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Lok Sabha commemorates 25 years of Independence

The Indian parliament, Lok Sabha, has commemorated the 25th Independence Day of Bangladesh by adopting a resolution on December 16, reports BSS.

According to the text of the resolution, released in the city by the Indian High Commission, the Lok Sabha recalled "with pride the joint action by the Bangladesh Freedom Fighters and the Indian Armed forces for the liberation of Bangladesh."

The Lok Sabha also commended "the services rendered by the Indian army, navy, air force and the Border Security Force in the liberation of Bangladesh." It also remembered with gratitude the sacrifices of those who had laid down their lives for the cause of Bangladesh liberation.

The resolution appreciated "the basic tenets of respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, peaceful co-existence and adherence to democratic values and human rights, which both countries believe in and which guide development of friendly relations between India and Bangladesh."

The Lok Sabha resolution commemorating the Silver Jubilee of Bangladesh Independence also resolved to further strengthen the existing good neighbourly relations between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the Upper House of Indian Parliament - Rajya Sabha - yesterday recalled with pride the joint action by the Bangladesh freedom fighters and the Indian armed forces in 1971 and expressed the desire to further strengthen the existing friendly relations between the two countries.

Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha Najma Heptulla said, "Let us recall with pride the joint action." The services rendered by the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force and the Border Security Force in the liberation of Bangladesh were commendable.

"We also appreciate the basic tenets of respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, peaceful co-existence and non-alignment and adherence to democratic values and human rights, which both countries believe in and which guide development of friendly relations between India and Bangladesh."

BJP member Prof VK Malhotra wanted that India should make efforts to free the Indians who continued to be in Pakistan jails for a long time following the 1971 war.

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President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placing wreaths at the National Memorial at Savar on the Victory Day. — PID photo

Spirit of Liberation War

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parade of the armed forces was the main attraction of the celebration. The President and the Prime Minister witnessed the march past at the Bijoy Sarani.

Army, Navy and Air Force personnel joined the parade displaying modern military hardware and US-made tanks, Russian copters and Chinese fighters.

Top government leaders and elite attended the function. The President inspected the parade and took salute.

The day's programmes included discussion, cultural functions, Qurankhwani, milad mahfil, rally, procession, street-corner drama, art competition and film show.

Special prayers were offered at all mosques, temples, churches, pagodas and other places of worship seeking divine blessings for peace, progress and prosperity of the nation.

Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television broadcast and telecast special programmes highlighting the significance of the occasion.

On the Day, people in their thousands converged at the Suhrawardy Uddyan to see the Prime Minister laying the foundation stone of the Independence Monument. The big gathering reminded older ones of the mammoth rally at the same venue on March 7, 1971 where Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gave his historic address. The occupation forces also surrendered there.

The Prime Minister released a postal stamp marking the silver jubilee at the Ganabhaban.

She was present at the start of a huge victory procession organised by Awami League that started from Bangabandhu Avenue and ended at Russel Square. The processionists were addressed by Hasina, party Secretary General and LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman, Mayor Dhaka Mohammad Hanif and city AL secretary Mofazzal Hussain Chowdhury, MP.

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) brought out a procession Monday afternoon and held a discussion meeting at the party office in observance of the Silver Jubilee.

The discussion meeting was addressed by Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Dr AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Secretary General of BNP Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Abdus Salam Talukdar.

Jatiya Party held a cultural function and Jamaat-e-Islami organised a discussion meeting to mark the day.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Rob) held a meeting at Dainik Bangla crossing. Party General Secretary and Minister for Shipping ASM Rob addressed the meeting.

Sons and daughters of martyrs under the banner of Pro-jona '71 visited the memorial bare-footed.

In the capital, public and private buildings were illuminated and the City Corporation erected a number of tastefully decorated arches.

Messages received from different parts of the country said the celebrations were as spontaneous there as in Dhaka.

The President hosted a reception at the Bangabhaban on the day. The Prime Minister, among others, was present.

A 17-member delegation of foreign dignitaries, led by Annada Shankar Ray of India, made a courtesy call on the President at the Bangabhaban on Tuesday.

