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### News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today inspected the flood situation in Sylhet, Sunamganj, Netrokona and adjacent areas. The Premier witnessed the flood situation for herself as the helicopter carrying her hovered maintaining 'low fly mode'. Later, she landed at the Sylhet Osmani International Airport and went to Sylhet Circuit house, where she is scheduled to hold a meeting with the divisional and district administration as well as local Awami League leaders. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will also address a press conference tomorrow at the PMO.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday greeted the woman of Narayanganj Bandar upazila who gave birth to triplets and named her son Swapno and two daughters- Padma and Setu to commemorate the grand opening of the Padma Bridge. PM's Protocol Officer-1 Mohammad Shameem Musfique on behalf of the Prime Minister handed over three gold chains, each of one vori, fruits and clothes to the parents of the babies after visiting their Nabiganj residence under Bandar Police Station yesterday.

The sitting of the Parliament session has been adjourned till 5pm today. Jatiya Sangsad Panel Chairman AB Tajul Islam made the announcement yesterday.

The Cabinet yesterday cleared the draft of Universal Pension Management Act 2022 in order to bring the growing elderly population under a sustainable and social safety net. The approval came at the cabinet meeting held with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair at her office. All Bangladeshi nationals aged from 18 to 50 years can participate in this pension scheme. And the expatriate Bangladeshis can also take part in it. They (expatriates) can get registered and provide premium. Finance Division has placed the draft of Universal Pension Management Act, 2022 aiming to bring the growing elderly population under a sustainable social safety net for the causes of unemployment, disease, paralysis, old age or other similar conditions, or penury amid the high life expectancy rate. The Cabinet gave the final approval to the draft Law on condition of vetting by the Legislative Division. If the Legislative Division will okay it, it will go to Parliament.

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen yesterday said, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to visit New Delhi in early September in line with the invitation of her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi. The probable date of the PM's New Delhi visit could be within first 10 days of September, he said this to the media at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka on his arrival from the Indian capital after joining the Bangladesh-India Joint Consultative Commission. He said, Dhaka and New Delhi decided to implement the bilateral decisions ahead of Sheikh Hasina's India tour while Dhaka expected the much-awaited Joint River Commission (JRC) meeting to be held by then.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday said, the government is not organising any festival to mark the opening of the Padma Bridge. He said this to the media at his Ministry yesterday. It will just be an opening ceremony and a public rally on June 25. The Padma Bridge has become a 'symbol of our ability. He said people across the country are jubilant as the construction of the bridge has become a reality despite opposition from BNP. BNP doesn't want any inaugural programme over the opening of the Padma Bridge and they hatched conspiracies to foil its opening. Referring to the flood situation in Sylhet and northern region of the country, he said, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has instructed the authorities to go all-out to rescue the marooned people and reach relief materials to them. The Army has been deployed for rescue operation.

Three foreign envoys in Dhaka have lauded Bangladesh for constructing the Padma Bridge. Envoys of European Union, China, Saudi Arabia and the Russian embassy yesterday congratulated Bangladesh for the bridge to be inaugurated on June 25. The Saudi Ambassador Essa Yousef Essa Al Duhailan said, the Padma Bridge will help open up the eyes of international investors, including Saudi companies, to give a serious look at Bangladesh. Ambassador said this to the media at the Saudi embassy. On behalf of the custodians of the two holy mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the ambassador congratulated President Md. Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government as well as the people of Bangladesh. Duhailan said, Saudi companies are increasingly looking at Bangladesh. Charles Whiteley, Ambassador and head of delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh, said the inauguration of the Padma Bridge is going to be an 'unforgettable moment'. In a message, the envoy conveyed warmest congratulations to Bangladesh.

Padma Bridge is a 'true game changer' and 'landmark achievement' as it offers multiple opportunities in terms of regional trade, investments, connectivity, employment, tourism, and many other fields, the Russian embassy in Dhaka said this in a media release. Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming lauded Hasina's wise leadership and determination in building the 'dream bridge'. Terming the Padma Bridge a symbol of courage, he said, 'it's an outstanding achievement. This is going to be a big day (June 25) for Bangladesh, he said in a Facebook message. He termed Hasina a 'true representative' of the people.

The government has suspended collection of tolls from three bridges over the Buriganga, the Dhaleshwari and the Arial Khan rivers on June 25 to facilitate easy transportation to the inaugural ceremony of the long cherished Padma Bridge. The toll collection of Buriganga, Dhaleshwari and Arial Khan bridges located in the same corridor of Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Highway has been waived for the inauguration day of the Padma Bridge (only June 25) in order to ensure smooth movement for all vehicular movements including vehicles of the invited guests.

Tight security measures have been taken to ensure safety and security inside and outside the venues of the Padma Bridge inaugural ceremony, as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is set to open the bridge on June 25 morning. The law enforcement agencies will take strict measures to ensure foolproof security surrounding the areas of the venues on both the sides of the Padma Bridge. A meeting on law and order centering the inaugural ceremony of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge, held at the Home Ministry, chaired by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday. Besides, strict security measures will also be taken at various venues and surrounding areas at Mawa and Janjira ends of the Padma Bridge. The meeting was informed that intelligence activities have been intensified to prevent any sort of sabotage activities at the venue or adjoining the Padma Bridge. Police control room will be installed at both the sides of the bridge to ensure overall security of the bridge and programmes. Members of the River Police and Fire service and Civil Defence will be deployed to rescue and prevent accidents on river route and avoid extra passengers on water transports. The meeting also instructed to ensure smooth traffic management on highways while during the visit at Janjira and Mawa points and ensure parking arrangement for motor vehicles of the guests and visitors.

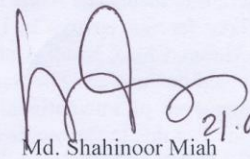
Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Md Shahab Uddin yesterday said, the government is implementing afforestation programme on a massive scale to prevent desertification and soil degradation. He said this while addressing a seminar, organised by the Department of Environment (DoE), at its office yesterday, marking the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 2022. Work is underway to build a land degradation-neutral country by 2030 in line with sustainable development by preventing soil degradation, he added. Speaking as the chief guest, Shahab Uddin said, the government, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, is implementing various projects and activities for prevention of deforestation, restoration of forests, creation of new forests, conservation of biodiversity, prevention of land erosion and protection of natural environment.

The government has appointed Muhammad Abdul Muhith as the next Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations (UN) in New York. He belongs to the 11th batch of BCS Foreign Affairs cadre and he will replace Rabab Fatima.

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday sent a legal notice to officials concerned to amend a gazette to add 'Joy Bangabandhu' with national slogan. The government on March 2 issued in a gazette notification, declaring 'Joy Bangla' as the country's national slogan.

Bangladesh yesterday reported one COVID-19 death after 21 days as zero coronavirus death was recorded since May 31 while the country posted 10.87 percent positivity rate of coronavirus, the highest rate over past four months. At least 873 new Covid-19 cases were recorded in 24 hours till 8am today, said a press release issued by the Directorate General of Health Services.

DSEX, the core index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, went down by 49.08 points or 0.76 per cent to settle at 6,357. Two other indices also ended lower. The DSE 30 Index, comprising blue chips, fell 15.37 points to finish at 2,314 and the DSE Shariah Index (DSES) lost 9.09 points to close at 1,388.



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