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News Brief

The government will not extend the ongoing general holidays, aimed at curbing the transmission of coronavirus, beyond May 30, State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain told media yesterday. A gazette notification will be issued today in this regard, he said, adding that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already signed it. The State Minister said all public, private and autonomous offices can be opened in a limited scale from May 31 to June 15 but everyone has to follow the 13 health directives issued earlier. Pregnant women, the elderly and the sick have been asked to refrain from attending offices during this period. Educational institutions will remain closed till June 15 but online classes will continue. Markets and shops will remain open from 10am to 4pm but they will have to follow health guidelines. The government has also decided to allow limited operation of public transport – buses, trains and vessels –maintaining health guidelines, State Minister said.

Bangladesh yesterday reported 22 more deaths from COVID-19 bringing the death toll from the pandemic to 544. The caseload has also surged to 38,292 after another 1,541 people tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 24 hours. A total of 2,66,456 samples have so far been tested adding 8,015 tests in 48 labs across the country in the past 24 hours. Nasima said now 56,693 people are at quarantine, nearly 4,994 people have now been kept in isolation and over 20,66,334 PPE were distributed and 3,88, 803 are in stock. Meanwhile, Ministry of Health has issued guidelines stating that separate arrangements have to be made for the treatment of coronavirus and non-coronavirus patients in all government-run and private hospitals that have 50-beds or more. The decision was taken after the number of Covid-19 patients increased in the country and both coronavirus and non-coronavirus patients were facing hassles while seeking medical treatment.

On the occasion of completion of 50 years of political career of Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called over phone and congratulated him, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told BSS. During the telephonic conversation, the two Premiers exchanged pleasantries and also reaffirmed to work together for the socioeconomic development of the region. The two leaders wished continued peace, progress and prosperity of the people of both the countries, the Press Secretary said.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday here said BNP is now staying in 'political isolation' as the party practices the politics of maintaining 'safe distance' from any disaster happened in the country. Quader, also Awami League (AL) General Secretary, said BNP's strategy is to create economic stagnation and hinder the livelihood of the people by keeping their lives and the country at stake. Regarding the approval of the coronavirus test method invented by the Gonoshasthaya, he said the government is following the policy announced by the World Health Organization to address the ongoing virus crisis and the use of rapid test kits in coronavirus testing is not approved by the World Health Organization.

Information Minister Dr Hassan Mahmud yesterday while briefing the journalists at the Chattogram Circuit House after presiding over a meeting on the coordination of relief and other issues to tackle the situation triggered by COVID-19 said relaxing the shutdown does not mean anybody will move around unnecessarily and hold public gatherings. He said Bangabandhu's daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is monitoring the whole coronavirus

situation round the clock and for this reason the health system in Bangladesh has not collapsed like in many other countries. Congratulating the journalists, the Information Minister said they are working in adversity in the face of the coronavirus.

Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun yesterday while speaking as the chief guest at a discussion meeting at the Industries Ministry conference room in the city said industrial units under the Industries Ministry are being modernized to make those profitable.

At least five people were killed in a fire at the United Hospital in the city last night. The fire broke out around 9.55 pm and three firefighting units brought the blaze under control at 10.25pm. He said the fire might have originated from an AC explosion.

The ‘International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers-2020’ will be observed on May 29 in the country as elsewhere in the globe. President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday extended heartiest congratulations and felicitations to all the peacekeeping members marking the day. In separate messages, they recalled all the valiant members of UN peacekeepers, who made supreme sacrifices for upholding world peace and paid deep homage to them. In her message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, Bangladesh today has become one of the largest troops contributing nations in the UN peacekeeping missions. The unique contribution of our peacekeepers in the UN missions and multinational forces has brightened the image of the nation and made Bangladesh a dignified country in the world, she said.

The “Safe Motherhood Day-2020” will be observed today in the country in a befitting manner. This year’s theme of the day is ‘Let stay at home during the period of corona, Keep mother and baby safe’. President M Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday issued separate messages on the occasion. The President, in his message, said safe motherhood is the right to every mother and it is essential for a beautiful and meaningful life. In her message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the development of maternal and child health is the crucial part of national development. She said the present government has taken various steps to provide antenatal, prenatal, postnatal and neonatal care, adding that for the development of the health sector, new hospitals will be constructed and doctors, nurses, midwives and other manpower have already been recruited. The President and the Prime Minister wished success of the observance of the Safe Motherhood Day.

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