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People reaping benefits of democracy: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the people of the country are now reaping the benefits of democracy as they got back their state power from the cantonment.



"Military dictators had grabbed the state power frequently in the past ... once the state power was in the cantonment ... As a result, there was no [required] pace in development," she said.

The PM said this while addressing the National Economic Council meeting virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

The meeting approved the 8th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025).

As the state power came back to the mass people, they are now enjoying their democratic rights fully, Hasina said.

"General people are getting the benefits ... rural people are getting the benefits ... that's the main thing," she said.

Hasina said she believes that the 8th Five-Year Plan will be very much effective in attaining the country's desired development.

In this connection, she mentioned that the government is implementing the UN-formulated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). "But coronavirus has created a problem, this is not for us alone, it's for the whole world."

Hasina said the government has been able to reduce the poverty rate significantly, while the GDP has been great

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The waste from homes and unauthorised and authorised factories in and around the capital pollute the Buriganga river. The water of the river polluting has become so dirty that it has turned black. The photo was taken from Bosila bridge around 1:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Mercury may start to drop from Friday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People will not get immediate respite from the bone-chilling cold as the country may not see any major improvement in weather conditions in the coming days.

Temperature may slightly rise in some areas today and tomorrow. But it may start falling again from Friday, said Ruhul Quddus, a meteorologist.

"A similar situation may continue till next one or two weeks. Even cold weather may prevail throughout January," he told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

Meanwhile, yesterday's lowest temperature was recorded at 7.3 degrees Celsius in Chuadanga and Sreemangal.

A weather bulletin yesterday said, "Mild to moderate cold wave is sweeping over Khulna division and the regions of Madaripur, Gopalganj, Sreemangal, Rajshahi, Ishwardi, Badalgachhi, Dinajpur, Tentulia, Rajarhat, Barishal and Khepupara."

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First ship docks in Matarbari deep sea port

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The first ship moored at the deep seaport in Matarbari in Cox's Bazar.

The foreign ship successfully reached the Matarbari Deep Seaport as the authority conducted an experimental capacity test of the newly built port.

Loaded with steam generator parts, the Panama flag carrier "Venus Triumph" anchored at the seaport around 10:20am, sailing off from Indonesia's Pt. Pelabuhan Cilegon Mandiri port on December 22.

These apparatuses will be used for the coal-based power plant in that area, Mohammad Abul Kalam, director of state-owned Coal Power Generation Company Bangladesh (CPGCBL), said.

The CPGCBL is implementing the coal-based power plant project in Matarbari.

The ship reached the deep sea of Matarbari early in the morning yesterday. Later at around 10:20am, the vessel was brought to the temporary jetty of the power plant.

The ship is owned by Sea Shore Marine Private Limited, while Ancient Steamship Company Limited is working agent in Bangladesh.

With the aim to navigate the ship, the CPGCBL created a 14-kilometer channel

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Bangabandhu-Umbricht meeting



Kashmiri Ministers Golam Rasulkar and Mufti Mohammad Sayeed call on Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Gono Bhaban on December 30, 1972.

December 30, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

KASHMIRI MINISTERS CALL ON PM Golam Rasulkar and Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, minister for supplies and minister for public works respectively, of the Indian State of Kashmir who are now on a private visit to Bangladesh call on Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today. They share that they are happy to see democratic institutions functioning in Bangladesh. They also express their satisfaction at Bangladesh's secular journey.

INDO-BANGLADESH CULTURAL ACCORD SIGNED A cultural cooperation agreement is signed between Bangladesh and India in Dhaka today. The agreement provides for the

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MUNICIPALITIES POLLS

AL-backed runners win 18 out of 24

STAR REPORT

The ruling Awami League-nominated candidates achieved victory in 18 municipalities out of 24 while their arch-rival BNP-nominated candidates won in two municipalities and independent candidates in three.

BNP candidates won in Rajshahi's Putia and Habiganj's Shayesthaganj municipalities whereas independent candidates won in Dinajpur's Phulbari, Patuakhali's Kuakata and Thakurgaon's Pirganj municipalities.

Result of another municipality -- Khulna's Chalna -- was withheld as BNP backed candidate died during the polling.

The first phase election of municipalities was held on Monday in 24 municipalities.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza

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Mourning swan holds up 23 German trains



AFP, Berlin

A swan mourning the death of its companion on a German railway track held up 23 trains for almost an hour and had to be removed by firefighters using special equipment, police said.

The two birds had strayed onto the track area of the high-speed line between Kassel and Gottingen in central Germany "during an excursion", according to Kassel police.

One of the birds died, likely after getting caught in the overhead power cables, said the statement on the December 23 incident, which was made public Monday.

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BGB shoots Indian man dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

An Indian "smuggler" was shot dead by the members of Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) in Mymensingh's Halaughat upazila early yesterday, said BGB.

The man was identified as Thedian Momin, 45, of India's South Garo Hills, said police.

Mahmudul Hasan, officer-in-charge of Halaughat Police Station, said a group of eight smugglers intruded into the upazila's Suryapur Dumnikura area at midnight.

Sensing their presence, a BGB patrol team of Suryapur Camp started chasing them. While fleeing, one of the smugglers threw a sharp cutter to BGB members. One of them was injured.

In retaliation, BGB opened fire on them. One of the "smugglers" sustained bullet wounds and died on

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WHO warns of worse pandemics

Urges world to get serious about preparedness

AGENCIES

The World Health Organization warned that pandemics far more deadly than Covid-19 may lie ahead, as South Africa banned alcohol sales and made masks mandatory in public from yesterday after a surge in coronavirus cases.

Nations around the world are struggling with winter spikes in infections that have pushed the global caseload over 81 million, even as the rollout of vaccines gathers pace in North America and Europe.

South African President

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 30

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:27 7:00
JAMAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:30 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) authorities struggling to free the reserved lane for cyclists on the streets due to lack of public awareness. The photo was taken on Manik Mia Avenue yesterday, a few hours after a mobile court conducted drive there to keep the lanes free.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

50 journalists killed in 2020

Says RSF, highlights murders in India, Pakistan, Mexico

AFP, Paris

Fifty journalists and media workers were killed in connection with their work in 2020, the majority in countries that are not at war, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said yesterday.

The figure shows an increase in the targeting of reporters investigating organised crime, corruption or environmental issues, the watchdog said.

It highlighted murders in Mexico, India and Pakistan.

Eighty-four percent of those killed this year were "deliberately targeted" for their work, RSF said in its annual report, compared to 63 percent in 2019.

"For several years now, Reporters Without Borders has noted that investigative journalists are really in the crosshairs of states, or cartels," said Pauline Ades-Mevel, RSF editor-in-chief.

Mexico was the deadliest country, with eight killed. "Links between drug traffickers and politicians remain, and journalists who dare to cover these or related issues continue to be the targets of barbaric murders," said the report.

None of the Mexico killings had yet been punished, added RSF, which has compiled annual data on violence against journalists around the globe since 1995.

Five journalists were killed in war-torn Afghanistan, it said, noting an increase in targeted attacks on media workers in recent months even as peace talks between the government and Taliban are ongoing.

RSF also highlighted the case of Iranian opposition figure Ruhollah Zam, who ran a popular social media

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