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### News Brief

Country's oldest university and highest echelon of academic excellence, the University of Dhaka is going to celebrate its 101st founding day today in a befitting manner. President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the eve of the day. In his message, President said the journey of Dhaka University started on July 1 in 1921 with the aim of spreading the light of knowledge in the Indian subcontinent. In her message, Prime Minister expressed her greetings to the members of DU family on the 101st anniversary of the university.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said, the critics of Bangladesh in true sense don't know about the potentiality of the country rather they underestimate the ability of the nation. The Premier made this remark while delivering her valedictory speech at the Parliament in response to the people who have been criticizing the country since the beginning of the construction of Padma Multipurpose Bridge with self-financing. She said, these people are always underestimating the capacity of the nation and suffer with a mentality of begging to others all the time. Many people have shown various fears (for the construction of the Padma Bridge with own financing) but she denied all, she added.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday also said, the project cost of Padma Bridge was very much reasonable and no scope for corruption there. She said this in a reply to the questions raised about the 'high cost' of the Padma Bridge project by the opposition, particularly BNP. It is very much similar to the costs of other bridges constructed in the recent time, she said. Estimated cost would not stand all time, some time it goes up, and compared to it (Oakland Bay Bridge) the Padma Bridge's cost is much lower as the Padma River is the mightiest river with strong current after Amazon, she added. The Padma Bridge has opened a golden door for the economic progress of the country and all the people now say that we can do too, she further added.

Eid-ul-Azha, the second largest religious festival of the Muslims, will be celebrated across the country on July 10 (Sunday), as the crescent moon of the Arabic month of Zilhaj of 1443 Hijri was sighted in the sky of Bangladesh yesterday. The National Moon Sighting Committee came up with the decision yesterday at a meeting held at the Islamic Foundation's conference room in the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in Dhaka.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday described the Yunus Centre's statement that denied Dr Muhammad Yunus's role to scrap World Bank's financing in Padma Bridge construction as evil attempts to hide the truth. He said this to the media at his ministry in the Secretariat referring to the Yunus Center's statement issued to the media. He said, Dr Yunus is the mastermind of the perpetrators against Padma Bridge particularly scarping of WB's credit for the mega project. He said, the then World Bank President Robert Bruce Zoellick stated that there was no logical reason for scrapping the credit. Firstly, Bangladesh is one of the partner countries of WB and it has share in WB and secondly, Bangladesh has never been loan defaulter as in terms of paying back debt, the country's position is very good in the world, Mr. Hasan said citing comments of Zoellick. As there was no logical ground, continuous pressure was put on the then WB President, he said, adding that but Zoellick didn't do so. Zoellick had been forced to sing the decision to scrap the financing at the eleventh hour on the last working day of him at the WB, Mr. Hasan mentioned.

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed the Taka 6,78,064 crore national budget for FY23 which eyes to tame inflation amid facing six key challenges alongside the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and other adverse global situation. Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal moved the Appropriations Bill, 2022 seeking a budgetary allocation of Taka 883751,81,97,000 crore which was passed by voice vote. Leader of the House and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was present throughout the day's proceedings. Earlier on Wednesday, Parliament passed the Finance Bill 2022 with some changes. Following the proposal mooted in the House by the Finance Ministry for the parliamentary approval of appropriation of fund for meeting necessary development and non-development expenditures of the government, the ministers concerned placed justifications for the expenditures by their respective ministries through 59 demands for grant. Earlier, Parliament rejected by voice vote a total of only 664 cut-motions that stood in the name of opposition members on 59 demands for grants for different ministries.

