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From: PIO, PID, Dhaka
Fax: 9540553/9540026
E-mail: pidhaka@gmail.com
Web: www.pressinform.gov.bd

News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stressed the need for building a peaceful world based on partnership urging all to use their resources in ensuring universal sustainable development abandoning arms races. The Premier was addressing the closing ceremony of the two-day "World Peace Conference-2021" at the city, joining virtually from Ganabhaban yesterday. A 16-point Dhaka declaration was adopted at the conference. The PM said that Bangladesh is always ready to work with all based on mutual respect and understanding to fully embrace the ideals of peace of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. For a long period of 24 and a half years, Bangabandhu led the war of independence, including all the democratic movements, to realize the just rights of the people of East Bengal, the Premier said. She added that in just nine months after independence, Bangabandhu crafted a constitution. Article 25 of that constitution attached friendship to the heart of the country's foreign policy in the field of "promotion of international peace, security, and solidarity," she continued. Following the footsteps of Bangabandhu the present government is working closely with the concerned agencies or organizations to maintain a regional and international peaceful environment, she said. The Prime Minister also highlighted the success stories of the government adding that Bangladesh is now a role model in the world in socio-economic development.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the young generation to become entrepreneur instead of chasing after jobs wrapping up academic life. The Premier made the call while inaugurating the 8-day National SME Fair- 2021 in city's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday, joining virtually from Ganabhaban. Highlighting the government measures to develop the interested person as entrepreneur, the PM said, the government has allocated separate fund in the budget for "Start Up Programme" so that the young generation can take this opportunity. She also mentioned the government's initiatives of providing technical education and vocational training to the young people alongside making arrangement of different opportunities both off-line and online. The Prime Minister added, the government has kept special arrangement for female entrepreneurs in the 100 special economic zones and they will get special facilities for their venture. Later, on behalf of the Premier, Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun distributed National SME Entrepreneur Award-2021.

The 'Moitri Dibosh' or Friendship Day is being observed in New Delhi today to commemorate India's recognition to Bangladesh as an independent state and the 50th anniversary of establishment of Bangladesh-India diplomatic ties. The Indian Council of World Affairs-ICWA, a subsidiary organization of Indian Ministry of External Affairs-MEA and Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi have chalked out elaborate programs to observe the day in a befitting manner. Marking the day, the ICWA will organize a discussion in which Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will deliver a recorded speech highlighting the significance of the day and India's role in Bangladesh's Great War of Liberation in 1971. Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla, State Minister for Cultural Affairs of Bangladesh K M Khalid, Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Muhammad Imran and ICWA Director General Ambassador Vijay Thakur Singh will speak on the occasion. Later, a panel discussion will be held with former High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Rajeev Mitter in the chair. On the occasion, Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi will organize a reception for 1971 war veterans and cultural programs. The programs will be followed by a cultural function to be performed by the Bangladeshi cultural troupes. Apart from Dhaka and New Delhi, the day would be commemorated in 18 countries around the world. These are-Belgium, Canada, Egypt, Indonesia, Russia, Qatar, Singapore, UK, Australia, France, Japan, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, UAE and the USA.

Eminent politician Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, the worthy son of democracy, will remain as a source of inspirations in the journey of democracy, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said this to newsmen after placing wreath at the grave of the great leader marking his 58th death anniversary yesterday. The Minister urged all the pro-democracy forces to be united, saying that the communal evil forces who were involved in killings and conspiracy after 1975 are still active and creating impediment on the way of democracy. The Minister, while addressing the council of 38 number ward of the party's Dhaka City South unit at Mahanagar Natyamanch yesterday said, Awami League's source of power is not the gun barrel like that of BNP. People are the source of power of AL, he said adding, BNP leaders got frustrated and bewildered as they stay out of the state power for long. AL will exist as long as the ideology of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will exist, he added.

The government is now working with utmost importance on crop production in adverse environment and land including coastal saline, haor and Chittagong Hill Tracts, to ensure sustainable food security for the growing population, Agriculture Minister Dr. Md. Abdur Razzaque said this at a seminar organized by his ministry on the occasion of World Soil Day at a city hotel yesterday. He said, food security has been achieved in the country during the tenure of the present agri-friendly government. The government is now working tirelessly to ensure the nutritional security of all people, he said. Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Md. Shahab Uddin attending the seminar said, to sustain agricultural production in the saline-prone areas of the country, science-based sustainable agricultural practices and technological innovations must be applied.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud has said, BNP's politics is revolving around two subjects-Khaleda Zia's health and Tarique Rahman's punishment issues. While talking to newsmen at his ministry yesterday, criticizing a remark of BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, the Minister further said, Awami League was established about 40 decades ago before Begum Zia came into politics and the country has achieved independence under the party. This kind of speech by Mirza Fakhrul is absurd, he added. Turning to the ongoing students' movement, he said, it was seen in the social platforms that mothers of students and a 35-year-old political activist are also doing movement by wearing school dresses. In fact, politics has been entered into the movement and the students should remain alert, he said. Terming the death of a KUET teacher 'unexpected and tragic', he said, the incident is now under investigation. If anyone is responsible, the culprits will be punished, he assured.

