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Independence Day Award 2000 announced

The government has announced the names of ten distinguished personalities for the Independence Day Award 2000 for their outstanding contributions in different spheres of national life, reports UNB.

The recipients are: Maulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish (Independence and Liberation War — posthumous), Major General M A Rab (Independence and Liberation War — posthumous), Sardar Fazlul Karim (Education), Syed Shamsul Huq (Literature), M Shahabuddin (Fine Arts), Sultana Kamal Khuku (Sports — posthumous), Binode Bihari Chowdhury (Social Welfare), Ustad Khurshid Khan (Music), Afif Roy (Music) and Roknuzzaman Khan Dadabhai (Children Organiser — posthumous).

Each award carries a gold medal, Tk 50,000 and a certificate.

Sharif's trial
Army chief behind the plane hijack, says defence

KARACHI, Mar 25: Deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif's lawyer argued today that his client faces a possible death sentence was in fact orchestrated by the army chief, reports AP.

Sharif and six others, including his younger brother Shahbaz, are on trial on charges of hijacking, terrorism, attempted murder and kidnapping. The prosecution has asked for the death sentence.

Sharif's defense will wind up its arguments on Monday and the verdict and the sentence is expected within one week.

"Musharraf told the pilot not to land until his loyal army was in control of the Karachi airport," argued Sultan.

Sharif is accused of trying to prevent a passenger plane, which was returning Musharraf to Pakistan, from landing in southern Karachi on Oct 12 — the same day the military took power in Pakistan.

While the Pakistan International Airlines plane circled Karachi, the army was taking power on the ground in protest of a decision by Sharif to dismiss Musharraf and replace him with a junior general.

The aircraft eventually landed, but with only seven minutes of fuel remaining.

Backlog of cases eroding basis of judicial system

Chief Justice observes at seminar in city

Chief Justice Latifur Rahaman said yesterday backlog of cases is eroding the foundation of the country's judicial system, reports UNB.

Stressing the need for training, Rahaman said judges must be conversant with the procedural law to reduce the backlog.

The Chief Justice was speaking as the chief guest at a seminar on "Curriculum Development for Training of Judges" at the Judicial Training Institute.

Rahman said delay-reduction is impossible without planning, cooperation, continuous monitoring and repeated adjustment and the refinement of planning.

Court administration and case management must be done by the subordinate judges to evoke dynamism, commitment and motivation in court officials," he said.

He said training programme should be more practical and the curriculum must be more specific in keeping with the needs of the time.

Rahman emphasised the need to include in the curriculum some modern subjects, such as constitutional law, human rights, consumer protection, the Arbitration Act and environmental law.

Judges must also have a sound knowledge of the English language, he said.

Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru stressed the need for regular and strict supervision and monitoring of the subordinate judiciary by the High Court to help deliver quick and qualitative justice.

The minister said the cur-

riculum should be developed so that trainee judges can develop the skills and expertise they need to deliver quick, qualitative and inexpensive justice.

He urged trainee judges to use their powers carefully. Otherwise the improper use of discretionary power might undermine the integrity and credibility of the judiciary.

Dr N R Madhava Menon, a member of the Law Commission of India, and Consultant Resource person for Curriculum Development under Technical Assistance for Capacity Enhancement of the Judicial Sector Project of the World Bank, submitted his preliminary report for discussion at the seminar.

The unidentified youth and four or five accomplices allegedly went to the village of Moga, which is inhabited mainly by tribals and dragged a young woman out of her house at around 3 am. When the victim screamed, locals rushed to the scene, caught one of the attackers and stabbed him to death after cutting off his penis.

Police recovered the body at the scene, a place near Fatikchhari-Sitakunda border, and sent to morgue for autopsy.

The 1999 Independence Day Awards go to Abdus Samad Azad (Independence and Liberation War), Prof Rashid Uddin Ahmed (Medical Science), Prof A Q M Bazlul Karim (Education—posthumous), Prof A F Salauddin Ahmed (Education), Sikander Abu Zafar (Literature—posthumous), Prof Mohammad Kibria (Fine Arts), Begum Badrunessa Ahmed (Social Service—posthumous), Kalmi Sharafi (Music), Fazlur Rahman Khan (Architecture—posthumous), Mazharul Islam (Architecture) and Brojen Das (Sports—posthumous).

Besides a certificate, the award carries a gold medal and Tk 25,000 for each recipient.

The Prime Minister said this government has established rights of the people and established the truth that people are the only source of power.

She said the people were ignored for last two decades and their fundamental rights snatched. But the present government, she said, has established the voting rights of the people and restored a system under which power will now be changed "through ballot, not bullet."

Hasina said "Accountability and transparency cannot exist without democracy. Real development of the people is also not possible without democracy."

For the last two decades, the history of the liberation war was distorted in all possible ways, she alleged and said the present government stopped the process by establishing the spirit and values of liberation war in all spheres of life.

Bangladesh was born by shedding lots of blood, she said and recalled the supreme sacrifice of the freedom fighters and the people of the country.

She also recalled the contribution and sacrifice of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman, four national leaders, and others who laid down their lives for Bangladesh.

