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Your Right to Know

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It is here in Golahat on Saidpur-Chilahati rail line where at least 448 people, mostly Marwari Hindus, were taken off a train and brutally killed by the Pakistani army and razakars led by Biharis on June 13, 1971.

PHOTO: STAR

A TRAIN TO MASSACRE

The 1971 Golahat mass killing in Saidpur remains a lesser known part of Liberation War history

PINAKI ROY and EAM ASADUZZAMAN

It was past midnight at Saidpur Rail Station.

In the dim light, mostly Hindu Marwaris and some Bangalees from all walks of life could be seen standing beside the platform. Tense, even those who knew each other

were not talking.

They were all anxiously waiting for the train that would leave for Jalpaiguri in West Bengal through the Chilahati border.

More than 450 Marwaris boarded that train, but little did they know that it would take them just 2km from the railway station.

On that fateful night, they were betrayed and subjected to a pre-planned massacre by Pakistani army troops and armed razakars led by two Bihari men -- Qaiyum Khan and Izahar Ahmed -- and their associates, who were lying in wait near Golahat point.

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VICTORY DAY TODAY



Sixty-one more recognised as Biranganas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has recognised 61 more Biranganas (war heroines) for their contribution and sacrifice during the country's Liberation War in 1971.

The recognition comes a day before the country goes into its 50th Victory Day celebration.

The Ministry of Liberation War Affairs yesterday issued a gazette notification in this regard. With the latest inclusion,

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Won't tolerate chaos in name of religion

PM says in address to nation on the eve of Victory Day, urges harmony, respect to all faiths

UNB, Dhaka

Issuing a strong warning against religious fanatics, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government would not let anyone create any division and anarchy in the country over religion.

"This Bangladesh is the Bangladesh of Lalon Shah, Rabindranath, Kazi Nazrul, Jibanananda... this Bangladesh is the Bangladesh of Shahjalal, Shah Poran, Shah Mokdum, Khanjahan Ali; this Bangladesh is the Bangladesh of Sheikh Mujib and 16.5 crore Bangalees -- this country is for all. We won't allow anyone to create any division and anarchy in the name of religion," she said.

The premier was addressing the nation on the occasion of Victory Day.

Hasina said a section of the defeated force of

"The people of Bangladesh are pious, not religious bigots. Do not make religion a political weapon. Everyone has the right to perform their own religion."

1971 are out to confuse the religion-loving Muslims through providing false, fabricated and fictitious information as they want to create anarchy in the society.

"In 1972, the Father of the Nation had said not to make religion a tool of politics. But the

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MEET WITH HOME BOSS Hefajat sticks to its stance on sculpture

RASHIDUL HASAN

Calling sculptures anti-Islamic, Qawmi madrasa-based clerics, many of whom are Hefajat leaders, have proposed that the government construct minarets instead of sculptures of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Led by Mahmudul Hasan, chairman of madrasa education board (Befaq), a 12-member delegation came up with the proposal at a meeting with Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan at his residence in the capital on Monday night.

Coming out of the hour-long meeting, Hefajat-e-Islam Naye-e-Amir Ataullah Hafezzi termed it fruitful. He claimed that the minister did not oppose their argument against the establishment of sculptures or idols.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressed the nation yesterday on the eve of Victory Day celebrations. In her 18-minute speech, she issued a strong message to religious fanatics and remembered the sacrifices made for an independent secular Bangladesh.

PHOTO: PID

She only went to buy chips

8-yr-old found dead after rape in Bogura

STAR REPORT

An eight-year-old girl has been killed after rape in Bogura's Dhunat upazila.

The victim, Tabassum Khatun, was a second grader at a primary school in Nosrotpur village of the upazila.

Police said the girl along with her grandparents went to a waz mahfil near their home in the same village on Monday night. At one stage of the religious event, the girl went to a nearby shop to buy chips around 10:00pm.

As she was late to return, her

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All air travellers must be Covid free

CAAB threatens int'l carriers with flight suspensions if they carry people with no coronavirus-free certificates

STAR REPORT

Airlines carrying passengers without Covid-19 negative certificates will have to face flight suspension penalty from now on.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) came up with the directives as multiple airlines recently carried passengers to Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport without Covid-19 negative certificates.

In some cases, some airlines also carried passengers despite having Covid-19 positive certificates.

Group Captain Chowdhury Zia-ul-Kabir, member (Flight Standards and Regulations) of CAAB, said with great concern, CAAB observed several airlines carrying passengers without having Covid-19 negative certificates in RT-PCR lab.

"Even some airlines are carrying Covid infected passengers."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

