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News Brief

The country's Covid-19 death toll hit 239 after 11 more patients died and total number of detected cases soared to 15,691 after the biggest single-day jump in novel coronavirus cases with 1034 new patients in the last 24 hours till yesterday, said Additional Director General (Admin) of Directorate General of Health Services Prof Nasima Sultana in a virtual media briefing at her office. She said a total of 1,29,865 samples have so far been tested adding 7,208 tests in 37 labs across the country in the past 24 hours. She said the recovery count rose to 2,902 in the last 24 hours after 252 patients were discharged from hospitals. Nasima said now 36,343 people are at quarantine, 2,236 people are in isolation and 17,83,926 PPE has been distributed so far while 3,88,392 PPE are in stock.

The Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday while speaking at a virtual press conference on the contemporary affairs from his official residence here warned all concerned, including the AL men, against irregularities, saying that the government's anti-corruption drive continues. Criticising BNP for not standing beside the people amid the COVID-19 crisis, Quader, also Awami League General Secretary, said instead of relief distribution, BNP is distributing Eid gifts among its leaders and workers, which is a mockery with the sufferings of commoners.

Agriculture Minister Dr Abdur Razzak yesterday at an online meeting over the current situation of Boro harvesting said, some 4,39,000 hectares of land have been harvested which is 99 percent of the total cultivation and besides out of 47,54,447 hectares of Boro cultivated land across the country, harvesting of 18,18,000 hectares of land have been completed which is 39 percent. The minister said 1,497 combine harvesters and 2,455 reaper machines are being used for harvesting paddy across the country. As per the direction of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, necessary steps have already been taken to cultivate crops on every inch of the land and it will be implemented soon, he said.

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday while inaugurating a coronavirus sample collection booth at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) here urged media owners not to terminate any journalist and worker and pay their salaries and arrears amid coronavirus pandemic. Hasan, also the Awami League Joint General Secretary, said the media owners may claim that they are in trouble right now but I want to say that there will be no problem after a few months. He said the Cabinet Division has already sent letters to 58 ministries and departments asking to pay the advertisement bills of the media outlets. Hasan said the government will always remain beside you. As frontline workers, he said, journalists are playing a significant role in preventing rumours too.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday while speaking at a conference on 'Vision Meghalaya, Vision Northeast Bangladesh Partnership' through video conferencing from the Bangladesh secretariat in the city, underscored the need for reducing gaps for boosting trade volumes between Bangladesh and India. The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India organized the conference. Tipu urged the business community of the two countries to come forward for removing all kinds of trade barriers for further strengthening economic bond between Bangladesh and India. He hoped that the Indian entrepreneurs will take initiatives in this regard through the conference.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam yesterday provided three Ireland-made ventilators and N95 masks for Police Hospital. He handed over the logistics to Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Benazir Ahmed at Police Headquarters.

Over 4.5 crore people across the country have received relief as the government continues its efforts to mitigate their sufferings in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic whereas 1,13,802 metric tons of rice have been distributed among some one crore families, an official handout said. Besides, more than Tk 51.69 crore has already been distributed in cash among over 3.6 crore people of more than 59.11 lakh families and about Tk 13.10 crore has been distributed as baby food among 7.89 lakh people of 3.83 lakh families.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), yesterday agreed with the Government of the Union of Myanmar to extend the tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) through June 2021 for activities in Rakhine State, said a UNHCR press release received here. The MoU aims at helping create a favorable environment for the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation of Rohingyas from Bangladesh as well as development in the three townships of Rakhine State.

The government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) yesterday signed \$500 million loan agreements to strengthen Bangladesh's efforts to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the novel coronavirus disease pandemic, said an ADB press release. The assistance package is expected to benefit over 1.5 million workers, mostly women, in export-oriented industries who will receive extended salary support while doctors, nurses, and medical workers fighting COVID-19 in government-run hospitals will receive special honorarium.


Finance Division has released Taka 1,257 crore for providing Taka 2,500 to each of the 50 lakh families across the country due to the impact of Novel Coronavirus. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate the operations of this fund disbursement Programme to the poor families on May 14 and it is likely to continue till the Eid-ul-Fitr.

US ambassador to Bangladesh Earl Miller yesterday handed over the supply including 1,000 KN95 surgical masks, 800 200- milliliter bottles of hand sanitizer, 500 pairs of surgical gloves, 300 hazardous materials suits, 100 protective masks, and 50 medical goggles to Fire Service and Civil Defense Director LTC Zulfiker Rahman, a US embassy press release said.

Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday asked the banks not to disburse cash dividend till September this year amid COVID-19 crisis. As per the guideline issued by the central bank, banks can declare the highest 30 percent dividend with maximum 15 percent cash. The decision was taken to keep the banks afloat with liquidity enabling them to implement stimulus package of more than Taka 72,000 crore to support the falling economy.

Bangladesh's first communication satellite, Bangabandhu-I would mark the second anniversary today at it was launched to the orbit on May 12, 2018 from United States.

The concerned VAT offices would remain open on May 15 (Friday) since it will be the last day for submission of value added tax (VAT) returns. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) issued an office order yesterday for remaining open all the VAT circle offices.


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