Locals said rival extortionists might have hands in the fire as part of their ongoing war over control of the garment waste trade.

Kochi, joint convenor of the



Solidarity: Token hunger strike by the members of martyred freedom fighters' families on the premises of Mukti Juddha Jadughar in the city yesterday in support of Humayun Ahmed's programme in Sylhet today. (Above) students of the Shahjalal varsity residing in Dhaka brought out a procession protesting politics over the university. —Star photo

1000 shanties gutted at Agargaon slum

By Staff Correspondent

More than 1,000 shanties and 20 grocery stores were gutted in two incidents of fire yesterday.

One blaze occurred at Agargaon, Mohammadpur, at the other broke out at Shantibagh, Motijheel.

The fire at the Agargaon BNP Basti (slum), which originated from a stove at about noon, affected 1,000 shanties and 20 grocery stores. Fire fighters rushed to the scene and doused the blaze at about 2:45 pm.

The fire at Shantibagh, which also originated from a stove around 3:41 pm, affected 20 slums. It was extinguished by 4:30 pm.

The Darogar Tek and Comilla Basti areas of the BNP slum were totally destroyed by the blaze. The Shahid Basti was only partially affected, said police and witnesses.

The shanties had bamboo fence walls and tin shed roofs.

Several people were injured, but no casualties or missing persons were reported.

Meanwhile, two AL-backed organisations, the Shechcha Shebha League and the Jubo League, clashed early yesterday at the Mirpur site of the fire that destroyed 200 shanties Friday afternoon.

Locals said rival extortionists might have hands in the fire as part of their ongoing war over control of the garment waste trade.

Kochi, joint convenor of the

Shechcha Shebha League, led one of the groups, while Mamun, a member of the Jubo League, led the other, they alleged.

MP Kamal Majumder and Mayor Mohammad Hanif visited the site yesterday, witnesses added.

Majumder said he distributed relief goods to the 200 families affected by the blaze. Government relief will reach the area shortly after offices reopen on Monday, he said.

When asked about the clashes, Majumder said he was not aware of any such incident, even though he was allegedly attacked by a gang on motorbikes led by S M Mannan Kochi on March 1.

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Kochi, joint convenor of the

Case under PSA: CCC Mayor's name dropped

RAJSHAHI, Mar 25: Charge sheet of the case under Public Safety Act involving Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu was submitted today, dropping his name, reports UNB.

The official said that Musharraf promised to use his influence with the Taliban to solve the problem of bin Laden, one of America's 10 most wanted men.

Pakistan is one of only three countries which recognise the self-styled Islamic emirate of Afghanistan which the Taliban declared after seizing power in 1996.

US officials said that Clinton pressed Musharraf to ensure a fair trial for deposed prime minister Sharif, who faces a possible death sentence on charges of attempted murder and hijacking on the day that Musharraf seized power.

Clinton also asked Musharraf to ensure that Sharif was not executed if found guilty. Musharraf has said he is not vindictive and cannot pre-judge the verdict.

Clinton flew here after five days visiting Pakistan's nuclear neighbour, India. Clinton had considered skipping Pakistan in protest of the military regime, but decided to make a quick stop to raise US concerns with a country that once served as a front-line ally in confrontations with the Soviet Union.

Unlike in India, where roads were clogged with onlookers as the president passed by, on his way to meet President Rafiq Tarar, the motorcade route was eerily deserted today.

Zimbabwe 286 for 9

Sports Reporter

Zimbabwe were 286 for nine at lunch on the second day of the second and last Test against West Indies yesterday.

Batsmen at the crease were Stuart Carlisle 27 and Henry Olonga 17.

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Clinton
From Page 1

Administration officials said the meetings produced no breakthroughs on the points the administration found the most troubling — a timetable for national elections, a scaling back of Pakistan's nuclear programme and an easing of tensions in divided Kashmir.

Still, both sides ended up with a clearer view of each other's positions, said White House spokesman Joe Lockhart.

Unless democracy is restored, and if the conflict over divided Kashmir continues, there is a danger that Pakistan may grow even more isolated, draining more resources away from the people," Clinton said.

The presence of scores of rifle-toting military and police during Clinton's visit drove home the reality of Pakistan's military regime.

Lockhart said Clinton told Musharraf to wind down tension with India over the disputed Kashmir region by respecting the Line of Control (LoC) dividing Indian and Pakistan-ruled Kashmir and upholding the primacy of dialogue.

He spoke a few hours after the Pakistani military accused Indian forces of shelling a village in Pakistani Kashmir across the LoC, the latest in a series of violent incidents which take place weekly in the region.

The US president also stressed Washington's abhorrence of terrorism, of which Pakistan is accused by India because of its support for Kashmir militants battling Indian rule of Kashmir, and for ties with the Taliban administration in Afghanistan.

US officials said Clinton pressed Pakistan to use its influence with the Taliban to secure the expulsion of Saudi-born terrorist suspect Osama bin Laden, who is accused with masterminding 1998 bombings of US embassies in Africa.

The official said that Musharraf promised to use his influence with the Taliban to solve the problem of bin Laden, one of America's 10 most wanted men.

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