The Prime Minister hosted a dinner in honour of the foreign dignitaries at the Ganabhaban on Monday evening.

The Silver Jubilee was also celebrated in Bangladesh missions.

The organisations which placed wreaths at the National Memorial in the first couple of hours in the morning included Awami League, BNP, Jatiya Party, Left Democratic Forum, Workers Party, Communist Party of Bangladesh, BSD, DU, TA, JUTA, BUETTA, DUJ and BFUJ. Ashbabpatra Samik Karmachari Kalyan Samity, Bangladesh Praktion Satnik Sangstha, Savar Thana Administration, Uttorbanga Kalyan Samity, Open University, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Chhatra League, Garo Adibashi, Chhinmool Hawkers Samity, Deshpren Party, BKSP, Centre for Rehabilitation of Paralyzed, Zia Parishad, JU unit, SSMC students union and teachers association, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University, Projona '71, ADAB, Shaheed Paribar Sangram Parishad, Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad, Bangladesh Christian Muktiyoddha Kalyan Sangsad, Nariganth Probertana, National University, SKOP, Bangladesh Bar Council, Supreme Court Bar Association, Jatiya Jubo Sanghati, Bangladesh Mohila Parishad and Gono Azadi League.

Tofael calls for greater trade ties among SAARC countries

By Staff Correspondent

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed yesterday called for greater cooperation in trade among the SAARC countries.

There is goodwill for Bangladesh and other developing countries of South Asia among European Union countries, he said and emphasised the need for strengthening the regional trade block under the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) to utilise the opportunity. Otherwise, it will be difficult to sustain in the post-Uruguay Round era, he observed. In this regard he mentioned that the SAPTA would turn into a South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) in near future.

The minister was inaugurating a two-day seminar on SAPTA jointly organised by the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) at the FBCCI building here yesterday.

SAPTA, that provides for tariff concessions among the SAARC countries was incorporated in the SAARC framework in 1993 and came into force in December 1995.

Tofael Ahmed said, Bangladesh will keep on persuading the developed countries for duty free access of Bangladesh products to their markets. For that, the products should be competitive, he said. Chamber bodies have a very important role to play in this regard, he added.

The inaugural session was also addressed by, among others, FBCCI President Yussuf Abdullah Harun, SCCI President Salman F Rahman, and vice-president AKM Shamsud-doha and Rashiduzzaman Dudu of the FBCCI.

The minister said that at the second round of SAPTA meeting in Kathmandu recently, more than 1500 items were added to the original list of 226 items for trading. He hoped that further concessions would be proposed at meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers beginning in New Delhi on Friday.

Referring to his experience in the recently held WTO ministerial conference in Singapore, Tofael said "I saw how helpless the countries were who were not supported by regional groups."

"I observed very closely how



President Shahabuddin Ahmed with a group of foreign dignitaries invited by the government on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee. They called on him at the Bangabhaban yesterday. — Star photo

Team of foreign dignitaries calls on President

A 17-member delegation of foreign dignitaries, led by Annada Shankar Ray of India, made a courtesy call on President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports BSS.

President Shahabuddin appreciated them for their moral support during the War of Liberation of the country and said the people of the country gratefully remember their contribution.

Among others PN Dhar, Muchkund Dubey, Bhabani Sengupta from India, Simon Dring and Rashed Suhrawardi from UK, Prof (Dr) Peter Bertocci, Archer Blood, Arnold Zeitlin, Mrs Vicki Zeitlin, Charles Ashton and Martin Walacott from USA were present on the occasion.

Road accidents

From Page 1

Jyotna 25, was injured as a minibus knocked her down at Kurmitola at about 7 pm on Sunday. She was rushed to DMCH where she succumbed to her injuries.

Kashem Ali 45, died on the spot when an autorickshaw hit him in front of Arambagh Club in Motijheel at about 4:30 pm on Sunday.

Shahid, (18), was injured when a bus hit him in front of the Dhaka Polytechnic Institute at about 10:30 am on Sunday. He died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Our Jessore Correspondent says: Four persons were killed in a road accident at Jhikergachha bazar on the Jessore-Benapole road of Jhikergachha thana Monday morning.

