

VICTORY DAY Tight security to ensure trouble-free celebration

UNB, Dhaka

A four-layer foolproof security bulwark backed by dog squads and sophisticated detective machines will be in place for trouble-free celebration of the Victory Day on December 16.

All the venues for the occasion, including the National Mausoleum at Savar, Bangabandhu Stadium and Bangabhaban, will be put under an unassailable security cover on the eve of the Victory Day, officials told UNB on Monday.

Meanwhile, an inter-ministerial security meeting on the observance of the Victory Day was held at the Home Ministry yesterday with State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar in the chair.

At each venue, four-layer checkpoints will be put up with security men checking people with sweeper, archway and metal detector. Besides, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) dog squad and women police will be on duty. The special deployment will begin after December 10.

The officials said the meeting proposed to limit the duration of children-juvenile rally at the Bangabandhu Stadium to one and half an hour "for security reasons". Raising V-day arches will be discouraged.

Secretaries of the Ministries of Home Affairs and the Liberation War Affairs, IGP and DGs of Rab, BDR, Ansar, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner and other senior officials were present at the meeting.

Babar would not specifically say what good news he wants to give the nation when recurrent bomb attacks and threats by suspected Islamist militants wreck people's nerves.

"Those supplying explosives to militants are being caught," he told reporters after the meeting.

"More good news awaits...you will be knowing about it when time comes," Babar said.

Democracy Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation observes 'Democracy Day' today, commemorating the fall of autocratic ruler HM Ershad who stepped down on this day in 1990 in the face of a mass upsurge.

General Ershad, who grabbed power through a military coup on March 24, 1982, handed over power to a neutral interim government ending his nine years of autocratic rule.

The 1991 general election that followed made way for the 12th Amendment that reintroduced the parliamentary system of democracy. The general election was held under the first ever non-party caretaker government led by then Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed.

Different political parties and various socio-cultural organisations have taken elaborate programmes to mark the day.

President, prime minister and opposition leader issued separate messages calling for united efforts to further consolidate the dearly earned democracy.

In his message, President Iajuddin Ahmed greeted the countrymen on the occasion saying the nation remembers with great admiration the struggle and sacrifices of those who fought and laid down their lives for the restoration of democracy.

Iajuddin urged all to play a united role in taking the country forward to development and prosperity through establishing the hard earned democracy on a firm footing.

In her message, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia paid respect to the democracy martyrs and also prayed for salvation of the departed souls.

"The democracy earned in exchange of lot of sacrifices should be consolidated at any cost. Everyone should remain alert against the enemies of democracy," she said.

The nine-year long movement came to a success on the day, and democracy, freedom of speech and constitution was restored, she added.

In a statement, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina said the 6th of December is a memorable day for the people and that people would foil all conspiracies against democracy by reactionary forces.

Hasina paid homage to those who laid down their lives to establish people's democratic rights.

