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News Brief

The 16th session of the 11th Jatiya Sangsad, the maiden session of 2022, commenced yesterday. In line with the parliamentary practice, President Md. Abdul Hamid addressed the first sitting. Leader of the House and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and parliamentarians of both treasury and opposition benches were present as Speaker Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury chaired the sitting. Earlier, the President convened the first parliament session of 2022 exercising the power bestowed upon him as per the Article 72 (1) of the Constitution.

President Md. Abdul Hamid, in his address, called upon all, irrespective of party affiliations, opinions, classes and professions, to work together on basic issues like democracy, rule of law and country's development. The Head of the State also asked all to work together to build a 'Sonar Bangla' dreamt by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by eliminating terrorism, drugs, corruption and militancy from the country. The President highlighted the overall activities and achievements of the government in various sectors and the tremendous progress in the fields of the ICT. In the current situation, compared to the negative GDP growth of most countries in the world, according to the provisional calculations, the GDP growth of Bangladesh in the fiscal year 2020-21 stood at 5.43 per cent, the President said. As a result of cash incentives and simplification of remittance sending process, the remittance inflow in FY 2020-21 increased by 36.1 per cent to US\$ 24.78 billion compared to the previous FY. And due to this, the foreign exchange reserve has increased significantly reaching it to US\$ 45.26 billion, the President pointed out.

President Md. Abdul Hamid will hold dialogue with the ruling Awami League, on the formation of a new Election Commission at Bangabhaban around 4pm today. A 10-member delegation, led by Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, will attend the dialogue.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said, the government's aim is to turn Bangladesh into a developed and prosperous country through building a modern and technology-knowledge based nation. The Premier was addressing the inaugural ceremony of the newly constructed Rangpur Divisional Headquarter Complex Building, virtually joining from Ganabhaban yesterday. Highlighting various plans and policies undertaken by the government for the development of the country, the PM added that her government has started implementing the 8th Five Year Plan after its formulation while the Perspective Plan (2010-2020) that was framed in 2009 has been implemented successfully. She continued, as the outcome of it, in 2021, Bangladesh became a developing nation when the country was celebrating Mujib Barsho and the Golden Jubilee of Independence. The Premier went on saying that her government's goal is to turn Bangladesh into a developed country by 2041. She asked all to implement the development programs properly so the future generation gets a congenial atmosphere for living.

Awami League backed candidate Dr. Selina Hayat Ivy has been re-elected Mayor of the Narayanganj City Corporation-NCC unofficially for third consecutive term beating independent candidate Taimur Alam Khandakar. According to the unofficial results, Ivy with the symbol of "Boat" bagged 1,59,397 votes while her rival candidate Taimur with "elephant" got 92,562 votes.

The existing relations and support in the agricultural sector between the USA and Bangladesh will increase further in the days coming ahead, outgoing US Ambassador in Dhaka Earl R Miller came up with the statement when he paid a farewell call on Agriculture Minister Dr. Md. Abdur Razzaque at the latter's ministry yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed different bilateral issues, including global economy, regional issues and recent sanction of US on Bangladesh's law enforcement agency and its officials. After the meeting, the Minister told reporters that the US imposed the sanction on law enforcement agency officials not to punish Bangladesh but to warn against the violation of human rights.

NNK Foundation, a family organization of Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud, has so far distributed blankets among 10,000 poor people in different areas under Rangunia and Boalkhali upazilas of Chattogram district in the last one month. Dr. Hasan took the initiative of distributing blankets among the needy people in 15 unions and one municipality of Rangunia upazila and Sreepur-Kharandhip union of Boalkhali upazila, from the beginning of this month. The NNK Foundation also distributed five hundred blankets to the poor people in South Rajnagar Union of Rangunia yesterday.

The government has not yet taken any decision to shut educational institutions due to a rise in the COVID-19 infection rate, Education Minister Dr. Dipu Moni said this after attending the inaugural function of basic training course for Assistant Engineers of the Education Engineering Department (Savar Zone) at the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre in Savar yesterday. She said, the government will take a pragmatic decision regarding the closure of the educational institutions if the ongoing corona situation worsens.

The government is pledge-bound to uphold the constitutional obligation, Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen said this during a diplomatic briefing hosted by the Foreign Ministry yesterday to exchange New Year's greetings with the diplomats stationed here. Dr. Momen, mentioning the spectacular achievements of the country in the areas of poverty alleviation, socio-economic development, infrastructure development, and digitalization, also highlighted the government's successful management of the onslaughts of the pandemic and different incentives and packages announced to address its negative impact. He stated that despite the pandemic, Bangladesh could manage a growth rate of 5.4 per cent last year. Law Minister Anisul Huq, LGRD Minister Md. Tajul Islam, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md. Shahriar Alam and Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen were present during the briefing.

Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun has said, a separate cell would be set up in the Industries Ministry to work on the circular economy, saying that the circular economy model is important to maintain the country's sustainable development trend after the graduation from LDC status. The Minister was speaking at a seminar organized by the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries-FBCCI at FBCCI auditorium in the city yesterday.


Environment, Forests and Climate Change Minister Md. Shahab Uddin addressing the seminar said that his ministry has taken initiative to prepare a working paper on plastic management. The Department of Environment has already adopted a 10-year action plan for plastic management and a three-year special program to stop the use of single use plastics in coastal areas, he said. At present 40 per cent plastic is being recycled, the remaining 60 per cent will have to be brought under it, he added.

The government is exploring options like rooftop and floating solar power plants as alternatives to land-based ones due to scarcity of lands, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid made the remarks while presiding over the virtually held "Member Interventions" session of the 12th assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency-IRENA on Saturday. He mentioned that Bangladesh has been making all its efforts with limited resources to promote renewable energy. Over 20 million people of the country have been brought under the electricity facilities through setting up over 6 million solar home systems, he added. Moreover, people of the remote areas are being given electricity through installing 26 solar mini-grids while 2000 diesel-run irrigation pumps were converted into solar-run pumps to reduce the use of liquid fuels, he said. Currently, the country is generating 650 MW electricity from solar energy while 8 grid-tied solar parks, having 231 MW capacity, were set up across the country, he informed.

The month-long Ekushey Book Fair, which usually begins on the first day of February here, has been postponed for two weeks due to the fresh surge of the COVID-19 in the country, State Minister for Cultural Affairs K M Khalid confirmed. However, decision over fixing the date for opening the fair would be taken later considering the COVID-19 situation, he said.

Bangladesh and South Korea have great potential to derive more mutual trade benefits through collaboration, especially in the area of apparel and textile industry, BGMEA President Faruque Hassan said this during a meeting with Ambassador of South Korea to Bangladesh Lee Jang-keun at BGMEA Gulshan office yesterday. BGMEA President requested the Ambassador to encourage Korean businessmen to invest in the backward linkage industry of Bangladesh, especially the non-cotton textile sector.

The country yesterday recorded 08 fatalities from COVID-19, taking the total death toll to 28,144. With 5,222 fresh cases, the number of infections surged to 16,17,711. The positivity rate stood at 17.82 per cent as 29,305 samples were tested during the time. At the same time, the recovery count rose to 15,52,893, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday.


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