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News Brief

The country's Covid-19 death toll hit 175 after 5 more patients died and total number of detected cases soared to 8,790 after 552 people tested positive for coronavirus in 24 hours till 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 76,066 samples have so far been tested adding 5827 tests in 31 labs across the country in the past 24 hours. Meanwhile, 3 more patients recovered in past 24 hours raising the total number of cases of recovery to 177. She said among the five fatalities, three are male and two female. Among the victims, all are in Dhaka. Nasima said 69,394 people are now at quarantine and 1,632 people have now been kept in isolation. She said a total number of 3,98,764 PPE are now in stock.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday at a virtual press conference on the contemporary affairs from his official residence urged the readymade garments (RMG) factory owners not to terminate any worker amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Quader, also Awami League General Secretary, said the government has taken various measures, including announcement of stimulus packages, to keep the RMG export orders effective amid the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already talked to the heads of the governments of different countries over phone to this end. The AL General Secretary urged people to communicate to the concerned authorities using helpline or hotlines if they have the symptoms of COVID-19. Quader expressed gratitude to those who have been working from the frontlines to fight the coronavirus.

Agriculture Minister Dr Abdur Razzak yesterday while addressing a special meeting on Coronavirus situation at the meeting room of Deputy Commissioner of Tangail said the government would take tougher actions if any irregularity and corruption is found in the distribution of government's stimulus packages for the agricultural sector. Razzak said Aush, jute and sesame seeds, fertilizer and other materials have already been distributed at free of cost to the farmers across the country. Besides, government supports are being given to the farmers for cultivating summer session vegetables, he added. The Agriculture Minister said the government has already declared Taka 5,000 crore stimulus packages with four percent interest rate along with giving subsidy of Taka 9,000 crore to agri-sector. Besides, the government has decided to give loan with four percent interest rate against the loan of Taka 14,500 crore due to Coronavirus pandemic, he added. The Minister said there will be no food shortage in next 7 to 8 months if the farmers can harvest their crops in due time.

As per the instruction of Awami League Joint General Secretary and information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud leaders and workers of Rangunia Upazila unit of Bangladesh Chatra League are cutting paddy and delivering it to the farmers' homes. Union-based team had been formed in Rangunia and every day they will go to some beel areas in Rangunia and cut the paddy of the poor farmers maintaining social distance, according to a BSS report.

Railways Minister Md Nurul Islam Sujan yesterday while speaking at a relief distribution programme in Panchagarh district said about 50 more ultra-modern air-conditioned luggage vans will be imported for carrying vegetables and other perishables.

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Md Shahab Uddin yesterday while inaugurating the food distribution programme at his constituency in Moulvibazar through a video conference from his residence in the capital urged the affluent members of the society to stand by the victims of COVID-19 crisis.

State Minister for ICT Division Zunaid Ahmed Palak yesterday through a virtual press conference launched live corona risk assessment test system for citizens' on Viber bot. Anyone, with Viber account, can assess the level of risk of coronavirus to him and find out the things to do by using the application launched with the help of Directorate General of Health Services and Multimedia Content & Communications, an official release said.

About 4 crore people across the country have received government relief assistance in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. A total of 92,341 metric tons of rice has so far been distributed in 64 districts among more than 3.95 crore people of 93,38,000 families as humanitarian assistance till Friday, an official handout said here yesterday. Besides, Taka 41.69 crore has already been distributed in cash among 2.42 crore people of 51.77 lakh families. A total of Taka 8.42 crore has so far been distributed as baby food aid among 5.26 lakh people of 2.63 lakh families.

European Union (EU) has expected that other countries in the region would grant landing of several hundreds of Rohingyas reportedly stranded in sea following generous example of Bangladesh that had allowed safe landing of 400 Rohingyas two weeks back, said EU Vice President Josep Borrell and Commissioner Janez Lenarcic in a joint statement. They praised Bangladesh for showing continued generosity and humanity towards the Myanmar's ethnic minority those had been forcibly displaced from Rakhine.

The Economist, the leading source of analysis on international business and world affairs, has placed Bangladesh as the 9th strongest economy in its report on the financial strength of 66 emerging economies in the wake of the Covid-19 attack. According to the ranking, released yesterday, the economy of Bangladesh has featured as strong or relatively strong in all the said indicators. It is ahead of China, India, Vietnam, Malaysia, UAE, Mexico, Brazil and other South Asian countries in the ranking.

The US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R Miller yesterday in a statement marking the World Press Freedom Day paid tribute to the Bangladeshi journalists who have been affected by deadly coronavirus while perform their duties. The US envoy also expressed his sincere condolences at the death of Humayan Kabir Khokon, the first journalist of Bangladesh who dies of COVID-19.

A total of 318 more stranded Bangladeshi nationals arrived Dhaka from New Delhi and Chennai by separate chartered flights yesterday. Among the returnees, 151 Bangladeshi nationals arrived here from Indian capital while 167 returned from South Indian city of Chennai, Biman's Deputy General Manager (PR) Tahera Khondoker told BSS.

Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments of the Ministry of Labour and Employment yesterday issued a directive, asking the garment workers to show their identity cards (IDs) to the concerned official for entering Dhaka, said a release here. Otherwise, it said, none would be allowed to enter the capital.



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