrested several people during April 12 to May 11 over relief misappropriation across the country.

A total 1,15,033 metric tons of rice has been distributed among 4.50 crore people of nearly one crore families across the country as relief till May 11, said an official handout here yesterday. Besides, more than Tk 52.76 crore has already been distributed in cash among over 3.6 crore people of more than 59,96,115 families and about Tk 13.10 crore has been distributed as baby food among 8 lakh beneficiaries of four lakh families.

A total of 88 more stranded Bangladeshis returned home from Mumbai yesterday while 169 Indians left here for Srinagar by a separate chartered flight under the ongoing repatriation drive amid flight suspension due to COVID-19 pandemic, spokesperson of the airlines Deputy General Manager (PR) Tahera Khondokar told Media. Meanwhile, a total of 313 undocumented Bangladeshi expatriate workers in Kuwait also arrived here yesterday.

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Ito Naoki and Chief Representative of JICA Bangladesh Hirata Hitoshi handed over PPE to health and family welfare secretary Md Asadul Islam in the capital yesterday, a Japanese embassy press release said here.

The Fisheries and Livestock Ministry has requested the central bank to include the district and upazila agriculture credit committees in the distribution process of the farm loan of Taka 5,000 crore allocated for the farmers affected due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The overall progress of the construction of much-awaited Padma Multipurpose Bridge reached 79 percent and construction work of the main bridge reached 87 percent amid the nationwide shutdown triggered by the coronavirus outbreak, a BSS report said.

Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) across the country is producing around 1,900 metric tonnes rice every day. Of the 76 industrial estates under BSCIC, rice mills at 13 industrial estates are producing rice in the country to keep the market stable, said an Industries Ministry press release issued yesterday.


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