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Foundation of National Defence College laid

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday laid the foundation stone of the National Defence College (NDC), the first of its kind in the country, on the Staff College premises at Mirpur, reports UNB.

Addressing a function organised on the occasion, Sheikh Hasina said the government has taken adequate steps for overall development of the armed forces as it is determined to build up a strong, skilled and well organised forces.

"We have taken various measures for the welfare of the members of the armed forces and accomplished their professional excellence with development," she added.

The Prime Minister said armed forces can not be developed and made skilled without imparting proper and adequate training. "Our armed forces have been involved in relentless hard work since its inception."

But there was no scope of institutional training for high-ranking military officials, she said adding that the necessity of establishing National Defence College (NDC) had always been felt for higher training of the armed forces.

"Today a new milestone has been set up in the field of higher training of the armed forces through establishment of the college," she added.

The first course at NDC will commence from January 10, 1999.

Referring to the homecoming of great leader of the nation Bangabandhu, the Prime Minister said, "We have chosen this day as the foundation laying day of the highest institution of the Armed Forces with the spirit of completing his unfinished tasks."

She urged all, irrespective of party affiliation and opinion, to come forward to move the country towards prosperity by facing the challenge of the 21st century and build a hunger and poverty free 'Sonar Bangla' as dreamt by the father of the nation.

Hasina thanked the British Government for its offer to send an advisory team to extend co-operation for establishing the NDC.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Mustafizur Rahman and Commandant of Staff College Maj Gen Abul Munim Monsur Ahmed also addressed the function.

At the function chiefs of three services handed over three cheques to Sheikh Hasina for the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

UK immigration minister due in city today

British Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State Mike O'Brien, MP, arrives in Dhaka today on a three-day official visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

As minister responsible for immigration and passport matters, O'Brien is visiting the British High Commissions in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh.

During his stay in Bangladesh, he will also visit Sylhet from where the majority of 3 lakh plus Bangladeshi community in UK originate.

He will meet community leaders and the trustees of the Bangladesh Overseas Centre and the Newham Bengali Community Trust.

The minister will be accompanied by Richard White, Head of Migration and Visa Division in the Foreign and Commonwealth office in London.

IFAD president arrives today

By Staff Correspondent

President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Fawzi Hamad Al-Sultan arrives Dhaka today on a four-day visit to Bangladesh.

During the visit, the IFAD president will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He will also hold meetings with a number of ministers, senior government officials, officials of UN agencies in Bangladesh and representatives of various NGOs working in the agricultural sector, says a release.

IFAD, a UN organisation headquartered in Rome, has invested nearly Tk 150 crore in Bangladesh so far and its current programmes include support to seven projects in livestock, fisheries, forestry, water resources and rural infrastructure and agricultural credit.

During the visit, the IFAD president will make field trips to Mymensingh and Netrakona to see the progress of various IFAD-assisted development projects. He will also visit the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) in the city.

Exclusive talks

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to Bangladesh from January 16 after attending the three-nation Business Summit the day before.

Official sources said Nawaz Sharif will have an exclusive tete-a-tete with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina before they join the official talks on January 16.

The sources said issues of trade and economic cooperation are likely to dominate the official meeting between the two countries.

They said a cultural agreement is likely to be signed by the two countries during the Nawaz Sharif's visit.

During his stay, the Pakistani Prime Minister will call on President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and attend a banquet to be hosted in his honour by Prime Minister Hasina.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia is expected to call on Nawaz Sharif on January 16.

Before his departure for Islamabad, the Pakistani premier will go for an excursion to the Sundarbans on January 17.

Coal import thru' Tamabil resumes today

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Jan 10: Coal import through Tamabil border will resume tomorrow after remaining suspended for 10 days as Sylhet Coal Importers' Group today decided to call off their strike.

The group went on strike protesting extortion and terrorism in Tamabil checkpoint area by a section of truckers.