Bangladeshi shot by BSF

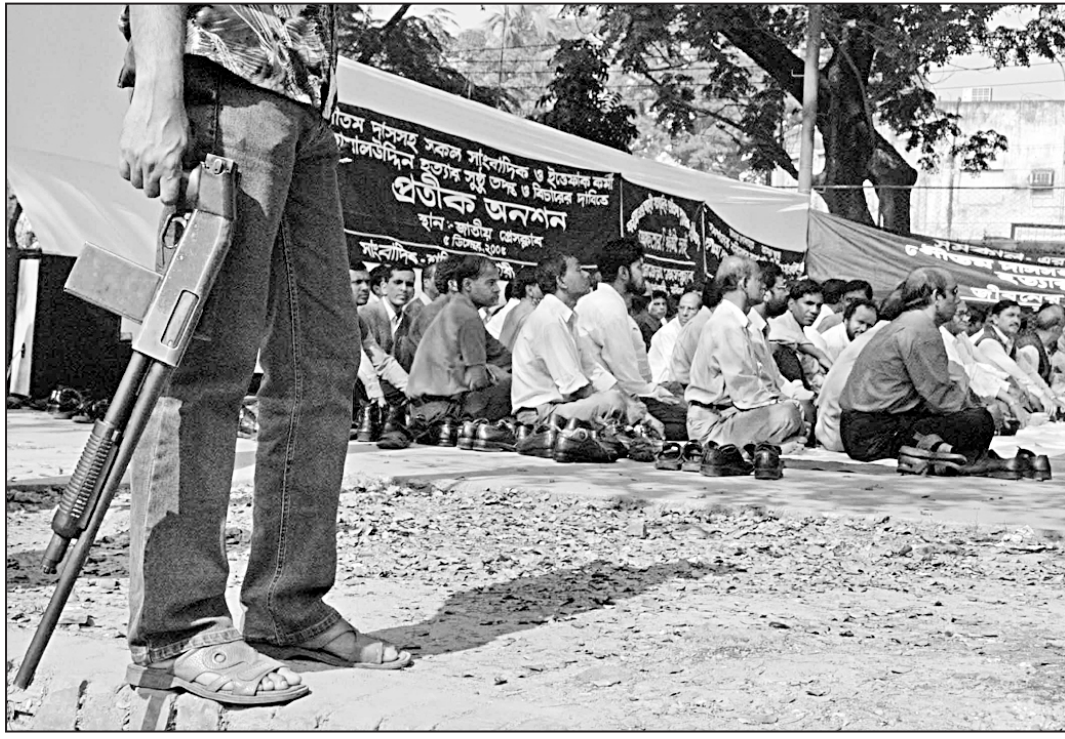
BSS, Chapainawabganj

Troops of the Border Security Force (BSF) of India on Sunday night shot a Bangladeshi farmer at Singnagar under Shibganj upazila.

Sources said the injured was identified as Bashir Ahmed, 27, son of Abdur Razzaque of Sahapara village. The victim went to his farm land some 100 yards inside the Bangladesh from Singnagar border pillar no-168 for irrigation.

BSF men of the Daulatpur camp fired two bullets at him.

Bashir was rushed to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.



Sangbadik Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SSKOP) observes a three-hour token hunger strike at the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding trial of the killers of journalists, including Gautam Das.

Third extraordinary OIC Summit begins Dec 7

PM leaves for Makkah today

REZAUL KARIM

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will leave Dhaka for Makkah this afternoon to attend the third "extraordinary" summit of the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

Convened at the initiative of Saudi King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, the December 7-8 summit will adopt a 10-year Programme of Action to restructure and revitalise the organization.

The summit will adopt a new OIC charter and consider the recommendations of the Commission of Eminent Persons (CEP) comprising members from 17 Muslim countries, and Makkah Forum of Scholars and Intellectuals, foreign ministry officials said.

The summit venue is Al-Safa Palace, the Royal Guest House overlooking the Ka'aba in Makkah, the holiest city of the Muslims.

Khaleda Zia will lead a 37-member Bangladesh delegation at the summit where most of the kings,

heads of state and government of the Muslim states will attend.

She will hold bilateral meetings with a number of her counterparts on the sidelines of the summit.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan already left for Makkah to attend today's OIC foreign ministers' meeting in Jeddah, where they will approve the 10-year draft plan to be submitted for approval by the heads of state and government tomorrow.

This summit aims at restoration of the Muslim nations' self-confidence, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal yesterday said, adding that this time scholars prepared a detailed report of all the member states' problems and predicaments that will be presented as the agenda, a report of Arab News said.

The report examines the future challenges and proposes comprehensive solutions that take into consideration political, economic, social and cultural aspects of the Muslim Ummah.

The summit will focus on economic issues and challenges facing the Ummah and give attention to the reduction of poverty and the increase of trade and economic integration between Muslim countries.

A proposal for expanding the OIC budget will be presented in the summit, officials said.

