

The Imperial Family

Continued from page 10

exhibitions and charity concerts. In September, 1987, the then Crown Prince took over the duties of the falling Emperor Hirohito, which included the opening of the Diet and with the future Empress Michiko, attending the autumn session of the National Sports Festival, the National Arbor Day and other such functions.

Holding his first audience for representatives of the people two days after ascending the throne, the Emperor vowed to fulfill his responsibilities. "I pledge I will always be at one with the people and uphold the Constitution," he said. The Emperor indicated he will follow the footsteps of his father and keep in mind the late Emperor's wish to be with the people. Expressing his hopes for further progress in the nation's future, world peace and the welfare of mankind, the Emperor indicated he will adhere to his status as the symbol of the people's unity, as provided by the Constitution.

His Majesty is interested in the study of fish and has published 25 papers on gobies in the Japanese Journal of Ichthyology. In 1986 he was elected an honorary member of the Linnean Society of London, an international biological society. He is also interested in history. Among sports, he plays tennis most often. He also greatly enjoys riding.

Her Majesty enjoys playing the piano and harp, as well as doing embroidery, weaving and other handicrafts. She is also known for her love of literature and flowers. Her favourite sport is tennis. Their Majesties first became acquainted on the tennis courts.

Their Majesties have two sons and a daughter. In spite of their busy lives with many official duties, they raised their children on their own, a departure from imperial tradition. They have tried to spend as much time as possible with their family in order to maintain close ties. Their constant visits to the Imperial Palace together with their children gave the late Emperor and the Empress Dowager much joy.

The Late Emperor and the Empress Dowager

His late Majesty Emperor Hirohito (posthumously Emperor Showa) was born in Tokyo on April 29, 1901 and died on January 7, 1989. He reigned just over 62 years after ascending to the throne on December 25, 1926. His life of 87 years and eight months made him Japan's longest living emperor. He was also the longest-reigning emperor in Japanese history.

Her Majesty the Empress Dowager Nagako, the eldest daughter of the late Prince Kuni, was born in Tokyo on March 6, 1903. She studied at

Gakushuin Girls' School. She is very fond of music and Japanese style painting, and is considered an accomplished artist in both fields. She also enjoys composing poetry and practising calligraphy. After her marriage in January 1924, she carried out her duties as empress until the last year of the late Emperor's life. Since January 1987 she no longer attends official occasions for reasons of health. At a press conference on the occasion of the 60th year of his reign, the late Emperor said of the Empress Dowager that he had shared joys and sorrows with her.

The Crown Prince

His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito (also known as Prince Hiro), the eldest son of Their Majesties, was born in Tokyo on February 23, 1960. He graduated from the Department of History in the Faculty of Letters of Gakushuin University in March 1982 and went on to take the first part of the doctoral course in history at the School of Humanities of Gakushuin University, specialising in the medieval history of Japan.

In July 1983 he went to England and entered the Graduate School of the University of Oxford the following October. At Merton College he studied commodity transport on the Thames in the latter half of the eighteenth century. He took the opportunity of his vacation to travel throughout Europe, and he visited various places in North America on his way home to Japan in October 1985. After his return to Japan, he resumed his studies at the Graduate School of Gakushuin University and in March, 1988, he obtained his MA. Since then he has been there as a researcher to study the medieval history of Japan.

The Court rituals marking his coming-of-age were held at the Imperial Palace on February 23, 1980. Since then, he has taken part in various imperial functions and officially attends many events. He has also made official visits to many countries. While his father was away on a state visit to the United States of America in October, 1987 during the illness of the late Emperor Hirohito, he temporarily took over the Emperor's duties in matters of state.

He is fond of music and plays the viola and violin. As for sports, he likes mountain climbing and is a member of the Japanese Alpine Club. He also plays tennis very often.