The victims were identified as Thana Nirbahi Officer (TNO) Potuakhali, ASM Ashraf-ul-Alam, 38, his brother-in-law Hasan Mozuruzzaman, 22, a van driver Ansar Ali 27, and a cycle rider Shyamol Ray 25.

According to police and witnesses, the accident occurred when a truck hit the van from behind.

The driver and the conductor of the truck, escaped.

BSS says: Four persons, including a woman were killed in three road accidents in different parts of Comilla district yesterday.

Two truck drivers, identified as Tapan Chandra Pal and Mohammad Liton, were killed as their trucks collided head-on on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Choudhagram.

Bijoya Begum, 55, was crushed under the wheels of a truck on the Comilla-Brahmanbaria road.

Another middle-aged man, Rafiqul Islam, was killed when a private car ran over him on the Comilla-Chandpur road.

UNB adds: Three persons were killed and five others wounded in separate road accidents in Sadar and Raipura thanas of district on Monday.

Two minor girls - Ratna, 10, and Chadni, 5 - were crushed under the wheels of a truck at Salda level-crossing on Monday morning.

Their parents, Mainuddin and Saimon injured in the accident, were sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

In another accident a rickshaw-puller, Biplob, was killed when a Dhaka-bound bus hit his rickshaw on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Morzal village in Raipura thana.

Two other passengers of the

2 police sergeants suspended

By Staff Correspondent

Two police sergeants have been suspended on charge of committing excesses with a captain of the Bangladesh Army Sunday evening.

The sergeants have been closed at the Razarbagh police lines following the incident, said a press release of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police last night.

An enquiry committee has been formed to probe the matter said the press release.

2 JCD activists shot in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Dec 17: Two activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) allegedly sustained bullet wounds when they were returning to the Shahporan Hall of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology after placing wreaths at the Central Shahid Minar in the early hours of the Victory Day. The victims, Jewel, a second year student of statistics and Bachchu, a third year student of Mathematics, were admitted to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital. Four rooms of the hall were also reportedly damaged.

The JCD has blamed the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) for the incident. It handed over a memorandum to the Vice-Chancellor demanding action against the miscreants.

Reception at Bangabhaban

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Begum Shahabuddin hosted a reception at Bangabhaban on Monday on the occasion of Silver Jubilee of Victory Day, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was present.

Former presidents Mohammadullah, Justice Ahsanuddin Chowdhury, cabinet members, mayor of Dhaka city, state ministers, diplomats, chief election commissioner, deputy leader of the opposition in the parliament, judges of the Supreme Court and election commissioners were present on the occasion.

Besides, cabinet secretaries, chiefs of staff of Three Services, principal secretary to prime minister, leaders of different political parties, attorney general, president of Supreme Court Bar Association, senior lawyers, disabled freedom fighters and their family members, editors of news agencies, national dailies and weeklies, columnists, senior journalists, vice chancellors of universities, educationists, eminent artists and high civil and military officials attended the programme.

46 freedom-fighter journalists honoured

By Staff Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the media men to portray the true history of Independence through their reports and write-ups.

"Carry the message to the new generation that Bangladesh is a nation of heroes. Myth of lies does not last long," Hasina said addressing a function organized at the Jatiya Press Club on Sunday to accord reception to some renowned journalists for their role in the War of Liberation.

Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) organized the reception. The Prime Minister also awarded medals and certificates to 46 journalists. DRU president Shaiful Kabir and general secretary Mostafa Feroj Dipu also spoke on the occasion.

