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News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked all concerned particularly the parents to encourage their children to play outside, which would help boost children's physical and mental health alongside stopping their derailment. The PM said this while virtually distributing the 'National Sports Award' to 85 sports persons and organisers from 2013-2021 in recognition to their glorious contribution to the country's sports arena as the chief guest from her official Ganabhaban residence yesterday. The Ministry of Youth and Sports organised the programme at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka.

The government has approved 17 procurement proposals, including 10 proposals for digital land mouza mapping in eight divisions to lower hassles related to land. The approval came at the meeting of Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase (CCGP) held virtually with Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal in the chair yesterday. The digital land mapping will be carried out under 'Mouza and Plot-Based National Digital Land Zone Project.' Briefing reporters virtually after the meeting, the FM said, the cabinet committee approved a proposal of the land ministry to procure 13,304 mouza map sheets at a cost of Tk 129.9 million from Development Design Consultants Ltd for Rangpur Division under the scheme.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said, the government is very much cautious about foreign exchanging reserve management in the prevailing global situation. He said to the media after the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase (CCGP) meeting held virtually yesterday. He mentioned that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has also instructed not to allow government officials to visit foreign countries without urgent need.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader reiterated that the Padma Multipurpose Bridge would be opened for vehicular movement in June. If Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gives her time, the Padma Bridge will be inaugurated at the end of June, he said this to the media after joining the board meeting of Bangladesh Bridge Authority at Setu Bhaban in Dhaka yesterday.

Bangladesh and Bulgaria will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two friendly countries this year. Bangladesh and Bulgaria established diplomatic relations on 26 January 1972 while the two countries have decided to take up a number of initiatives to further strengthen bilateral partnership. This was discussed while Bulgarian Ambassador Eleonora Dimitrova called on Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen at foreign ministry yesterday. Foreign Minister and the Bulgarian Ambassador recalled the official visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Sofia in May 2016 to attend the Global Women Leader's Forum and her meetings with the President and Prime Minister of Bulgaria. The proposal of naming a street in Sofia after the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and a road in Dhaka after the forefather of the Bulgarian National Revival, St. Paisiy Hilendarski has been discussed and both side agreed, in principle, to work on that. Dr Momen appreciated Bulgarian support in various regional and in international forum and sought their support for Bangladesh's candidature to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term 2023-25.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming yesterday told reporters that Bangladesh was not in any Chinese debt trap. He made the remark after a meeting with Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen at the foreign ministry. Debt trap is being widely discussed as Sri Lanka is facing a serious financial crisis. One of the factors that led to the situation in Sri Lanka is its massive debt burden. Momen said Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were not comparable because the latter's major source of income came from tourism, which was seriously affected by the pandemic, but Bangladesh's export and remittance earnings are quite large, he added.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud said, his ministry was working to bring some necessary changes in the draft of the Mass Media Employees (Services Conditions) Bill to make it a law that would protect journalists properly. He said this to the media while speaking at a meet the press event at the Jatiya Press Club, organised by the Overseas Correspondents Association Bangladesh (OCAB) yesterday. The existing laws are not capable of protecting journalists properly and the government has taken the initiative to formulate the law following journalists' demand, he added.

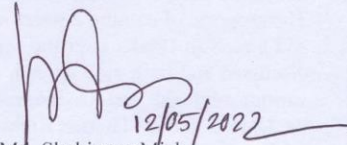
Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said, the Bangladesh Coast Guard had started its journey under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and it's now the real vanguard of the Sea. He said this while speaking at a function of the para-military force at Khulna Shipyard as chief guest yesterday organized by Khulna Shipyard. He ceremonially handed over one floating crane, two tug boats, six high speed boats and one inshore patrol vessel to Bangladesh Coast Guard here through this function.

State Minister for Information, Communication Technology (ICT) Junaid Ahmed Palak has visited Harvard University in Massachusetts, USA, known as the most famous and oldest residential research center yesterday. At the end of the visit, Mr. Palak went in the second oldest building in Harvard and the university's historic site is Wadsworth House. He met with the university delegation.

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and Bangladesh Plastics Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BPGMEA) organized a stakeholders engagement workshop on Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) and Design for Environment (DfE): Opportunities for Plastics Industries in Bangladesh. The workshop was organized under a project of UNIDO with the title 'Integrated Approach towards Sustainable Plastics Use and Marine Litter Prevention in Bangladesh' in Dhaka yesterday. UNIDO being the specialized agency of the United Nations for promotion of industrial development, is implementing this project in Bangladesh in cooperation with the Department of Environment and funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Directorate General of Health Services has reported 33 new Covid cases and no new death in its 24-hour reporting cycle ending at 8:00am yesterday. The daily test positivity rate stood at 0.53 per cent after 6,182 tests, according to official data.

DSEX, the key index of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, lost 1.10 per cent, or 73.62 points, to close at 6,591.99 points yesterday after losing 32.46 points in the previous session.



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