Another major economic challenge for the Muslim countries that are WTO members has resulted from the limitation on economic activities that the World Trade Organisation imposes.

The establishment of crisis funds and funds for the poor by the Islamic Development Bank will also be taken into consideration during the summit.

Around 1,600 journalists from around the world will cover the summit and a well-equipped media centre has been set up for the event.

The Saudi authorities have tightened security in and around Makkah ahead of the conference.

Five more JOCVs arrive

UNB, Dhaka

Five more members of Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) arrived here yesterday in order to extend cooperation in such sectors as primary education, physical education, computer technique and vocational training.

They will work in public organisations for the next two years. Later, the new JOCV members called on Ambassador of Japan Matsushiro Horiguchi at the Chancery.

Ambassador Horiguchi hoped that they would fully demonstrate their talents and skills for the benefit of Bangladesh.

At present, there are as many as 53 volunteers, all speaking the Bengali language, engaged in various activities throughout Bangladesh.

Jamaat loses

FROM PAGE 1 Jatya Party (Ershad) candidate Abul Malek Sarkar bagged....votes.

Our Dinajpur Correspondent reports: Around 65 percent voters cast their votes at 122 centres in Birganj and Kaharol upazilas.

Locals caught two people re-handed while they were distributing money among the voters asking them to cast their vote for the ruling alliance candidate. Later, army personnel picked them up. Some 50 people were held for false voting, police said.

The parliamentary seat fell vacant at the death of Jamaat lawmaker Abdullah Al Kafi who died on September 12.

In the 2001 national election, the four-party alliance candidate Kafi bagged 88,669 votes defeating AL candidate Abdur Rouf Chowdhury who polled 60, 197. Gopal, contesting with Jatya Party nomination, bagged 40, 621 votes.

The by-election was held almost peacefully. The voting took place from 8:00am to 4:00pm without any break and 2,33,818 voters were designated to franchise their rights.

Locals said people cast their votes against the alliance government to express their dissatisfaction over the performance of the coalition in the last four years.

The people are frustrated with the four-party government due to sky-rocketing prices of essentials and the alarming rise of militancy in the district, local said.

Six candidates contested the Dinajpur-1 by-polls. They are Aftab Uddin Molla, Monoranjan Shil Gopal, Abul Malek Sarkar, Nasirul Haq Rustom, Shibley Sadiq and Mohammad Sadeq.

Jalil gets bail in land grabbing case

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday granted anticipatory bail to Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil in a land grabbing case.

After hearing a petition filed by Jalil, a HC division bench comprising Justice MA Rashid and Justice ATM Fazle Kabir also issued a rule upon the government to show cause within four weeks as to why the petitioner should not be granted regular bail.

Abdul Jalil appeared before the court and sought bail in the case.

Rafiqul Islam Sarker, an assistant director of Rajuk, filed a land misappropriation case against Jalil and others with Matijheel police on November 17.

In the case, he alleged that Jalil, chairman of Mercantile Bank and some of its unknown officers in assistance of one Mustari Begum of Gulshan, have tried to possess a piece of land on plot no 3 of block no CWN(C) at Gulshan Avenue in the city through false documents.

Earlier, on November 15, Jalil obtained anticipatory bail in an abduction and land grabbing case filed by Mustari Begum, who is now an accused of this forgery case filed by Rajuk.

Advocate Abdul Baset Majumder, advocate Mahbubey Alam, advocate Sahara Khaton, advocate Yusuf Hossain Humayun, Advocate Jahangir Hossain Selim and advocate Azherullah Bhuiyan moved the petition before the court.

Consultation on community radio begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day national consultation on 'Community Radio in Bangladesh' begins in the city today in a bid to provide people at grassroots level with necessary information through radio.

Information Minister M Shamsul Islam will inaugurate the function as chief guest.

The consultation will be organised by Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC), The Forum for Development Journalism and Communication Studies (Focus), Mass Line Media Centre (MMC), Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) and Voice.