Anti-repatriation campaign: Two Rohingyas held

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 10: Police arrested two Rohingyas refugees from Kutupalong camp in Ukhiya thana in the district today for campaigning against repatriation, reports UNB.

They were identified as Abul Hashem, 27, and Mohammad Sadek, 25.

Police said the arrested have long been involved in armed movement against repatriation of Rohingyas refugees.

Benazir files 3 cases

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he or his family owns outside Pakistan.

Benazir's action came two days after British authorities had ordered seizure of documents relating to her family assets and bank accounts in Britain on Islamabad's request.

AFP adds: Zardari today said he feared for his wife's life and accused unidentified quarters of conspiring to eliminate the Bhutto family.

"I am jailed for no crime of my own and now I fear that the conspirators want to eliminate Bhutto family as happened to the Gandhis in India," Zardari told reporters in the central jail.

UNB adds: An independent investigation carried out by the New York Times has confirmed allegations by the Pakistan government that Benazir and her husband Asif Zardari had made at least \$100 million in illicit profits through kickbacks.

The actual amount could be as high as \$1.5 billion that they gained through kickbacks from various spheres of government activity.

Following an unusual investigation conducted in various countries around the world, the New York Times reported today its own findings confirming that the Bhutto family earned massive kickbacks from foreign companies for granting them lucrative government contracts.

In one instance, Zardari and a Pakistani partner struck a deal with Dassault Aviation, France's leading military contractor, to earn \$200 million for a \$4 billion jet fighter deal.

The Times was given copies of documents obtained by the Pakistani authorities from a Bhutto family lawyer in Switzerland, reportedly purchased at \$1 million.

These documents, ranging from handwritten notes on bank transactions to purchase receipts of property around the world, show a clear pattern of corruption: perpetrated during Benazir Bhutto's two terms as Pakistan's Prime Minister.

Three-nation summit

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erate," he said.

The organisers have also invited businessmen from other SAARC countries as observers, which, they said, would dispel misgivings about the agenda of the summit. Kanti Kumar Podar, President of the SAARC chamber, and its six vice presidents will also attend.

Bilateral agenda, business or political, will take a back seat in the whole exercise, the officials said.

Transport and communication are key areas identified by Bangladesh chamber leaders in which the three nations can work together towards growth and development. "We can link up with, say, Central Asia through India and Pakistan or we can be a gateway to ASEAN countries."

The business leaders, in presence of foreign, finance and commerce ministers and civil servants, will discuss issues such as trade liberalisation in the light of SAARC Preferential

Mercury to fall

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fog. Fog shrouded the sun in Dhaka city but people in Khulna, Jessore and adjacent areas enjoyed the warmth of sunlight for about two hours.

In the city, the hazy sky clouded by fog and cold winds excruciated the bite of the cold spell.

Biting cold continuing in the northern districts claimed 34 more lives yesterday, raising the total to 189 so far.

The maximum temperature in Dhaka was recorded at 14.8 degree Celsius and the minimum at 12 degree yesterday. Visibility in the city improved further yesterday compared to the day before, the Met office said.

The lowest temperature in the country was recorded at 7.9 degree Celsius at Srimangal and the highest at 23.9 at Teknaf.

Today's match

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January 14, 16 and 18.

The final lists of team members for today's match could not be known. However, the squads have the following players.

INDIA: Mohammad Azharuddin (Capt), Sachin Tendulkar, Ajay Jadeja, Sourav Ganguly, Navjot Sidhu, Robin Singh, Jagvir Singh, Hrishikesh Kanitkar, Sajjad Bhatia, Debashish Mohanty, Harvinder Singh, Rahul Singhvi, vs. BANGLADESH: (from): Rashid Latif (Capt), Saeed Anwar, Amir Sohail, Shahid Afridi, Ijaz Ahmed, Azhar Mahmood, Aaqib Javed, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Saqlain Mushtaq, Mushtaq Ahmed, Mohammad Hussain, Manzoor Akhtar, Fazli Akbar, Yousuf Youhana.

