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**News Brief**

The country's Covid-19 death toll hit 110 after 9 more patients died and 434 people tested positive for corona virus in 24 hours taking the total number of detected cases to 3382 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 29,578 samples have so far been tested since the detection of first COVID-19 cases adding 2974 were tested in 21 labs across the country in the past 24 hours. Meanwhile, 2 more patients recovered in 24 hours, which brought the total number of cases of recovery to 87. Among the 9 fatalities, 3 are in their 60s, 3 in their 50s and 3 in their 40s. Nasima said 77004 people are now at both home and institutional quarantine. She said a total number of 359271 PPE are now in stock. In order to stem the community transmissions of COVID-19, the health official urged the law enforcement agencies and organizations concerned to take strict measures to make the nationwide shutdown more effective.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday while speaking at an online press briefing on contemporary affairs from his official residence warned that stern actions would be taken against the people involved in misappropriation of relief goods meant for the poor and destitute people amid the ongoing corona virus pandemic. Calling upon the country's people to follow the instructions of Prime Minister in tackling corona virus, Awami League General Secretary said the nation now remains united in addressing the crisis under the courageous leadership of Sheikh Hasina. He urged AL men to form committees immediately to join the relief distribution activities in coordination with the local administration.

Agriculture Minister Dr Mohammad Abdur Razzaque yesterday while speaking with local Boro cultivators and farm laborers at Modanm, Netrokona said the government always remains beside farmers of the country and as per the directives of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, it has already taken all the necessary steps to help farmers to harvest Boro paddy timely amid the pandemic of Covid-19. The Agriculture Minister advised them to strictly follow the health instructions and maintain social distancing during the harvesting of Boro paddy so that corona virus cannot spread. Dr Razzaque, also ruling Awami League Presidium Member, added that the government provided 128 combined harvesters and 23 paddy- ripper machines to framers of the Haor areas to assist them in harvesting Boro paddy timely. During his visit in Haor areas, he distributed masks, sanitizers, soaps and lungies among 200 paddy-harvesting workers.

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud after exchanging views with Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) leaders at AL president's Dhanmondi political office last evening said BNP is talking in a perplexed way at seeing the countrywide relief activities being carried out by Awami League alongside the government, said a press release issued yesterday. Noting that the government has brought over one third population of the country under different assistance programmes to combat the pandemic COVID-19, the Information Minister said different questions are being raised through the social media on to whom they (BNP) are distributing relief. Minister said BNP is still now busy in flaunt photo session. Receiving the members' lists of the two journalists' organizations handed over by BFUJ and DUJ leaders, the Information Minister said, as the journalists are presenting news and also working to combat COVID-19 taking risks, we hope, we would be

able to do something positive for them soon. He said a fair price shop of TCB commodities for journalists has already been set up on the Jatiya Press Club premises. According to another press release, as per the instruction of Information Minister and Awami League Joint General Secretary Dr Hasan Mahmud, the AL men will reap the paddy of the farmers in Rangunia, Chattogram during this Boro season.

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen will participate in an extraordinary foreign ministerial level meeting of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Executive Committee as a part of its effort to address issues of COVID-19 pandemic via video conferencing, a foreign ministry press release said here yesterday.

Local Government and Rural Development Minister Md Tazul Islam yesterday while talking to newsmen after visiting a number of canals in the city's Uttara area warned the public representatives plundering relief materials or involved in any other irregularity will not be spared. The Minister said taking instant actions, criminal cases have also been filed against those found involved in any irregularity in different parts of the country.

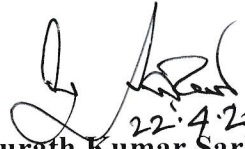
The UN Refugee Agency UNHCR yesterday, through a press release, warned of life-threatening consequences if annual monsoon preparations cannot be completed on time in Bangladesh amid the global outbreak of COVID-19. To address the risks of a potential outbreak of corona virus in the Rohingya camps, the government of Bangladesh, together with UNHCR and partners, has ensured the inclusion of refugees in its national response. Construction of isolation and treatment facilities has been launched with the goal of ensuring the availability of 1,900 beds to serve both refugees and host communities in Cox's Bazar.

Five special flights including one from Bangladesh Air Force yesterday operated to and from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) bringing back 259 Bangladeshis and taking away 719 foreigners from here amid ongoing flight suspension due to COVID-19 pandemic. Of the Bangladeshi nationals, 169 arrived here from India, 70 from the Maldives and 20 from Turkey while 301 US citizens, 264 Britons and 154 Turkish nationals left Dhaka for their respective countries by separate chartered flights.

The Fisheries and Livestock Ministry issuing an official order has asked all concerned to take necessary measures for undertaking massive publicity of the Taka 5,000 crore refinancing scheme to facilitate loans in fisheries and livestock sectors, according to a press release issued here yesterday.

Bangladesh Post Office (BPO) has opened a central control room to ensure uninterrupted postal services during the countrywide holidays rendered by the deadly COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative has been taken to ensure BPO's essential services such as saving certificate dealings, post office saving bank, post life insurance, digital commerce as well as countrywide transportation of emergency medical equipment, said a ministry press release yesterday.

Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC) has started selling sugar as part of its initiative to supply better quality sugar to consumers ahead of Ramadan. According to sources at the BSFIC, sugar is now sold from the country's 15 sugar mills aiming to supply sugar at a rate fixed by the government, said a handout. Besides, sugar will be supplied to the dealers registered under the corporation. As per the demand, each one-kg packet of sugar will be sold at Tk 65 at super shops in Dhaka city. Besides, BSFIC will also monitor market so that consumers can buy sugar at a fair price.

  
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