

# Air force base construction at Cox's Bazar soon: PM

UNB, Jessore Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina yesterday said construction work on a full-fledged air force base at Cox's Bazar to ensure security of maritime boundaries and other military and civil establishments will begin soon.

She urged Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) to imbue with the spirit of the War of Liberation and remain prepared to face any situation.

Addressing the Winter Graduation Parade Bangladesh Air Force at BAF Academy Parade Ground, she also asked members of the force to work with the people to turn Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021.

The parade was held marking the commissioning of No 62 Flight Cadet Course and No 9 Special Short Service Commission Course of BAF.

"I am sure the air force, possessing the spirit of the War of Liberation, will remain prepared to face any situation," she said.

Hasina asked the newly commissioned officers to protect the nation's independence and sovereignty, saying that a strong, professional and modern air force is a must for any sovereign country.

"I hope you will make ceaseless efforts for improving professional quality through practice and apply the basic training you have taken from the Air Force Academy."

Reminding that equipment of the air force is very expensive, she said, "You are going to take the responsibility of ensuring proper maintenance of these equipments."

Giving example of Bir Shrestha Shaheed Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman and Shaheed Sergeant Zahurul Haq, the PM said as followers of these heroes, the responsibility of safeguarding the national independence falls upon the young officers.

The PM said the government has taken various projects to modernise the air force.

As a part of the plans, she said process is underway to include modern war equipment to the air force and develop its infrastructure facilities.

"We have already taken steps to procure modern missiles capable of striking from land."

The PM announced that flying allowance of air force personnel would

be increased to Tk 5,000 from Tk 900.

Besides, she said the present government has already increased air force insurance to Tk 12 lakh from Tk 10 lakh.

Later on, the PM laid foundation stone of multi-storied Bangabandhu Complex to facilitate the young officers with all the modern training facilities.

Earlier, the PM was received by air force Chief Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman and Base Commander of the local base Group Captain M Mortuza Kamal.

The PM reviewed a smartly turned-out parade and took salute at the impressive march past. She handed over awards, certificates and flying badges among the Flight Cadets.

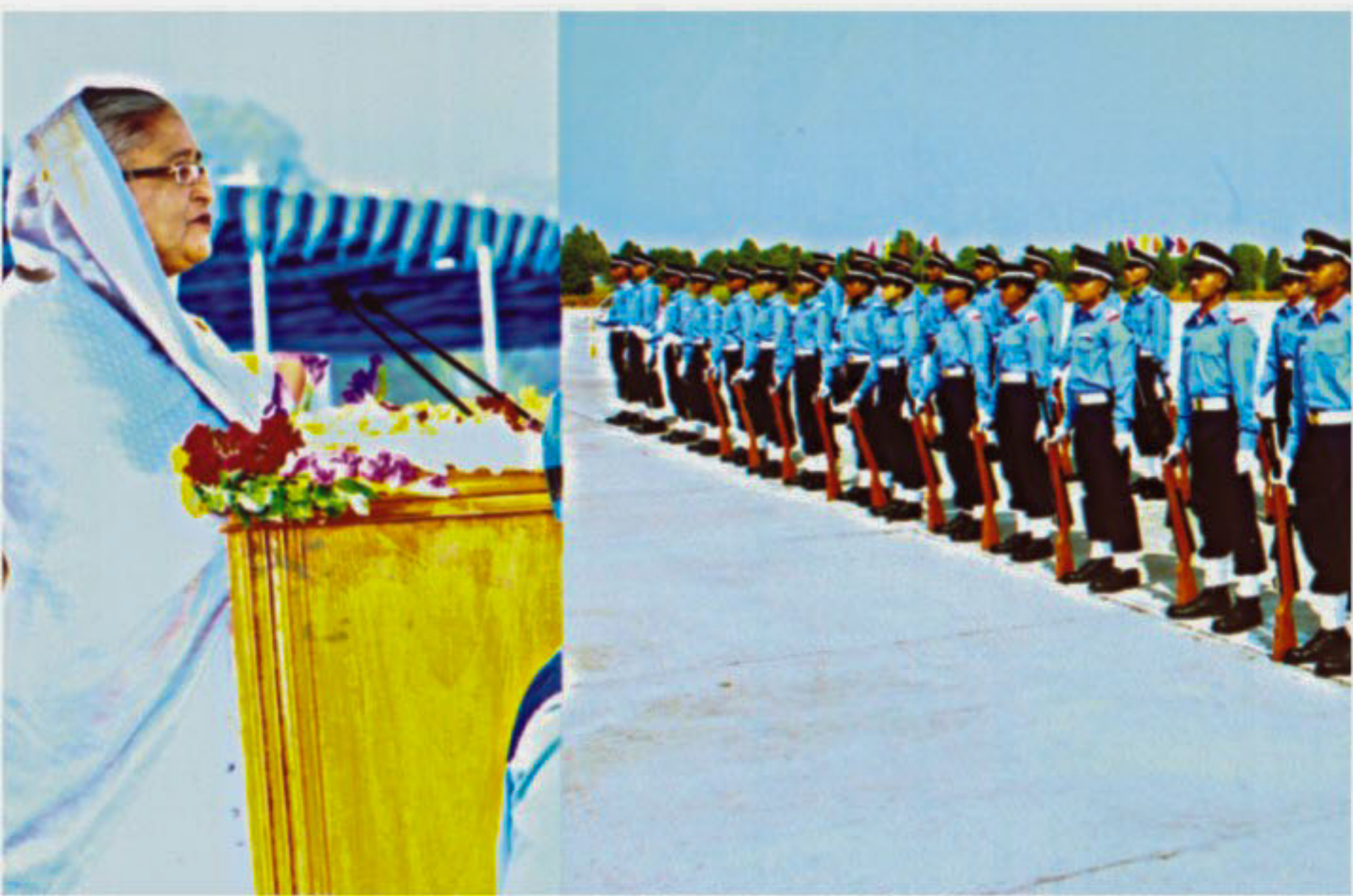
A total of 33 flight cadets including 10 female cadets were commissioned.