Revenue

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and supplementary duty, also slumped, dropping by Tk 199.30 crore against the target of Tk 1823.82 crore.

The Income Tax collection target also fell short by Tk 29.90 crore and other tax and duties by Tk 5.48 crore.

The reasons behind the fall was attributed to evasion of duties by importers, particularly the car importers and reduced imports.

Sundarbans

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coits. "Kalu dacot hails from an area near the signal tower in Mangla and Altu Robal dacot, a Christian from the Dhaingmari area, controls the eastern part of the Pashur river."

Dhaingmari Forest officials said these gangs were operating in Marapashur, Jangla Karmahal, Laidung and Khamgramari areas. "Our manpower is so inadequate that it is not possible to crack down on these gangs," said Habibur Rahman.

Prime Minister and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina addressing a discussion meeting at the Institution of Engineers in the city yesterday on the occasion of Bangabandhu's Home-Coming Day. — PID photo

7-party demands repeal of CHT accord

BANDARBAN, Jan 10: Leaders of the Seven-Party Unity Council here today demanded immediate repeal of the 'so-called peace accord' on CHT saying it had taken away the voting rights of the Bangladeshis living in the region, reports UNB.

Addressing a meeting of the Unity Council at the local press club premises, they said the Bangladeshis would now have to live in the hill tracts — in their own motherland — as second class citizens only because of their language.

The Bangladeshis would also have to take their citizenship certificate from the tribals because of their language.

The Unity Council leaders urged the Muslim countries to use their influence to help repeal the CHT agreement which was signed between the government and the PCJSS on December 2 last.

They said the 'black accord' has created the basis for handing over the country's one-third territory to another country.

The accord initiated the establishment of a separate country within the independent country, they alleged, saying that the country's independence and sovereignty are not safe under the present government.

The 7-party Unity Council leaders threatened to wage an oust-government movement after the holy month of Ramadan to 'save the country'.

Tremor

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the two countries.

Neither he nor Xinhua provided details on the 35 deaths. Huang said in addition more than 164 people had been injured.

The quake struck at 11:50 am (0350 GMT), when many people were indoors getting ready for lunch. Residents in Beijing felt apartment buildings quiver. Guests at a hotel in Zhangjiakou, 100 kilometers (60 miles) from Shuangy, ran outside in fright.

Independence Cup Cricket

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target of 191 in 46.2 overs losing six wickets.

But apart from the fiery spell from Srinath, which gave Azharuddin the much-needed boost ahead of the blood and thunder clash against arch-rivals Pakistan today, the day belonged to the hosts.

Albeit India won the match, it was the lowly-rated Bangladesh who prevailed over their more colourful opponents with a remarkable recovery after their all too familiar batting collapse backed by a spirited display of bowling and fielding.

The opening match of the

the makeshift arrangement, much to the delight of a near-packed audience.

The exuberance of the loyal home crowd however soon turned into a nightmare when the hosts lost four top-order batsmen with only 22 runs on the board.

But then came the commendable part of the Bangladesh innings. The new kids in the international cricket, who fared pathetically in their recent tours to Kenya and New Zealand, finally lived up to the spirit in front of the home crowd with vice-captain Aminul Islam and a determined Khaled Mahmud putting on a remarkable 109-run fifth wicket stand.

Amin scored a chanceless unbeaten 69, his first 50 in 16 one-day internationals, spiced with seven sweetly-timed hits to the fence. The dapper right-hander, who was going through a lean patch, returned to form right in the nick of time. His previous best was 42 against Pakistan in the Asia Cup in Sharjah in 1995. Amin, who got off to a rather rusty start, smote some eye-pleasing shots in his 96-ball stay at the crease.

