

PM assures support for FFs



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the installation and oath-taking ceremony of Bangladesh Freedom Fighters' Central Command Council-District and Upazila Commands at the Bangladesh Army Stadium in the city yesterday.

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said she does not want to see any freedom fighter leading a distressed and inhuman life and assured all out support of her government for their well-being.

"I don't want to see freedom fighters living inhuman life and passing their days in miserable condition while I am alive," she said.

The PM was addressing the installation and oath-taking ceremony of Bangladesh Freedom Fighters' Central Command Council-District and Upazila Commands at the Bangladesh Army Stadium in the city's Banani.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam was the special guest at the function chaired by State Minister for Liberation War Affairs AB Tajul Islam.

The PM directed the government offices and officials concerned to take necessary steps to mitigate the sufferings of the freedom fighters.

She also urged the freedom fighters to prepare lists for their respective areas mentioning names and addresses of the freedom fighters so that the government could take quick and necessary actions.

"We will build houses for the homeless, provide work and food. We will not leave any stone unturned for the welfare of the freedom fighters," Hasina said.

But she cautioned on people impersonating as freedom fighters and requested the genuine freedom fighters to remain alert in this connection.

"You (freedom fighters) are the great-est sons of the nation. We are here for you and we will provide all sorts of facilities

for you," she said.

In this regard, the PM mentioned that this time her government took steps to provide 30 percent quota of government jobs to the family members of the freedom fighters.

"In the past, this quota was reserved for the freedom fighters, but now we allocated that quota for the children and grandchildren of the freedom fighters," she said.

Earlier, the PM administered oath to the 6,431 office bearers of the Bangladesh Freedom Fighters' Central Command Council-District and Upazila Commands.

The PM said the government enhanced the allowances of freedom fighters from Tk 1,500 to Tk 2,000 and the number of beneficiaries to 150,000 from 125,000, increased their age in service by 2 years, provides ration to 7,838 war-wounded and martyred freedom fighters families and provided abandoned houses for these families.

Besides, she said, a 'Palli' (village) is being constructed for the freedom fighters.

At the outset of the programme, a one-minute silence was observed in memory of Bangbandhu, the four national leaders and martyred freedom fighters.

Chairman of the Bangladesh Freedom Fighters' Central Command Council Helal Morshed Khan Bir Bikram also spoke on the occasion.

Liberation War Affairs Ministry organised the function with assistance of the Bangladesh Freedom Fighters' Central Command Council.

West Bengal expertise sought for housing

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Visiting Housing and Public Works Minister Abdul Mannan Khan yesterday sought expertise of West Bengal state in housing projects in Bangladesh.

"Experience of companies and officials here will help us overcome the growing housing problem in Bangladesh," Khan told reporters after a meeting with West Bengal Urban Development Minister Asok Bhattacharya in Kolkata.

"Since we don't have sufficient land for construction, we have to go for vertical expansion. We need expertise in the area," said Khan,

who is heading an eight-member delegation.

He said they would meet ministers, agencies under the housing department and private companies developing housing projects in the state.

The delegation would also meet officials of the West Bengal Housing Infrastructure Development Company (WBHIDCO) to share their experience in developing New Town in Rajarhat area on the eastern fringe of Kolkata, Khan said.

Khan yesterday visited Salt Lake locality of Kolkata. He will also visit the New Town and meet Housing Minister Gautam Deb today. Khan arrived here on Tuesday.



Outgoing Italian Ambassador Itala Maria Marta Occhi makes a farewell call on Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office in the city yesterday.

Azimpur Old Friends Assoc rally tomorrow

METRO DESK

A grand rally on the eve of the reunion of Azimpur Old Friends Association will be held tomorrow.

The rally will start from the Garage Math, Party House, adjacent to the mazar in the locality at 9:30am.

Important and high-ranking government officials, former residents of the area, along with the present residents of Azimpur Colony will participate in the rally.

A group of freedom fighters, former residents of the colony, will also attend the rally.

Missing TV reporter found in Sirajganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The senior reporter of the Boishakhi TV, reported missing on Tuesday, was found near Ullapara railway station in Sirajganj yesterday.

Locals found Kamran Karim lying unconscious by Nagarbari-Bogra Highway around 4:15pm.

DB sources said local police recovered Kamran on receiving information from locals and gave him primary treatment.

After gaining consciousness, Kamran claimed some unidentified men forcibly picked him up in a microbus from Gulshan-1. He could not recall what happened next as he fell unconscious, police said.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Monirul Islam of DB told The Daily Star yesterday evening that a DB team had been sent to Ullapara to bring him to the capital.

Rab sources, however, said several calls were made from Kamran's cellphone to his wife's while he remained missing. Police are yet to know the identity of the caller.

Defamation case against Prothom Alo editor

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued summons upon the daily Prothom Alo editor and a reporter, asking them to appear before it on January 13 next year hours after Awami League lawmaker Kamal Ahmed Majumder filed a defamation case.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shahadat Hossain passed the order after hearing the case filed against Prothom Alo Editor Matiuur Rahman and reporter Arup Dutt on charges of publishing "a defamatory news" in the daily on October 25.

In the complaint, Kamal Majumder said that the daily had run a report on October 25 involving him on grabbing five kathas of land owned by Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital at Mirpur-14 in the city.

But the report was false, fabricated and concocted and it was published to defame him in the society as well as in the political arena, said the complainant.

Kamal Majumder also said he did not know where the land was situated. Moreover, he came to know that the hospital is not in possession of the land, but it is under the public works ministry. So, there is no scope for grabbing the land, the complainant added.

Suranjit hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suranjit Sengupta, co-chair of the special committee for amending country's constitution, was admitted to the city's Labaid Cardiac Hospital yesterday morning with irregular heartbeat problem.

He was admitted to the hospital's Coronary Care Unit around 8:45am.

Dr Baren Chakraborty, supervising Suranjit, told The Daily Star that he is suffering from 'atrial fibrillation' and now his condition stable.

'62pc psychiatric patients visit traditional healers'

DU CORRESPONDENT

With 16.1 percent of the country's adult population suffering from psychological disorders the government allocates only 0.44 percent for mental health in the budget, said speakers at a programme yesterday.

The study on 'Mental health and chronic physical illness: the need for continued and integrated care' also found that around 18 percent of Dhaka children are affected by mental illnesses.

The programme was organised by Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Society and Clinical Psychology Department of Dhaka University (DU) marking the 'World Mental Health Day 2010' at Teachers-Students Centre (TSC) of DU.

"There are eight institutions and 123 psychiatrists in the country catering to the needs of mental patients," said Zahir Uddin, general secretary of the society while presenting the research findings.

Social stigma, discrimination and lack of awareness further escalate identification and treatment of mental illnesses. Narrating the level of awareness about the disorder, he said a total of 62.37 percent psychiatric patients are taken to traditional healers (Kabiraj, Ojha and Hujur) by their caregivers.

Zahir, also associate professor of National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), suggested to improve the primary care services for controlling the psychiatric illness.

Dr Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, state minister for Ministry of Women and Children Affairs; Prof AAMS

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Mr. Serajul Huq
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Attention

This is to inform all the subscribers of Grameenphone that due to a scheduled maintenance work of submarine cable near Singapore, Internet service will remain unavailable on 29th October 2010 for 4 hours from midnight onwards. For the same reason, interruptions may also be noticed during following 4 days. We expect that uninterrupted service will be resumed by 2nd November 2010.

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