A spectacular fly past of different aircrafts of BAF Academy followed the parade.

Among others, ministers, advisers to the PM, high civil and military officials, diplomats of foreign mission in Bangladesh and parents and guardians of the cadets were present on the occasion.



Freedom fighter Ajit Rai from Hakimpur upazila of Dinajpur begins a hunger strike unto death at the base of Aparajeyo Bangla on Dhaka University campus from 10:00am yesterday demanding establishment of dignity, rights and honour of freedom fighters.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the newly commissioned officers at Winter Graduation Parade of Bangladesh Air Force at BAF Academy Parade Ground, Jessore yesterday.

## Housewife murdered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Husband and in-laws allegedly beat a housewife to death in city's Kadamtoli area early hours yesterday.

Deceased 35-year-old Shilpi alias Shahinur Sarker, her husband Ripon Sarker and their children lived at a house in Muradpur High School Road.

Shilpi's sister-in-law Lipi and others brought her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) around 1:30am yesterday where doctors declared her dead.

Lipi told DMCH doctors and staff that Shilpi committed suicide by taking poison.

Nurul Alam, father of the deceased, told this correspondent that Ripon and his brothers and sisters beat and strangled his daughter to death.

Alam also said Ripon married more than once, which resulted in quarrels between the two. He said Ripon, working in Saudi Arabia, came to the country on leave yesterday and again had a quarrel with Shilpi.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Kazi Ayubur Rahman of Kadamtoli Police Station told The Daily Star that they received allegation of murder. Police went to the spot and found a towel, which they assume, might have been used to strangle Shilpi.

The OC said they would be sure of the reason behind the death after autopsy.

Ripon's four siblings have been taken to the police station for interrogation while he is on the run.

## GONOSHASTHYA HOSPITAL A hospital for poor

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

It is a modern 250-bed hospital situated in the posh Dhanmondi area of the city.

The hospital's very location can be scary to the poor who can hardly afford exorbitant healthcare costs in the city.

In fact, the Gonoshasthya Nagar Hospital has broken a new ground in offering healthcare to people from all walks of life.

From street beggars to domestic aids and from petty clerks to top executives, the healthcare system at Gonoshasthya covers all.

Monwara Begum, 50, came from Munshiganj with severe rheumatism. She said she had taken up the insurance policy nearly a year ago for Tk 100 that might have saved her from misery. The insurance has enabled her to get proper treatment at a cost her family could afford.

"A session of physiotherapy costs me only Tk 120. Thanks to the doctors and nurses I am able to walk again," she said.

"The main feature here is the health insurance system where the poor can easily get the health services by taking up a yearly health insurance book each paying Tk 100," said Assistant Director and Registrar Dr Gour Gopal Saha.

"The subsidy given to the poor is recovered from the rich patients who pay Tk 2,500 each for the same period," he added.

"Can you think of a normal delivery of a baby in the country covering hospitalisation, consultancy and other aspects for only Tk 500? We do it here," said Saha.

But the Gonoshasthya's seemingly noble scheme to provide healthcare for all has failed to move the rich section of the society. Its officials admitted the meager number of registered members from the affluent part of the society is not reflective to the cause for which the hospital was created.

"The notion that expensive is good is very much prevalent in our society, I think that is why we are lagging behind with the rich section," said an official.

Shah Alam was found lying at a bed after his appendix surgery. The man aged around 25 who works at a plastic industry at

Chakbazar said he came to the hospital with extreme pain.

"Within half an hour of my arrival here they operated on me. I cannot think what would have happened to me if I landed at the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital near my house," said Shah Alam. "It is both affordable and reliable."

The hospital also lacks modern equipment for diagnosis. Dr Saha said although they lack modern machineries like the MRI and CT Scan and are unable to perform certain cardiac surgeries, the motto is to provide equal treatment irrespective of rich and poor.