40 more die, highest in 12 weeks

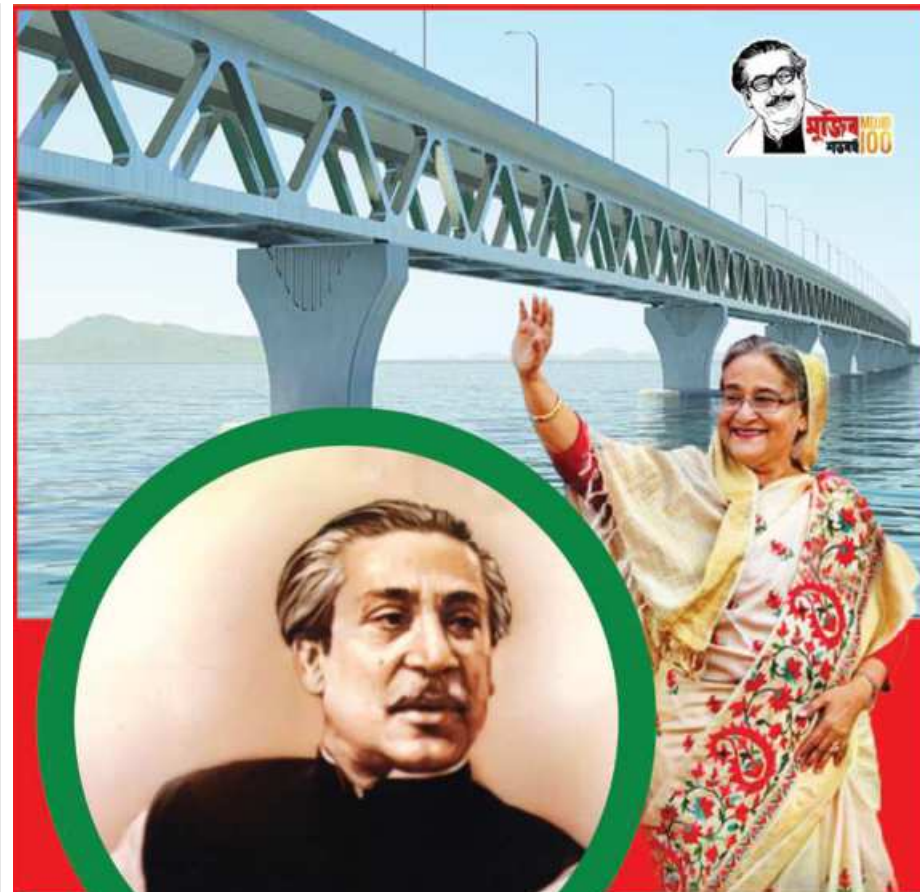
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country yesterday reported 40 deaths due to Covid-19 -- the highest for a single day in more than 12 weeks.

Besides, 1,877 people died from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, according to a DGHS press release.

Earlier, the 21st day of September saw the same number of deaths due to novel coronavirus infection. After that, the number of daily deaths continued to go down and

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16th

DECEMBER

HAPPY VICTORY DAY

PADMA CONQUERED IN THE MONTH OF VICTORY

The Padma Bridge is no longer just a dream. The robust leadership of Deshratna Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the worthy daughter of Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, has now made visible all of the 6.1 kilometres of the Padma Bridge. The Padma Bridge is a unique milestone for the Bangalees as we enter our 50th year of victory. Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, had expressed his determination to build a prosperous Bangladesh by overcoming dependence on foreign aid. Bangabandhu wanted this country to truly become one day a Golden Bengal.

Following the path shown by Bangabandhu, Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ignored all obstacles and constructed the Padma Bridge with fully national funding, showing the world that any false pressure cannot suppress Bangladesh. Bangladesh has never succumbed to any conspiracy and will never do so in the future.

Born of the sacrifice of three million martyrs, Bangladesh has overcome thousands of obstacles to reach where it is today. Statistics show the huge number of achievements in the last 49 years, proving that Bangladesh has come a long way from being once a war-torn country with almost no infrastructure. In some cases, Bangladesh has surprised the world with its success. Even with a small territory, this country of 160 million people is now self-sufficient in food.

Bangladesh has made unprecedented progress in the last decade in any indicator of economic growth and social development. Bangladesh has come a long way in overall growth since 1990, compared to the average growth of developing countries. The rate of poverty has dropped by more than half. Women's contribution to economic activities has increased rapidly. Bangladesh could be able to overtake many other developing countries, including neighbouring India, in many social indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality rate, female education rate, birth control usage of able-bodied couples etc. The most visible progress has been made in building "Digital Bangladesh". In the meantime, "Bangabandhu Satellite" has been successfully launched.

Bangladesh is ahead of India in a lot of areas and Nobel Laureate, Amartya Sen, has reiterated this point on numerous occasions. In his book titled "An Uncertain Glory: India and Its Contradictions", he dedicated a whole chapter to Bangladesh.

After independence, the life expectancy of an average Bangladeshi was 46 years, and it has now gone up to 72.6 years. Meanwhile, the average life expectancy in South Asia remains at 65 years. In low-income countries, the infant mortality rate is 70 deaths against 1,000 births; in South Asia, it is 52 deaths against 1,000 births; while in Bangladesh, the status is 37 deaths against 1,000 births. Bangladesh has now graduated itself into a middle-income country. With the firm leadership of our Honourable Prime Minister, we aptly tackle the Rohingya crisis. Complex initiatives for ensuring the safe return of the Rohingyas to their homeland are underway. The Honourable Prime Minister has also handled the COVID-19 pandemic as efficiently as any leader of developed countries.

This is the year of Golden Jubilee of independence for Bangladesh. The country steps into 50 years of its glory. In this moment of great achievement and on the occasion of Victory Day, we are remembering the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. At the same time, we are also paying our respects to all the martyrs of the independence war. Along with that, I also remember every freedom fighter who took part in the liberation war.

Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, dreamt that one-day Bangladesh would be a prosperous country, free of hunger and poverty, standing tall in the world. To fulfil that dream, a 20-year plan, 'Vision 2041', has been adopted, and the Prime Minister herself is leading the implementation of it. After Bangabandhu, she is the true leader for a modern Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's first perspective plan 2010-2021 will end in the golden jubilee of its independence. The journey to become a middle-income country and a 'Digital Bangladesh' by 2021 is on course to meet its target even in the midst of the on-going pandemic. Today, under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the country has found a way to achieve its security and prosperity.

Joy Bangla. Joy Bangabandhu.



Courtesy

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