Unesco, UNDP and Unicef will support the event.

This was stated by the speakers at a press conference organised by the National Advisory Committee on Community Radio in Bangladesh at the National Press Club yesterday.

They said the community radio will provide locals with necessary information on trade, weather, agriculture, education, natural calamities and many more things to make their life more easier.

Citing the example of Nepal, Indonesia and the Philippines, the speakers said it is very common in many countries now a days and very economical to install and easy to operate.

Radio is very easy to carry, and people can keep it with them while working in the field, they added.

The speakers said the community radio is for people, run by people and owned by people too.

Transmitting programmes on local language is one of the greatest advantages of this radio, they added.

Kamrul Hassan Monju, chairman of the steering committee and executive director of MMC, SM Rezanul Alam, assistant communication officer of the Unicef, AHM Bazlur Rahman, chief executive officer of BNNRC, Ahmed Swapan Mahmud, executive director of Voice, Assistant Professor of Dhaka University Rubaiyat Ferdous from Focus, and Ichirio Miwazaya, programme officer of the Unesco, spoke at the press conference.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed will attend the concluding day programme as chief guest.



Death anniversary

Today is the 14th death anniversary of former chief justice Amin Ahmed, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and wellwishers are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Poor Kohinoor welcomes world's richest man

Bill Gates couple visit Brac programmes

UNB, Dhaka

Brac member Kohinoor Begum, a seamstress and mother of three residing in Sabujbagh, is perhaps the luckiest woman in Bangladesh in welcoming into her home world's richest man Bill Gates.

Gates, chairperson of Microsoft Corporation, the world leader in computer software, and wife Melinda Gates, visited Brac programmes at Uttar Mugda Para in the city yesterday morning.

FH Abed, founder and chairperson of Brac, accompanied the couple. The visit was part of a daylong trip to Bangladesh to meet several NGOs as well as representatives of the government.

Soon after the arrival, Gates made their way to a Brac Village Organisation (VO) site at Sabujbagh, where they were received by Brac Deputy Executive Director AMR Chowdhury.

Several senior members of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, along with journalists from the New York Times, Le Monde and other foreign newspapers, also accompanied the couple.

Gates and Melinda have shown keen interest in Brac approach to poverty reduction and took part in the weekly micro-finance meeting of the Muggdapara VO group, where they were informed of various income-generating activities being initiated by poor urban women using Brac loans.

With the help of Abed, the couple engaged the women borrowers in a lively discussion about their socio-economic condition.

While Melinda expressed awe at the members' commitment to repaying their loans on time, Gates was amused to learn that the women and not their husbands were the main providers for their families.

As part of its current focus on improving neonatal mortality in the developing world, the Gates Foundation is actively campaigning to raise awareness and provide support to initiative geared towards neonatal health.

Gates and Melinda also visited the Ante Natal Clinic conducted by a Brac Health Programme Organiser. The couple talked to several pregnant women present at the ANC about health and social issues related to pregnancy and newborns.

The couple also visited a local drug store to learn about the types and prices of medicines and immunization available in the country.

Before leaving the area, Gates and Melinda thanked the programme participants and appreciated Brac's initiatives to improve the condition of the poor in Bangladesh.



Artiste Shimul Yusuf speaks at the citizens' condolence meeting in memory of Shahadat Chowdhury, an eminent journalist and freedom fighter, at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday.

BNP rejects demand for resignation of govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP yesterday rejected the opposition's demand for resignation of the coalition government.

BNP General Secretary and LGRD Minister Abdur Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said it's nothing new, they have continuously been calling for the government to step down since the four-party alliance came to power in 2001. Instead of clamouring for the resignation, the opposition parties should rather sit down with the government and discuss all their demands and grievances, he observed.

Bhuiyan was addressing a meeting preparatory to the ruling party's grand rally slated for December 21 at Pallan Maidan.