The journalists who were accorded reception were: Sontosh Gupta, Toab Khan, Wahidul Haq, ABM Musa, MR Akhter Mukul, Falz Ahmed, Ataus Samad, Kamal Lohani, Bazlur Rahman, Jawadul Karim, Moulana Abdul Awal, Ferdous Ahmed Koreshi, Motiur Rahman, Saleh Chowdhury, Shahadat Chowdhury, Sayed Jafar, Abul Hasanat, Abed Khan, Shaiful Azam Mukul, Syed Shahjahan, Fakir Abdur Razak, Salimullah, Amir Hussain, Mozammel, Hussain Monju, Mirnal K Roy, Sarwar Jahan, Nazrul Islam, Abu Kaiser, Abu Taher, Mumiruzzaman, GM Yakub, Mohammad Alam, Harunur Rashid, Nazimuddin Manik, Kazi Zahedul Islam, Rauful Hasan, Kazi Rafiqul Haq, Tozammel Ali, Harun Habib, Shaifur Rahman, Dilip Chakravarty, Md Saadek, Akram Hussain Khan, Shuva Rahman, Nirmal Sen and Rashedul Haq Pasha.

AL MP Khademul Islam dead

By Staff Correspondent

Mohammad Khademul Islam, a ruling party MP from Thakurgaon, died at the Suhrawardy Hospital at 2 pm yesterday. He was 58.

Islam, also the president of Awami League's Thakurgaon district unit, was suffering from heart disease.

A freedom fighter, Khademul Islam was elected MP four times, the last in the June 12 general elections.

Prime Minister and AL chief, Sheikh Hasina went to the hospital on hearing to the death news.

Namaj-e-janaza of Khademul Islam will be held at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad at 10 am today, said a party press release. After the janaza, the body will be taken to his home district of Thakurgaon for burial.

UNB adds: President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have expressed profound grief at the sudden death of Mohammad Khademul Islam.

Speaker Humayun Rashed Chowdhury also expressed deep shock at the sad demise of Khademul Islam.

PM: Struggle yet to end

From Page 1

which would start soon. Mukti-juddhar Jagdhar will also be set up in this historic ground, she informed.

Hasina said the whole nation was at one at the call of Bangabandhu and took up arms against the Pakistani occupation forces who cracked down on the unarmed civilians on March 25, 1971.

Although Mujib, the majority party leader in the December 1970 general election, was arrested by the military regime of Pakistan, the people took forward the movement for independence taking up arms at the directive of the Bangabandhu, she recalled.

She regretted that after the killing of Bangabandhu, the history of the country and its independence war had been distorted in last 21 years. But the nation once again proved that truth cannot be usurped by falsehood.

The Prime Minister said with lot of sacrifice people had given Awami League the responsibility to serve them. "Whatever opportunity I get I want to utilise it by establishing truth and justice as well as just demands of the people, which they had been deprived of for last 21 years," she told the gathering.

Sheikh Hasina said power could not give her anything. "My highest achievement is that I am the daughter of the Father of the Nation," she said. "My only target is to give a good life to the people by achieving economic prosperity and social progress."

The Prime Minister said there could be difference of opinion in a democratic society, but there should not be any difference in establishing the spirit of independence and for economic emancipation.

"Independence is very dear to us... we have achieved it at the cost of many lives and after a long struggle," said Hasina paying rich tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War.

The Prime Minister, on the occasion of Silver Jubilee of Victory, sought cooperation of all in rebuilding the country.

As the Prime Minister entered into the historic Suhrawardy Uddyan, thousands of cheering people greeted her chanting full-throated slogans: "Joy Bangla... Joy Bangabandhu."

Leaders of different political parties, freedom fighters, artists, students, teachers, journalists and people of all walks attended the function.

They danced and clapped as the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone. They also sang in chorus with the artistes "Purbo Digante Surja Utheche Rakta Lal..."

The function, organised by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, was also addressed by State Minister for Culture and Youth Obaidul Kader.

Former Air Chief, Air Vice-Marshal (R) Ghandaker, who was present from among the freedom fighters during the surrender of the defeated Pakistani forces on Victory Day, was present on the dais.

PM to open Ctg TV centre tomorrow

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 17: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will arrive here on December 19 to inaugurate the Chittagong Television Centre, official sources said.

The Chittagong TV station has been built at a cost of Tk 67 crore.

The Prime Minister is due to arrive by helicopter from Dhaka at 8 am.

She is also scheduled to attend a passing out parade at the Naval Academy.

