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News Brief

The country's Covid-19 death toll hit 155 after three more patients died and total number of detected cases soared to 6462 after 549 people tested positive for corona virus in 24 hours 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 54,733 samples have so far been tested adding 4332 tests in 25 labs across the country in the past 24 hours. Meanwhile, eight more patients recovered in past 24 hours raising the total number of cases of recovery to 139. She said among the three fatalities, all are in their 60s and all victims are in Dhaka. Nasima said 76,840 people are now at quarantine and nearly 1220 people have now been kept in isolation. She said a total number of 3,41,444 PPE are now in stock.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday while speaking at a virtual press conference on contemporary affairs from his official residence said the politics of divide will make the COVID-19 tackling efforts more complicated amid the country's ongoing crisis. Quader, also Awami League General Secretary, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is monitoring the country's COVID-19 situation round-the-clock and has been giving necessary instructions to the officials concerned to this end. He expressed gratitude to those who have been working in the frontlines to fight the coronavirus. He urged the traders not to adulterate iftar items during holy Ramadan

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday while paying homage at the grave of freedom fighter lieutenant Sheikh Jamal by placing a wreath on his grave at the city's Banani graveyard, marking his 67th said the patrons of the killers of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman are still active in the country's politics. Hasan, also Awami League Joint General Secretary said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's initiatives to tackle the COVID-19 crisis have highly been lauded around the world. Hasan said the BNP's politics was established on falsehood and it did not stand by the people. The AL Joint General Secretary urged the BNP leaders to leave up holding the photo sessions and stand by the country's people amid the crisis.

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen has called for a shared responsibility of neighbourhood countries and developed nations in sheltering Rohingyas as UK's State Minister for its foreign and commonwealth office Lord Ahmad called him over the 500 reportedly stranded Rohingyas in Bay of Bengal, a foreign ministry statement said. The Bangladesh Foreign Minister also sought cooperation so that the British buyers refrain from cancelling their orders for Bangladesh garments products during this global crisis. The Foreign Minister also informed the British Sate Minister that Bangladesh would send medical supply to the UK as a gift for helping British government combating deadly coronavirus.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday while talking to journalists after holding an unofficial and unscheduled meeting with the RMG factory owners at the Secretariat said that steps have been taken to reopen the readymade garment (RMG) factories following the health guidelines with the workers currently staying in the capital. The Minister said there is no need of workers from outside the capital city to join their work. The minister said the wages for the month of April will be paid as determined by the government or negotiated with them.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal in a video conference yesterday advised the banking sector leaders to keep the Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) in control as the road ahead of economic recovery would be challenging. He also emphasized on putting a lid on the banks operating cost and reducing the cost income ratio. Mentioning that the banking sector is the

State Minister for ICT Division Zunaid Ahmed Palak yesterday while addressing a virtual press briefing said Bangladeshi tech-giant Walton has been able to produce world-class ventilators, mechanical breathing devices 'WPB 560' in our country and functional prototypes of three models of the ventilator which would soon be handed over to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) for clinical trial. He added that after receiving no objection certificate from DGHS, Walton would be able to go into production on commercial level.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russell yesterday in an emergency meeting of the department in its conference room said that government is going to take a project to create self-employment for youth who have become jobless due to coronavirus outbreak.

President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed deep shock and sorrow at the death of National Professor Dr Jamilur Reza Choudhury. In a condolence message, the Prime Minister said Dr Jamilur Reza, as an eminent engineer, played an important role in the country's infrastructural development including Padma Multipurpose Bridge. They prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed profound sympathy to the bereaved family. The educationist died of heart attack at the age of 77.

Information Minister and Joint General Secretary of Awami League Dr. Hasan Mahmud has expressed deep grief over the untimely death of the city editor of the daily Shomoyer Alo Humayun Kabir Khokon who died while undergoing treatment at a Hospital in the capital. Dr Hasan conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family and prayed peace to the departed soul.

The Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry issued a circular amid the coronavirus outbreak to release fifty percent of the security deposit paid by recruiting agencies, to help them pay wages and office rent on condition of redepositing the money within one year.

Farmers have so far harvested about 62 percent of their boro paddy while 14 percent is matured for harvesting and remaining 24 percent paddy is yet to ripen in the country's haor belt, said an Agriculture Ministry press release. The boro crop was cultivated on 445,399 hectares of land in the haor region, of them; crop of 2.74 lakh hectors of land has been harvested so far.

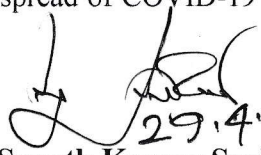
A total of 121 more expatriate Bangladeshi workers returned home from Kuwait while 109 Japanese nationals left for Tokyo yesterday, HSA director told media. As per the government decision, after arriving here, all returnee workers will undergo a medical checkup at the airport and to be sent to 14-day quarantine under management of the Armed Forces Division.

Nagad, Bangladesh post Office's financial service has been enlisted as emergency service through a Ministry of Public Administration notification, said press release yesterday. Around 70,000 outlet services of Nagad across the country have remained open to ensure emergency financial service for the people since the beginning of government declared general holidays in this COVID-19 gripped situation.

The poultry farmers of eight divisions of the country have sold about Taka 26.72 crore poultry products including milk through mobile selling centers of the Department of Livestock across the country, said a press release here yesterday.

Associate organizations of the Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) has already provided different sorts of assistance to the people from their own initiative at a cost of around Taka 27 crore to contain COVID-19 and also distributed essential commodities to around 1.34 lakh poor families at a cost of Taka 8.5 crore, as per a PKSF press release issued yesterday.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society till April 26 has distributed health safety materials like hygiene kits, soaps and hand sanitizers among some 2,56,017 families and has been spraying disinfectant at various establishments across the country to avert the spread of COVID-19, said a press release yesterday.


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