Amin's unbeaten knock however overshadowed a gutsy innings from his fifth-wicket partner Khaled Mahmud. The stockily-built all-rounder, who joined Amin after skipper Akram Khan stooped to Mohanthy, scored a workmanlike 79-ball 47 in his ODI debut. Mahmud struck five fours before running himself out while gunning for a non-existing single.

After his sad departure in the 40th over, Amin along with the help of lower-order batsmen took Bangladesh close to 200 mark. Slow left-arm spinner Rafique scored a breezy 17-ball 20 inclusive of a quartet of fours. But it was number eleven batsman Shariful who sent the boisterous home crowd to frenzy with a massive sixer over long-off in the last over of the innings.

Bangabandhu

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suring economic progress.

The Father of the Nation who gave political freedom to the nation was brutally killed on August 15 in 1975 when he started his mission for ensuring the economic emancipation of the people, she said adding "Now it's our duty to compete the unfinished tasks of Bangabandhu."

"We'll free the nation from illiteracy, hunger and poverty, we'll ensure the basic needs of the people to bring back smile on the faces of downtrodden," she said calling upon all to work together.

Recalling the homecoming of the father of the nation, Sheikh Hasina said the victory of the nation was fulfilled with the return of Bangabandhu, for what the whole nation was waiting on that day.

Awami League presidium members — Zohra Tajuddin, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Principal Kamruzzaman, Amir Hossain Anu, Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak and Abdul Jalil, DCC Mayor Mohammad Hanif, and Awami League leaders Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed, State Minister for LGRD, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya and Abdus Salam Khan MP also addressed the meeting.

Boy dies in cracker blast

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 10: A minor boy Shahin, 3, died in a cracker blast incident this morning at DC road under Chandgaon thana in the city, police said.

Police later recovered the body but could not know how the cracker blast occurred at around 11:30 am today.

\$ 100m to be sought from donors for dev of CHT

Bangladesh is likely to seek around 100 million US dollars from the donors for implementation of short-term development programmes in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) on an emergency basis, a senior official of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) told BSS yesterday, reports BSS.

The official, who asked not to be named, said a project proposal in this regard is expected to be submitted to the donors within a couple of weeks. Proposals of medium and long-term development programmes seeking financial assistance from the development partners of Bangladesh will also be submitted later, the official added.

The ERD in a letter on December 22 last asked the Special Affairs Division to prepare a project proposal seeking financial assistance of around 100 million US dollars from the donors so that basic infrastructural development work in the Hill Tracts can be started as a short-term measure.

The ERD took initiatives after the donors' response to provide financial assistance for development of the country's economically potential CHT following the peace accord between the government and the tribal leaders on December 2 to bring an end the decades-old insurgency in CHT.

The representatives of the donor countries and agencies sought detailed information required for carrying out resettlement and development programmes in the CHT after holding a meeting with Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria on December 4.

According to sources, the project proposal prepared for taking up short-term development programme in Hill Tracts has laid emphasis on resettlement of the refugees and construction of infrastructures like schools, clinics, rural feeder roads and village markets which are necessary for development of the Hill Tracts.

Bomb blasts few hrs before Sonia's arrival in Madras

MADRAS, Jan 10: At least three people were injured in a bomb explosion in central Madras today a few hours before Sonia Gandhi, the powerful widow of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, was to arrive in the city to campaign for the general election, reports AP.

The blast shattered some glass panes of the United States consular office near the flyover. The impact threw a cyclist off the road and damaged vehicles, United News of India news agency said.

But few details were immediately available about the explosion near a busy flyover in the southern Indian city, 50 kilometers (30 miles) from the site where Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated while on an election campaign in 1991.

Sonia Gandhi is scheduled to travel to the site in Sriperumbudur this morning along with her daughter Priyanka, to campaign for the Congress Party that her husband, mother-in-law and Rajiv's grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru led for decades.

The Sriperumbudur meeting will be the first election rally she addresses after formally joining the party last year and more recently agreeing to help the party of her family by actively campaigning for it.

