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News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the plantation programme of one crore saplings across the country as a part of the celebration of Mujib Year, the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by planting saplings at Ganabhaban on July 16. Environment, Forests and Climate Change Minister Md. Shahab Uddin stated this at a virtual meeting yesterday. A total of 20,325 saplings will be planted in each of the 492 upazilas from July 16 to September 15, the Minister informed.

Bangladesh yesterday recorded 47 more fatalities from the novel coronavirus in a daily count, raising the death toll from the pandemic to 2,352. At the same time recovery count rose to 93,614 after another 5,580 recoveries, record highest in a single day, were discharged from the hospitals during the period. Directorate General of Health Services-DGHS came up with the disclosure at its daily health bulletin. The country also saw further rise in coronavirus cases with the detection of 2,666 new cases taking the total number of cases to 1,83,795. A total of 11,059 samples were tested at 77 authorised laboratories across the country during the time, DGHS added.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader referring to the COVID-19 testing scam called upon the law enforcement agencies to accelerate investigation against the two institutions involved and bring the accused to justice. The Minister made the call as he was addressing a press briefing from his official residence yesterday. In containing coronavirus transmission, he said, the number of cattle markets should be the minimum ahead of Eid-ul-Azha and digital platforms could be a possible option to deal with the sacrificial animal sale.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan while addressing a meeting yesterday at his ministry on law and order situation said, no cattle markets will be allowed to be set up on road ahead of the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha. Besides, cattle-laden trucks will not be allowed to make stoppage on road, he said. The law enforcing agencies will take steps against circulation of fake notes, extortion and dope gangs, said the Minister.

Law Minister Anisul Huq has said, virtual courts will be used in special conditions based on necessity while regular court proceedings will resume after the Covid-19 pandemic. The Minister came up with the remarks while inaugurating an online training programme of advocates. The government has taken e-judiciary project of Tk 2,800 cr for digitalization of judiciary, the Minister added.

Local Government Minister Md.Tajul Islam while presiding over a programme at his ministry through virtual platform yesterday said, stern action would be taken if anyone is found involved with corruption and irregularities in the projects under his ministry as the government has taken a zero tolerance policy towards corruption. The Minister said, to ensure sustainable development, quality must be ensured at all levels.

The government has decided that no citizen would be allowed to leave the country without having a COVID-19 negative certificate from government authorized coronavirus testing centers. The decision was taken at a virtual inter-ministerial meeting chaired by Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen while Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque and Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmad also attended the meeting. The meeting decided to provide coronavirus testing facility for those who intend to go abroad for employment under the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry.

The government has taken steps to provide Tk 200 crore as loan in an effort to re-establish the returnee migrant workers, affected during the pandemic coronavirus situation. A MoU in this regard was signed between Expatriates' Welfare Bank and Wage Earners' Welfare Board yesterday. Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmad was present at the event.

Flood situation might further worsen in northeastern districts of Sylhet, Sunamganj and Netrokona, northern districts of Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur, Kurigram, and Gaibandha, northwestern district of Natore and north central districts of Bogura and Jamalpur. Water levels of all major rivers in upper Meghna basin, Brahmaputra-Jamuna and Gages basins are in rising trend, the Flood Forecasting and Warning Center said in a bulletin yesterday.

The government has called upon all the Muslims in the country to offer their prayers in the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha at their respective nearby mosques instead of Eidgah or in open places to check the spread of the deadly coronavirus. The call came from an inter-ministerial virtual meeting at the Religious Affairs ministry with its Secretary Md. Nurul Islam in the chair yesterday. The meeting decided that the country's main Eid congregation would be held at Baitul Mukkaram National Mosque instead of National Eidgah in the wake of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Vikram Doraiswami, Additional Secretary in charge of International Organisations and Summits at the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is likely to be the next Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh. If finalised, Doraiswami will replace Riva Ganguly Das, the current Indian High Commissioner who has been serving the post since March 1, 2019.

The Health ministry in an order issued yesterday temporarily suspended JKG Health Care Chairman Dr. Sabrina Arif Chowdhury from the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases for her alleged involvement in providing fake coronavirus test reports. Police arrested her yesterday in the case. NBR has frozen all the personal and institutional bank accounts of JKG Health Care Chairman Dr. Sabrina Arif Chowdhury, CEO Ariful Chowdhury and Regent Hospital Chairman Md. Shahed in COVID-19 test scam. Besides, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has served show-cause notice to Director General, DGHS Prof. Dr. Abul Kalam Azad over the signing an agreement with the Regent Hospital.

The Anti-Corruption Commission summoned six officials of Central Medicine Store Depot of the DGHS yesterday for the sake of investigation as there are allegations that they are involved in various irregularities, corruption and abuse of power in the name of procuring substandard masks, PPEs and other health equipment for the treatment of Covid-19.

Bangladesh yesterday started exporting mangoes to Switzerland. The North Bengal Agro Farm Ltd. of Rajshahi is expected to export 100 tonnes of mangoes to the European country and the shipment would continue till mid-August.

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