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### News Brief

Outgoing Ambassador of the Philippines to Bangladesh Vicente Vivencio T. Bandillo paid a farewell call on President Md. Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban yesterday. During the call on, the President called upon the Philippines government to import garments products and medicines from Bangladesh as the country offers world class products at comparatively low prices. The President hoped that the Philippines, being a member of ASEAN would play a strong role in the repatriation of Rohingyas to their homeland.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked the Bangladesh Army to be always prepared to face any threat from home and abroad to protect the constitution and sovereignty of the motherland. The Premier was addressing the flags raising programme of eight units and organisations of Bangladesh Army at Sheikh Hasina Cantonment, Lebukhali in Patuakhali yesterday, joining virtually from Ganabhaban. The Prime Minister said, to develop Bangladesh Army as capable of facing geo-political and military challenges of the 21st century, the government has been implementing forces goal-2030 that was formulated following the Defense Policy of the Father of the Nation.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked the private banks to be more sincere in providing loans to small business enterprises at low interest under the government's incentive package, to offset the Covid-19 fallout as some 35 commercial banks under Bangladesh Association of Banks-BAB yesterday provided 25,95,000 blankets to the Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund to help the poor during the upcoming winter. The Prime Minister said, proving all apprehensions wrong, the country's reserve of foreign currency is US\$ 40 billion even amid COVID-19 pandemic. Bangladesh is probably the only country in the world that has been able to keep its economy afloat from the beginning of the pandemic as the government took timely measures, she added.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will lay the foundation-stone of the Bangabandhu Railway Bridge today, which will be constructed over the Jamuna River next to the Bangabandhu Bridge. The project is expected to be done by 2025. The Premier will also virtually join Swadhinata Padak 2020-giving ceremony which was postponed due to Covid-19, at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital in the morning.

Speaker Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury has said, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman fought his whole life for the political and economic emancipation of men and women and he laid the foundation for women's empowerment. The Speaker was addressing a virtual discussion on 'Bangabandhu in Women's Empowerment' marking 'Mujib Borsho' organized by Meherpur District Administration yesterday. The Speaker also administered the oath of two newly elected MPs, Kazi Monirul Islam and Md. Anwar Hossain Helal, elected from Dhaka-5 and Naogaon-6 respectively yesterday at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, pointing to BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir's allegation that the government wanted to keep BNP away from politics said, BNP is getting isolated from people because of its ill-politics. The Minister while virtually inaugurating a training centre of BRTC at Gabtoli in the capital yesterday said, the demand for women drivers in the country is increasing day by day, so it is an urgent to include cent percent women drivers and helpers in the BRTC's women bus service and school bus service.

The Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase in a virtual meeting yesterday, chaired by Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal approved four proposals with an estimated cost of around Taka 428.99 crore, including one for improving the Dhaka Water Supply network. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs meeting also held yesterday approved a proposal in principle for



following the Direct Procurement Method on emergency maintenance dredging at Rabnabad channel of Payra Port project. Meanwhile, the government has reorganised the seven-member Cabinet committee headed by Local Government Minister Md. Tazul Islam to finalise the Detailed Area Plan-DAP prepared by the RAJUK.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan may visit Bangladesh to attend the Mujib Borsho celebrations in March next year, if Covid situation improves, Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen told journalists after Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh Mustafa Osman Turan met him at the Foreign ministry on Tuesday to hand over special gift of medical equipment, sent by the Turkish President. Besides, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu will come to Bangladesh soon to inaugurate the newly-built mission of Turkey in Dhaka, he said. The Minister further said, Turkey wants to take bilateral trade to US\$2 billion a year at the soonest from about US\$900 million now. Meanwhile, the Maldives has expressed its keen interest to recruit more doctors and nurses from Bangladesh when the outgoing Maldivian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Aishath Shaan Shakir made a farewell call on Dr. Momen yesterday.

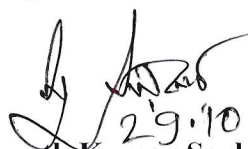
Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury has said that land development taxes can be paid online from anywhere in the world from July 1, 2021. He was speaking at the inaugural function of the online-based land development tax management software piloting program at his ministry yesterday with the theme 'Land service in hand'. State Minister for ICT Division Junaid Ahmed Palak speaking at a function in Dhaka yesterday said, 300 schools of the future are being set up in the country to get ideas about frontier technologies like blockchain, internet of things, robotics so that in the future they may develop into skilled people suitable for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The government, in an online meeting of the Food Planning and Monitoring Unit under the Ministry of Food yesterday decided to procure two lac tons paddy and 6.50 lakh tons rice this year. The government has set the paddy procurement price at Taka 26 per kg, Taka 37 per kg for parboiled rice and Taka 36 per kg for Atap rice, said Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister S M Rezaul Karim in a meeting at his ministry yesterday said, the government is formulating a policy to safeguard the poultry and dairy industries of the country.

US-Bangla Airlines started scheduled flights on Dhaka-Chennai, Chattogram-Chennai and Dhaka-Kolkata routes from yesterday under the 'Air Bubble Agreement' between Bangladesh and India. Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Vikram K Doraiswami speaking on the occasion assured that the process of issuing of tourist visas to Bangladesh travellers will restart soon. Meanwhile, Liberation War Affairs Ministry yesterday issued a statement seeking applications from indigent ailing freedom fighters to be treated in the neighboring country India under the joint venture of the ministry and Indian High Commission in Dhaka with financial assistance from the Indian government. The freedom fighters have been advised submit their applications to the concerned civil surgeon offices by November 15, 2020.

A total of 33 journalists, who passed hard time because of the coronavirus outbreak in Lakshmipur district, yesterday received Taka 10,000 each as financial support from Prime Minister's special fund. Meanwhile, the daily Sokalbela editor and publisher Syed Enamul Haque died at a hospital in the capital yesterday. Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud expressed profound shock at his death. The country yesterday recorded 23 more fatalities from the COVID-19, raising the death toll from the pandemic to 5,861. MP of Habiganj-3 Advocate Md. Abu Zahir, who has been infected with Covid-19, airlifted to Dhaka yesterday and admitted to the Combined Military Hospital. The shutdown of educational institutions is going to be extended further due to coronavirus pandemic, official sources informed yesterday.

  
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