Other Members of the Imperial Family

Their Majesties' second son, Prince Fumihito, who has the title of "Aino-miya", was born

on November 30, 1965. He graduated from Gakushuin University in March 1985 and began his studies at St. John's College at University of Oxford in October 1988. Following his graduation from Gakushuin University, he has paid official visits to foreign countries and is undertaking official duties in society at home. The daughter, Princess Sayako, who has the title of "Nori-no-miya", was born on April 18, 1969. She is currently a student at Gakushuin University.

The late Emperor and the Empress Dowager have five other children: Prince Hitachi and four daughters, all of whom

are married. Prince Hitachi graduated from Gakushuin University in 1958, and since then has devoted himself to the study of biology. Like his father, he married Miss Hanako Tsuguru, daughter of a former count, in September 1964. The couple visit many parts of the country to take part in various ceremonies related to national activities in the fields of culture, education, sports, and social welfare. They have also undertaken a number of goodwill tours abroad. The four married daughters are the late Mrs. Morihito Higashikuni (former Princess Teru), Mrs. Toshimichi Takatsukasa (former Princess Taka), Mrs. Takamasa Ikeda

(former Princess Yori) and Mrs. Hisanaga Shimazu (former Princess Suga).

Other members of the imperial family include Princess Chichibu, Princess Takamatsu, and Prince and Princess Mikasa. Prince Mikasa is a younger brother of the late Emperor. (Prince Chichibu and Prince Takamatsu, both younger brothers of the late Emperor, are deceased.)

Younger members of the imperial family include Prince and Princess Tomohito of Mikasa, Prince Katsura, and Prince and Princess Takamado (the three princes are sons of Prince Mikasa).

Governmental Structure

Continued from page 10

Of these, 300 are chosen according to the small electoral district system, by which just 1 person is elected from each district. The other 200 are chosen as per a proportional representation system whereby seats are distributed to preferred party members according to the proportion of the vote received by the party. Members of the House of Representatives are elected for 4-year terms, but the Cabinet may dissolve the House of Representatives before the end of a full term.

One must be at least 30 years old to be elected to the House of Councillors, whose number of

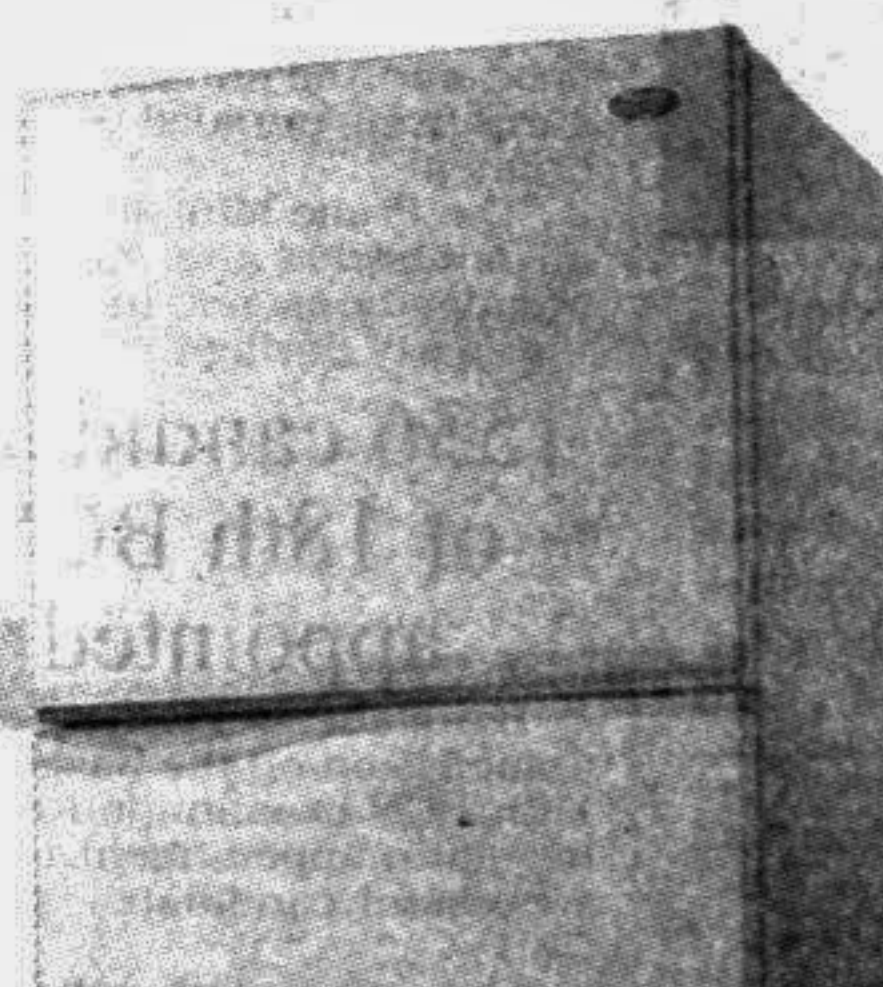
members is 252. Of these, 100 seats are filled on a proportional representation system and the remaining 152 are filled according to the electoral district system. All members are chosen for 6-year terms. Half of the total number are chosen every 3 years. Members of the House of Councillors remain in their positions whether or not there is a dissolution of the House of Representatives.