"The system categorises people at six different social levels and the fees are charged accordingly. But we strictly try to maintain the same quality of treatment for all categories of people," said Dr Mohammad Shawkat Ali, department of forensic medicine.

For the poorest category of patients, all pathological tests and consultation of doctors are free of charge while all medicines for the same group are sold at 50 percent discount.

"This is why a rickshaw puller can avail any type of treatment and operation for roughly Tk 300," said Dr Ali, also the coordinator of Rickshaw and Van puller Family Project.

For the general patients, Gonoshasthya has introduced packages such as cataract surgery at Tk 3,500. The most attractive of the packages is for the mom-to-be. For Tk 2,500 a pregnant mother receives medical care from the day she tests positive till a month after her delivery.

"This is the third time I have come to this hospital for delivery because I find quality service at a very reasonable price here. My two sons were also born here five and six years ago," said Selina Begum from Mirpur area.

The founders of the Bangladesh Field Hospital during the country's war of liberation in 1971 took the initiative of the Gonoshasthya Kendra. It started its community based health activities at Savar in 1972 and later in 1996 shifted to Dhanmondi.

## Graft highest among 'justices' assistants

Says ACC chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Supporting the recent TIB survey report claiming judiciary tops the most corrupt service sector list, ACC Chairman Golam Rahman yesterday said corruption trend is highest among those from whom justices take assistance.

About the Transparency International Bangladesh's (TIB's) survey report's authenticity, Golam in an interview with ATN Bangla said, "TIB has apparently prepared the report maintaining internationally accepted methods."

He said Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) started an investigation into the corruption of a few bench officers and justices.

"Earlier their (bench officials and justices) corruption could not be caught then and there but now investigation is on to find stories behind their wealth," he said.

About corruption in judiciary, Golam said a former chief justice has already spoken against corruption by some bench officials and justices.

## Uphold Bangladesh's culture before world

Urges Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon all to uphold the culture of the country before the world.

"We have our own glorious culture and all should come forward to protect it for the sake of our future generation," she said while addressing a discussion meeting at Mahanagar Nattyo Mancho in the city.

The meeting was organised by Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha (Jasas) on the occasion of the 32nd founding anniversary of Jasas, cultural wing of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Khaleda also asked Jasas leaders to protect the culture from foreign infiltration and raise awareness among the new generation about its richness.

"Find local talents from each and every corner of the country who will uphold Bangladesh before the international community," she suggested Jasas leaders.

Recalling that our songs during the War of Liberation inspired the nation, Khaleda said different cultures and language present at country's different parts have to be protected, as these are a valuable part of our national culture.

She hoped that Jasas would create an opportunity for the new generation to enrich the country's culture.

Gazi Mazharul Anwar and Ashraf Uddin Ujjal also spoke on the occasion with Jasas President MA Malek in the chair.

A cultural programme was held after the meeting.

## Mishu's bail rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected bails of Garment Sramik Oikya Parishad President Moshrefa Mishu in two separate criminal cases filed for creating recent unrest in the city's garment sector.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Ismail Hossain passed the orders after hearing the bail petitions from the prosecution and the defence.

Of the two cases filed with Kafrul Police Station, one was on charges of vandalising Outright Fashion Ltd in Shewrapara on June 30 while the other for vandalising National Wool Wear Ltd in Mirpur-14 on December 9. Both accused her of damaging and setting fire to vehicles and obstructing police from duty.

## Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the second death anniversary of Zaker Party Central Committee leader Md Abdur Razzak.

A milad and doa mahfil will be held at his residence in 155 North Ibrahimpur (Momin Sarani) at Kafrul in the city, says a press release.

Razzak is the father of Momin, an 18-year-old college student who was killed by criminals in 2005.



Queue of people waiting to collect rice at Tk 24 per kg from an open market sale (OMS) point at Kamrangirchar in the city yesterday.

## SHOP STAFF KILLING

### Death threat now on owner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Extortionists doubled the amount they demanded from a grocery shop owner at the city's Pallabi yesterday, a day after killing his employee.

Three armed men shot dead Mohammad Sajeb, an employee of Matlab General Store at Kalshi Road there, as shop owner Nazir Sarkar filed a GD with police following death threats over a demand of Tk 3 lakh as extortion.

Nazir's brother Faruk Sarkar told The Daily Star that the attack was within 15 minutes of filing the GD seeking police help and the extortionists have now doubled their demand.

phone to kill all in our family one by one if we fail to pay them Tk six lakh," said Faruk.

He alleged that the extortionists were local criminals who already forced many traders to pay. "They killed our shop's employee Sajeb as we denied to pay," Faruk said, adding that they were now feeling insecure.

"It was an example. All of you will face the same situation" -- Faruk quoted the anonymous extortionists, who threatened his brother over phone after killing Sajeb.

Meanwhile, police arrested an alleged extortionist Shimul Ahmed of the area on Sunday night from Kalsi of Pallabi in connection with the incident.

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