Armed attack on AL procession in Ctg: 6 hurt

CHITTAGONG, Dec 17: Six Awami League activists were injured in a gun-attack on their procession towards the local Shaheed Minar in Rangunia thana Sunday midnight, reports UNB.

The wounded were identified as Rakibuddin, Humayun Kabir, Shahadat Hossain, Mohammad Ibrahim, Sirajul Islam and Kazi Alam Shah.

With bullet wounds all of them were rushed to Rangunia thana health complex. Critically injured Kazi Alam Shah, with head-injury, was shifted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Protesters blamed activists of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) for the attack with sticks, LG and pipegun.

Police and witnesses said a group of 14-15 attackers swooped on the processionists at Bahuchakra Bazar and opened fire.

A case was filed with the local police. None was arrested in this connection.

USAID

From Page 1

seven megawatts will help reduce the existing power shortage in the rural areas and provide electricity for irrigation and rural industry.

Presently, Brown said, industries which have been REB's major clients are considering to install their own power generation plants threatening the viability of the PBSS because of the potential revenue loss.

Some of the PBSS collect eight million US dollars as revenue in a single year, the USAID director said. Supporting the REB is one of the four areas the agency now focuses for its operation in the country.

Three other areas are agriculture, collaboration between the business community and NGOs, and environment.

Jessore Jail

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Meanwhile, negotiation held between the prisoners and police officials in presence of IG (Prison) Liaquat Ali, Divisional Commissioner SM Shamsul Alam and DIG of Khulna division Hafizuddin was said to have failed as the angry prisoners remained rigid on their demands.

Local political leaders gathered at the Jessore circuit house to hammer out a solution of the jail commotion.

Political party sources said the administration convened a meeting of the local political leaders at 7 pm today at Jessore Circuit House to help resolve the problem.

The leaders urged the administration to avert bloodshed in ending the revolt, one of them told UNB by phone.

He said present in the meeting were, among others, Sharif Abdur Rakib of the ruling Awami League, Nazrul Islam of BNP, Kazi Shahid Lal of Gano Forum, Iqbal Kabir Zahid of Workers Party, Inamul Huq of NAP and Abul Hossain of CPB.

Later at 10 pm, the political leaders and the officials met with the prisoners at the jail gate and apprised them that the administration would take steps to solve their problems in the jail.

They will again meet the prisoners at 8:30 am tomorrow to work out a solution.

John Major

From Page 1

the invitation of his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina.

He is expected to visit Bangladesh in the last leg of his three-nation tour of South Asia, which will also take him to Pakistan and India.

Vision of the Young

From Page 1

Drama artiste and architect Taurik Ahmed said, "We should develop our own culture with a modern perspective in the next 10 years so that the local culture remains the mainstream. Lot of positive things can be done in Bangladesh if the people take up their respective work professionally."

Another drama artiste Afsana Mimi was critical of the quality of current politics but said, "I am hopeful that the country's politics will become stable and rational. I believe there will be no more sufferings of the people, caused by mindless conflicts of rival parties."

She added, "I dream of a politics where opposing parties will respect each other and not criticise just for the sake of criticism."

Syed Nasim Elahi, a young entrepreneur, said "empowerment of the people can not be left to politicians and bureaucrats. We the common people will have to come forward. The less we depend on our politicians for development, the better it is for us." He said that people should be vocal about things harmful to the growth of the society.

Tritha Saha, a poet, said, "Education should be the thrust sector in the next 10 years. Sharing the view, Chowdhury Khaled, a student of the NSU said, "We should develop a sense of pride instead of looking down on ourselves. Dignity of labour should be established," he added.

A uniform education system should be formulated by removing the present differences between Bangla and English medium schools and colleges, they said. They also visualised a stable economy and a society which would empower women so that they can fully contribute to nation building activities.

Naureen Khan, a student of IUB observed that the campus should be free of politics. She said the students unions should only focus on national issues. The seminar was also addressed by among others, Dr Shapnil Mahtab, Zaid Almer Khan, Gemini Wahaz, Kamrul Ahsan, Rafiq Hossain, Munni Saha, Anwar Shadat and Mahub Tarq.