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Ratha Yatra, the chariot festival of Sri Jagannath Dev which is one of the major festivals of the Hindu community, will begin today. The festival will come to an end with Ulto Ratha Yatra (reverse journey) on July 8. In observance of the festival, different religious bodies and temple committees have drawn up various programmes. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON) has chalked out a nine-day programme in Dhaka. The country's largest Ratha Yatra festival will be held at Dhamrai in Manikganj district. The programmes of the festival begins in the morning with rendering of Harisankirtan, holding of Agnihotra Jagna seeking world peace and people's welfare, recitation of verses from Srimat Bhagabat Geeta, distribution of mohaprosad, discussion, rendition of padaboli kirtan and arati, cultural function, staging of religious drama and screening of religious films. The programmes of the ISKON at Swamibag in Dhaka starts with holding of Agnihotra Jagna seeking divine blessings for world peace and people's welfare tomorrow morning. A discussion will be organised there in the afternoon. Planning Minister MA Mannan will join it as the chief guest while Indian High Commissioner Vikram K Doraiswami will attend as the special guest. Mangal Pradip will be lit up later. Later, a colorful procession will be brought out from Swamibagh temple with carrying images and idols of Sri Jagannath Dev, his brother Sri Balaram and sister Srimati Subhadra on three largely build Rathas (chariots).


A total of 46,120 hajj pilgrims went to Saudi Arabia from Bangladesh so far to perform holy Hajj this year. Of these, 3,385 are under government management and 42,735 are under private management, said a Hajj bulletin yesterday. According to the bulletin, a total of 128 flights carried the pilgrims to their destination including 73 flights from Biman Bangladesh Airlines, 48 flights from Saudi Airlines and seven flights from Flynas Airlines. Hajj flight started from June 5. The last flight with the pilgrims will be operated on July 3. The first return flight with the pilgrims will start on July 14. The Bangladeshi pilgrims are going to perform the holy Hajj with the help of 359 Hajj agencies. This year, the holy Hajj is going to be held on July 8.

The Canada-Bangladesh joint working group on strengthening commercial relations has urged the government of Bangladesh to complete negotiations on a new agreement to continue duty-free access to Canadian market since the General Preferential Tariffs with Canada will expire in 2023. The committee came up with the call during the meeting virtually held on Wednesday night. During the meeting, Canadian Co-Chair Nuzhat Tam-Zaman recommended launching an annual Canada-Bangladesh Forum as a launching pad for the JWG. The recommendations from Canada include easier visa processing, electronic visa for Bangladeshis, branding the development stories of Bangladesh to Canadian investors and forming Canada Bangladesh cross border e-commerce platform. Co-chair of Bangladesh, FBCCI President Md. Jashim Uddin said, BIDA is providing a number of services through One Stop Service platform as doing business in Bangladesh is easier now. Hence, the FBCCI Chief called the Canadian entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh. Agriculture and Technology are the sectors with most potential, he informed. Bangladesh High Commissioner to Canada Dr. Khalilur Rahman informed that the Foreign Ministry of Bangladesh is working to ease the Canadian Visa processing for Bangladesh.

Unveiling a 'cautious' monetary policy statement (MPS) with a tightening bias, Bangladesh Bank (BB) has projected domestic credit growth ceiling at 18.2 percent in the fiscal year 2022-23 (FY23) accommodating 14.1 percent credit growth in private sector and 36.3 percent in public sector. BB has decided to increase its policy rate (the repo rate) by 50 basis points to 5.50 percent from 5.00 percent to deal with the demand side pressures along with ensuring the required flow of funds to the priority and productive sectors to promote supply-side activities. The monetary policy also seeks to promote import-substituting economic activities and dissuade imports of luxury goods, fruits, non-cereal foods, canned and processed foods, etc., to reduce exchange rate depreciating pressure, protect foreign exchange reserves, and control inflation. BB will continue its support to implement the government's ongoing stimulus packages alongside BB's refinance schemes in the face of new adversities, including the Russia-Ukraine war in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bangladesh yesterday reported four Covid-19 deaths while it recorded 2,183 corona virus positive cases during the period. Bangladesh reported 15.70 percent Covid-19 positive cases as 13,905 samples were tested in the last 24 hours, Directorate General of Health Services sources said.

DSEX, the key index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, gained 0.41 per cent, or 26.47 points, to close at 6,376.94 points yesterday.

  
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