For years, she has wielded a huge behind-the-scenes influence over party decisions and important leaders have regularly consulted with her.

After the explosion police tightened security throughout the city ahead of Sonia Gandhi's arrival, UNI said.

Elaborate security arrangements had been made at Sriperumbudur for Sonia Gandhi's visit, Press Trust of India news agency reported.

She would make her speech from behind a bullet-proof glass shield, the agency said.

Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by a suicide bomber who detonated bombs strapped to her body as she came close to him and pretended to greet him. Police say that the assassin belonged to the Sri Lankan Tamil rebel group that is fighting for an independent homeland in the island nation just south of Tamil Nadu state of which Madras is the capital.

Tamils in Indian Tamil Nadu and northern Sri Lanka have a common culture and language. That led many Sri Lankan rebels to once seek refuge in the state.

Assault on AL leader OC closed, two constables suspended

From Our Correspondent

SHERPUR, Jan 10: Office-in-Charge of the Sadar thana Abul Khaer Mian was closed and two constables were suspended today for their involvement in the beating of a local Awami League leader on Thursday last.

The action followed a departmental investigation by Additional DIG Syed Sirajul Islam, official sources said.

They allegedly beat Mozharul Islam Vice-president of district Awami League and a central committee member of Sriramik League when he went to the thana for filing a case.

Young man pushed out of bus, dies

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Jan 10: A young man was killed when he was allegedly pushed out of a running minibus by the helper on Dhaka-Narayanganj road at Dhaka in Fatullah today.

The dead was identified as Harun-or-Rashid, 20, hailing from Kachua in Chandpur district. He died under the wheels of the minibus.

Wallullah, cousin of Harun, complained to Fatullah thana that Harun had an altercation with the helper over fare and at one stage the helper pushed him out on the road.

Police seized the minibus but failed to arrest any of its staff till filing of this report last night.

Prokrichi

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Medical Association office yesterday discussed the situation and called upon the members of Prokrichi-BCS cadres to remain unused.

The council urged the government to withdraw immediately all administration cadre officials on deputation in different departments, corporations and organisations to facilitate promotion of others.

In a resolution, the meeting expressed deep resentment and concern that the 'action committee' was engaging in 'unholy activities' although they have their own BCS (Administration) cadre association (itration) cadre association. It noted that the action committee was 'hampering normal working at the Secretariat and created a reign of terror there.'

The meeting said it wants to set the records clear for the people and the government that the administration cadre has kept 90 per cent of the posts from assistant secretary to Secretary in the Secretariat in violation of rules.

There is no proper policy on filling up of these posts since the previous government created anomalies in this respect. There is no provision to keep the posts in the Secretariat reserved for certain cadre. If members of all cadres and professions were posted in their relevant ministries, the disparity and other problems could be overcome," the meeting said in a resolution.

Bangabandhu's home-coming day observed

The home-coming day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was observed yesterday, reports UNB.

Bangabandhu returned home this day in 1972 after nine months in Pakistani jail.

Bangladesh Awami League and its front organisations observed the day through elaborate programmes.

The national and party flags were hoisted atop Bangabandhu Bhawan, Awami League central office and all its offices across the country.

Prime Minister and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, along with party leaders and workers assembled at the Bangabandhu Bhawan at 8 am and placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu.

The Prime Minister stood in silence for sometime in front of the portrait of Bangabandhu to pay respect to the great leader. Ministers and party leaders were present there.

To mark the day, central Awami League organised discussion meeting at the Engineers Institution auditorium. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina spoke at the discussion as chief guest.

Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television aired special programmes while newspapers published special articles highlighting the significance of the day.

Edn boards

From page 1

ther talks regarding its four-point demands, Bakshi said.

The Federation called the indefinite strike demanding the cancellation of the Task Force report that brought corruption charges against some board employees and officials, ending the attempts to curtail the autonomy of the education board.

Transfer of the centralised board of education to the respective boards and ending intervention in board matters by the Ministry of Education.

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