He reiterated his call for the opposition to sit in a dialogue to resolve the problem of growing militancy in the country. He once again sought support from all political parties in fighting the menace of religious extremism.

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina at a press conference on December 4 rejected the prime minister's call for dialogue on ways to tackle militant activities and said immediate stepping down of the ruling coalition is the only way to stop the ongoing bomb terrorism in the country.

The LGRD minister said the government will continue detaining the suspected militants to contain violence irrespective of whether or not the opposition joins the dialogue.

If necessary the government may launch a combing operation across the country to arrest the culprits.

With Mannan Bhuiyan in the

chair, the meeting was held at his official residence. It was participated among others by Standing Committee Members Khandoker Delwar Hossain, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Khandker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, Vice-president Sarwari Rahman, Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, Joint Secretaries Abdullah Al-Noman, Mirza Abbas, Selima Rahman, and BNP leaders Amanullah Aman, Mofiqul Hasan Tripti and Imran Saleh Prince.

The meeting urged all BNP men to ensure a mammoth gathering at the Pallan Maidan on December 21. Some of the leaders proposed for arranging multi-media screens for those who may not be able to reach near the main podium.

BOMB BLASTS HC grants bail to 6 Sariakandi AL activists

BDNEWS, Bogra

Six Awami League (AL) leaders and activists of Sariakandi upazila got anticipatory bail from the High Court on Sunday in an alleged charge of bomb blasts at the villages of Chandina and Nawarpara.

A HC bench comprising Justice Abdur Rashid and Justice AKM Fazle Kabir granted the bail prayers for Sariakandi Sadar union AL general secretary Jahanul Islam and Jubo League President Rezaul Karim Thandu along with four others.

Shahadat an icon of patriotic journalism

Speakers tell citizens' condolence meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a citizens' condolence meeting yesterday paid rich tributes to Shahadat Chowdhury, an eminent journalist and freedom fighter, for his outstanding contribution to the nation.

They said the nation would always remember him for his progressive role in all important movements including liberation war.

Shahadat had inspired the people through his writings at times of national transition and difficult days of the country, they added.

The speakers said he was an icon of honest, objective and patriotic journalism.

In his death a vacuum has been created in the field of objective journalism which will be difficult to fulfill, they added.

The speakers said the country now badly needs a journalist like Shahadat to combat militancy and terrorism.

Dhaka University Teachers' Association President Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said Shahadat always carried out his war against communalism and fundamentalism through his writings.

"We can show our proper respect for him by strengthening our fight against the fanatics and working for the cause of liberation war," he said.

Eminent journalist Shahrier Kabir said Shahadat did not fail to identify the real enemies of the country and he gave a guideline for combating the fanatics and militants.

Awami League leader Asaduzzaman Nur MP said the country is now passing through a critical juncture and he could play a vital role to help overcome this crisis.

Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Journalist Kamal Lohani, Dr Jafarullah Chowdhury, Artist Rafiqun Nabi, Ramendra Majumder and Shahadat's wife Selina Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

The speakers prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and conveyed their sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

The condolence meeting was organised by Sammilita Sangskritik Jote at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city.

Jote General Secretary Golam Kuddus moderated the meeting.

Late Shahadat Chowdhury, who was the editor of the weekly Saptahik 2000 and fortnightly Anandodhara, passed away at the Birdem Cardiac Centre in the capital on November 28 at the age of 62.

14-party stages a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting killings by Islamist militants across the country.

WEATHER TODAY Dry weather likely UNB, Dhaka. Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 24 hours as of 6:00pm today. Light to moderate fog may also occur over the river basins of the country during morning. Met office said predicting slight fall in night temperature in the period. Highest temperature 30.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Teknaf and lowest 9.2 degree Celsius at Rajshahi. The sun sets in the capital at 5:11pm today and rises at 6:29am tomorrow. Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were: City/Town Temperature Humidity in Celsius percentage

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Max, Min, percentage. Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.