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### News Brief

Super cyclone Amphan hit southwestern Bangladesh coastlines bordering India coast this evening with pounding winds and torrential rains, inflating sea waters causing as high as 12 feet tidal surges with initial reports suggesting at least three casualties, a BSS report said. Bangladesh authorities had shifted around 2.4 million people to more than 14,336 storm shelters. Fierce wind gusts and rains snapped power supply, plunging much of the coastal zone in Bangladesh into darkness. Md Mohsin, the Director General of the Department of Disaster Management, said the coastal districts experienced tide of 4 to 5 feet higher than normal level due to the storm. The authorities were yet to collect all the data on casualties and damage. It was likely to move in a north-northeasterly direction further and weaken gradually.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday joining a meeting of the National Disaster Management Council (NDMC)) to review the preparations to face the possible assault of the cyclone from her official residence Ganabhaban through video-conference said her government is prepared to face the cyclone 'Amphan'. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina monitored round the clock the situation of super cyclone named 'Amphan' in the Bay of Bengal, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told media. Meanwhile, Prime Minister yesterday also asked her party leaders and workers to stand by people, alongside the government, in addressing the aftermath of cyclone Amphan.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has given financial assistance of over Taka 122.02 crore to all the mosques across the country to alleviate the financial difficulties of the mosques during the coronavirus situation, said an Islamic Foundation press release.

Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday called Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and proposed sending an expert team to help Bangladesh combat the novel coronavirus pandemic, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told media. During the 25-minute conversation, the Chinese president assured Sheikh Hasina that his country would continue supports for Bangladesh's economic development. Jinping also said China will continue to work for further strengthening 'strategic partnership' with Bangladesh. Sheikh Hasina reiterated her call to the international community to work together to combat COVID-19 pandemic. The Chinese president said the visit of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to China laid the foundation of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Bangladesh yesterday recorded deaths of 16 people from the COVID-19, raising the total number of fatalities from the pandemic to 386 and reported 1617 fresh positive cases, the highest single-day jump, increasing the virus caseload to 26,738, said Additional Director General (Admin) of Directorate General of Health Services Prof Nasima Sultana in a virtual media briefing. Among the total infections, 19.47 percent patients have recovered while 1.04 percent died so far. She said a total of 2,03,852 samples have so far been tested adding 10,207 tests in 43 labs across the country in the past 24 hours. Nasima said now 52,941 people are at quarantine 3,816 people are in isolation and over 20,07,322 PPE were distributed and 3,51,707 are in stock.

The Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said after failing in the polls and launching agitation against government), BNP has now got involved in the evil game of politics capitalizing on the global crisis amid the pandemic Covid-19 outbreak. Quader, also Awami League General Secretary, came up with the remark during a virtual media briefing at his official residence in the capital. He asked the industry-owners to pay all dues of the workers and employees of mills and factories before the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday said BNP could not tolerate that people are maintaining their livelihoods and devotees are offering prayers at mosques following the health guidelines amid coronavirus crisis. Hasan, also the Awami League Joint General Secretary, was talking to reporters at his secretariat office here after joining an iftar distribution programme at Rangunia upazila in Chattogram through a video conference. Hasan said his family organisation – NNN Foundation –distributed Eid gifts and iftar items among the imams and muajins of mosques in his constituency. Meanwhile, Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday expressed deep shock and sorrow at the death of photojournalist Mizanur Rahman who died on way to hospital after he felt ill. In a condolence message, the minister prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed profound sympathy to the bereaved family.

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday while presiding over the seventh ‘Trade Support Advisory Committee’ meeting at the ministry said the government is intensifying its efforts to take the advantage of the changed world trade after Covid-19, said an official release. Tipu said many countries and companies across the world have already come forward to invest in the 100 special economic zones announced by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Education Minister Dr Dipu Moni yesterday inaugurated the stipend distribution programme of July to December, 2019 for 12.59100 lakh students. The Ministry of Education has sent Taka 236.9368 crore to Bangladesh Bank yesterday in this regard.

Bangladesh and India have added five more ports of call that would augment the trade and provide a stimulus to the economic development of the new locations and their hinterland. Bangladesh's Shipping Secretary Mezbah Uddin Chowdhury and Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das signed the Second Addendum to the Protocol on Transit and Trade at the shipping ministry yesterday. Further, two more extended ports of call – Tribeli ( Bandel) and Badarpur on Indian side and Ghorasal and Muktarpur on Bangladesh side – have been added through this addendum. Now, total ports of call are 11 and there are two extended ports of call in both countries.

State Minister for Industries Kamal Ahmed Mojumder yesterday while distrusting relief said the government has ensured adequate supply of chemical fertilizers to farmers across the country to increase production amid the coronavirus crisis, said to a press release.

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) yesterday approved US\$250 million for extending cooperation to Bangladesh government's utmost efforts for combating Covid-19, AIIB Vice President, Investment Operations, DJ Pandiantold BSS in an online interview.

The Agriculture Ministry yesterday asked the authorities concerned to ensure smooth marketing and transportation of seasonal fruits and agricultural products amid the coronavirus crisis. It also requested the authorities concerned to ensure fair fare of BRTC trucks in transportation of seasonal fruits and agricultural products and increase banking transaction time period amid the ongoing crisis, a ministry press release said.

Industries Ministry yesterday issued a clarification about the report published in different media outlets on banning the tobacco production and tobacco-related products, quoting Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun. In the clarification, the Industries Ministry said that it would be reasonable to keep the tobacco industry running maintaining the overall health rules.

The government has appointed Mosud Mannan, currently serving as the ambassador of Bangladesh to Uzbekistan, as the next Ambassador of Bangladesh to Turkey. Ambassador designate Mannan is a career foreign service officer, who belongs to 1984 batch of Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Foreign Affairs cadre.

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