In recent years, one can note a declining proportion of people who exercise their right to vote in elections. Although it was the first election under the new constituency system — a combination of 300 single-seat constituencies and proportional representation for 200 members — only 59.7 per cent of registered voters cast their ballots for the House of Representatives election on October 1996, which is the smallest percentage on record. In recent years many registered voters have chosen to give up party affiliations with the result that the percentage of people who claim no party preference is growing. As a means of increasing voter turnout on election days, it has been decided that polling places are to stay open 2 hours more, until 8:00 PM.

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News

'Forge strong unity against anti-liberation forces'

BRAHMANBARIA, Dec 22: State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed today urged all pro-liberation forces to forge a strong unity against 'growing activities of the anti-liberation forces' to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh as dreamt by millions of martyrs, reports BSS.

Addressing as chief guest the launching ceremony of the Daily Titashkantha here, Prof Abu Sayeed said the anti-liberation forces, ultra revolutionaries and the elements involved in killings and conspiracies have now become united to foil the country's independence and democracy.

He alleged that these forces, under the leadership of Opposition Leader, have also united to undermine the spirit of the Liberation War and to block the onward march of the country. The state minister called upon the people to resist their evil design and build up a strong resistance against them.

Prof Abu Sayeed pointed out that a section of these people are trying to restore the Pakistani-style fundamentalist politics to push the society backward. He also alleged that the Leader of the Opposition has now started indecent politics involving the national mosque.

Prof Abu Sayeed said Baitul Mukarram is our National Mosque and it is the sacred duty of the people, including the government, to maintain sanctity

of this mosque. "Adequate steps have been taken to keep the premises of the mosque free from all political activities," he said.

Urging all to avoid politics inside the national mosque, the state minister said pious Muslims would automatically resist any kind of conspiracy centering Baitul Mukarram Mosque. The government in the greater interest of the people has already identified some areas for holding public meetings," he said, "but some political groups try to hold public rallies in the (Baitul Mukarram) mosque defying the rights of the pious Muslims."

The state minister said that Begum Khaleda Zia should make apology to the nation as she has hurt the sentiment of the religious minded people by threats of general strikes in the holy month of Ramadan.

Presided over by adviser of the daily Muhammad Musa, the launching ceremony was also addressed by former deputy minister Humayan Kabir, Awami League leader Lutful Haq Sachchu, Additional District Commissioner of Dhaka District Mizanur Rahman and Editor of the daily Ibrahim Khan Sadat.

Prof Abu Sayeed said the present government has ensured the freedom of the press as well as the freedom of expression and the right of voting of the people.

3 die in separate incidents

By Staff Correspondent
Three persons died in separate incidents in the city on Monday, police and hospital sources said.