Law Minister Anisul Huq has called for innovative thinking and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) system for easing the existing backlog of cases. He was addressing the inaugural function of 25th Judicial Administration Training Course for District and Sessions Judges and Metropolitan Sessions Judges at Judicial Administration Training Institute in the capital yesterday. He added, Bangladesh Judicial Academy would be built in Shibchar, Madaripur to provide world-class training to judges in the country. Apart from the country's judges, judicial officers from South and South-East Asian countries would be able to take training here, he said.

Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal has called upon the World Bank to extend loans against projects under budget support to ensure speedy implementation of development schemes. The Minister made the request in a meeting between the Bangladesh delegation led by him and the World Bank delegation led by WB Vice President for South Asian region Hartwig Schafer, held at a city hotel yesterday. During the meeting, the Minister also requested the WB delegation to speedily release the \$500 million budget support against the Programmatic Recovery and Resilience Development Policy Credit (DPC) project to keep operative the affected labour market, financial and social sectors from the shock of the pandemic. World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh Mercy Tembon also attended the meeting.

The development work on both sides of the river 'Teesta' is being implemented at a cost of about Taka 8,500 crore, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi came up with the information while speaking at a function, organized by Rangpur Division Journalists Association at the Economic Reporters Forum auditorium in the city yesterday. Bangladesh takes all necessary steps to prevent the highly contagious new COVID-19 African variant Omicron, Health Minister Zahid Maleque came up with the assurance while visiting newly constructed building of Bangladesh Institute of Health Management at Savar yesterday. The authorities have strengthened screening of all passengers at all gateways including air, land and waterways to detect new South African strain. The government has expanded testing facilities to tackle Omicron, he added.

State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Dr. Md. Murad Hassan has said, people of the country are enjoying better life due to the huge development works, carried out across the country during the rule of Awami League under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. While exchanging vies with local newsmen in Jamalpur district yesterday, he called upon the journalists to cover objective news for the greater interest of the country.

Chairperson of the National Advisory Committee on Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, Saima Wazed Hossain has said, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman believed in peace and he had the faith that peace could only be achieved through fairness, justice and equality. "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, my grandfather, led his life, his entire life to achieve this peace and worked towards peace in order to achieve social equality and harmony," she said. Saima, also Member Secretary of the Organizing Committee of World Peace Conference, was virtually addressing a panel discussion titled "Peace through Inter-faith Dialogue, Culture and Heritage" at Foreign Service Academy yesterday on the second day of the World Peace Conference. David Fernandez Puyana, Permanent Observer of the United Nations University for Peace to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, moderated the panel discussion. Number of discussants from different countries took part in the discussion.

Doleshwar Hanafia Jame Mosque, constructed in 1868 and located in Dhaka's Keraniganj has received the Award of Merit in this year's UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. The project also garnered a Special Recognition for Sustainable Development, according to a recent webpost of UNESCO.

The export of plastic products has witnessed an uptrend as its earnings reached \$57.06 million in the first five months (July-November) period of the current fiscal year (FY22) which is also 29.8 per cent higher compared to the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, the Export Promotion Bureau-EPB data said.

The overall progress of construction work of 21.26-kilometre-long elevated metro rail service from Uttara to Motijheel-Kamalapur Railway stands at 72.99 per cent now, while 89.88 per cent civil work between Uttara and Agargaon has been done, Managing Director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd-DMTCL M A N Siddique informed to the National News Agency yesterday.

Ganatantrik Mukti Dibash (Free Democracy Day)' is being observed in the country today marking the fall of the then autocratic ruler in 1990. On the eve of the day, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in a message, greeted the countrymen, describing them as "Sentinel of Democracy".

The country yesterday recorded 06 fatalities from COVID-19, taking the total death toll to 28,001. With 197 fresh cases, the number of infections surged to 15,77,443. The positivity rate stood at 1.03 per cent as 19,132 samples were tested during the time. At the same time, the recovery count rose to 15,42,274, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday.


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Md. Shahinoor Miah
Principal Information Officer (Acting)
Phone- 9546091