Rezaul, a construction worker, died when he fell from the fourth floor of a under construction building at Lake Circus, Kalabagan, in the morning.

Fatally injured Rezaul was sent to the DMCH where he died soon after his admission to the hospital.

In another incident, a young housewife reportedly committed suicide at her residence at Sher-e-Bangla Public Works colony on Monday night.

The victim identified as Helena Akther, 20, wife of Habibur Rahman, killed herself by hanging.

Police recovered the body of the victim and sent it to DMCH for autopsy.

Relatives said that she committed suicide as a sequel to family feud.

The other person, Malek, a fruit vendor, died from overdosing at New Market in the city on Monday night. He was sent to the DMCH where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Nirmul Committee to observe 'Nat'l Hatred Day'

By Staff Correspondent
The Ekkattur Ghatik Dal Nirmul Committee will observe the 'National Hatred Day' on December 29 across the country.

This was decided at a meeting of the city unit of the committee held at its office with city convenor Sculptor Raza in the chair, said a press release yesterday.

The Nirmul Committee or the Committee for Elimination of Killers and Collaborators of 1971 has been observing the day since 1991 after the Jamaat-e-Islami declared Golem Azam as Ameer of the party that opposed the War of Liberation.

The release said the Jamaat violating the Constitution of the country declared foreign national Golem Azam as Ameer of the party on December 29 in 1991.

The meeting was addressed by Kurshid Alam Swapan, Kamal Hossain Badal, RN Basu, Mostafa Galib Samir, Masud Ahmed, Ranjan Das Shibu, Wulailah Rintu, Rafiqul Islam, Pulak Chowdhury, Khaled Ahmed, Saifulah, Abdullah Hil-Safi, Ahmed Didarul Kabir and Shamsul Islam.



Police seen evicting hawkers from the footpath adjoining the Baitul Mukarram Mosque premises yesterday.

— Star photo

Algerian envoy calls on FM

Algerian Ambassador in Dhaka Aissa Seferdjeli called on Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad at his office yesterday, reports UNB.

During the meeting, they exchanged views on matters of mutual interests of the two countries.

BMSSS observes Victory Day

Bangladesh MuktiJoddha Smriti Sangrashkan Sangsad (BMSSS) has observed a week-long programme recently to mark the anniversary of Victory Day, says a press release.

In observance of the Victory Day, BMSSS placed wreaths at graves of the martyrs, offered fatiha, and garlanded the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Among other programmes, the Sangsad also held a discussion in the city. Discussants strongly raised the issue of war-crime and said movement would be launched if not a trial is undertaken.

With BMSSS chairman M Ubedur Rahman Chowdhury in the chair, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Shashanka Majumdar, Ziaul Haq Kaari, Nazul Islam Chowdhury, Al Maizbhandary, Ibne Aziz Chowdhury, Shishir Chandra Mandal, and Nikhil Chandra Ray.

2 hurt in Feni bomb blasts

FENI, Dec 22: At least two persons were seriously injured in bomb explosions at Kazirbag here today, police said, reports BSS.

The bombs reportedly exploded in the house of one Moslem Mia injuring his wife Rahima Khatoun and her daughter Hadisa, 9, seriously.

The injured were later admitted to Feni hospital. A case was filed with Feni police.

Five major rivers changing their courses

PANCHAGARH, Dec 22: Five major rivers flowing through the northern districts are changing their courses in their land of origin in India, reports APB.

This is due to commissioning of the Teesta Barrage in India and unilateral withdrawal of waters, specially during the dry season, an Executive Engineer of the Water development Board told APB recently.

The rivers are Karotoa, Mahananda, Atrai, Teesta and Dharala. All these rivers have been losing their navigability also. He also said that vast lands in the northern region are facing desertification as a result of the massive and unilateral withdrawal of waters by India.

Kachi-Kanchar Mela to celebrate birth anniversary of poet Jasimuddin, Zainul

The central Kachi-Kanchar Mela will celebrate the birth anniversary of Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin and poet Jasimuddin on December 29 and January 1, respectively, reports BSS.

On the occasion of the 84th birth anniversary of Shilpacharya, a children's painting competition has been arranged at the Institute of Fine Arts, Shahbag at 9:30 am on December 29. Children aged between 3 and 15 have been invited to join the competition with their painting materials (except paper). They can draw a picture on any subject using any medium.

On the occasion of the 96th birth anniversary of poet Jasimuddin, a children's recitation competition of the poems of poet Jasimuddin will be held at Kachi-Kancha Bhaban (37/A, Segun Bagicha) at 9:30 am on January 1.

Children of 3 to 14 years of age have been invited to join the competition. Interested competitors are advised to enlist their names, along with the names of guardians, date of birth, school and class, full address, phone no (if any), etc with the central Kachi-Kanchar Mela, 37/A, Segun Bagicha, Dhaka-1000. Phone 414535.



BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia seen at an Iftar party with the Musallis and Islamic thinkers at her Minto Road residence yesterday.

— Star photo

Discussion on 'economy in next millennium'

The economic challenges for the developing countries and more particularly the least developed ones will be quite challenging in the next millennium, but a nation like Bangladesh could prosper provided certain basic requirements are met as far as possible, speakers at a roundtable discussion said in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The discussion on 'Bangladesh economy in the next millennium' was organised by the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) at its auditorium. The discussants mainly focussed on the prospects of Bangladesh in the economic and business arena and increasing trade relations with the outside world especially with the European nations.

W E Schramm, Ambassador of Germany and Dean of the Envoys of the European countries, and Michael Drury, the Ambassador of the Commission of the European Communities were the main speakers at the roundtable. DCCI President R Maksud Khan presided.

German Ambassador said the economy of Bangladesh looks good despite several problems and laid emphasis on rooting out corruption and unnecessary red-tapism for speedy economic progress. He also called for political stability for attaining all-round economic development.

The EU Ambassador said trade between Bangladesh and the EU is on the increase and added that euro could give a boost to the trade when introduced.

The speakers were of the view that Bangladesh needs better management and proper utilisation of the resources like manpower to achieve the desired progress in the economic field.

Migratory birds start coming

NETROKONA, Dec 22: Migratory birds, our flying guests in winter, have been crowding the northern parts of Netrokona district, reports BSS.

Flocks of different types of birds, locally known as Dighari, Khaligari, Sarails, Balihans and Pankouri in hundreds and thousands have been pouring in the marshes and swamps in the region around the Garo hilly region under Durgapur and Kalkamanda thanas of the district.

According to the naturalists, the migratory birds come to the Garo hill during the winter season flying from the ice-fields in Siberia. Thousands of kilometers north off here, to escape the biting cold.

While making a day-long trip to the Garo hills on December 19, BSS Netrokona district correspondent Faqirul Huq saw for himself that the area had turned into a heavenly abode of the guest birds. Some of the mi-

gratory birds were seen sauntering cheerfully on the sandy fields, which have emerged on the river Sumeswaris and some were catching small fishes from the water below. Others were seen chirping or flying in the air from the row of trees at the top of Garo hills. The scene was attracting the travellers and local people.

Talking to the BSS correspondent, local people alleged that natural movement of the guest birds was being hindered by the bird hunters. They also complained that a section of professional bird hunters used to catch the guest birds daily for selling them at the local haats and bazars despite the government ban on bird hunting.

They underlined the need for intervention of law enforcing agencies to ensure the safe stay of the guest birds in their temporary winter home in the Garo hilly region.



Annual prize giving ceremony and cultural programme '98 of Lycium International School was held recently at the school premises. M Mahbubuzzaman, former minister & cabinet secretary and Muhammad Ashrafal Hoque, Principal, Holy Child Public School & College and Holy Child International School attended as chief and special guests respectively.