

BANQUET HOSTED FOR BHUTANESE PREMIER PM for meaningful ties with Bhutan

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the relation between Bangladesh and Bhutan now needs to be turned into truly meaningful ties for mutual benefits.

Speaking at a banquet hosted by her in honour of Bhutanese Prime Minister Jigmi Y Thinley at Sonargaon Hotel yesterday evening, she mentioned the areas of cooperation in trade, tourism, hydro-power, climate change, health, biodiversity, agro-processing, agriculture, forestry, IT, education and water resources management.

"Both the countries should, of course, be working in close cooperation to harness our synergies on these and other areas for the good of our two nations," Hasina said.

In Bangladesh, she said, "Our aim is to strengthen democracy, achieve economic growth and make our citizens happy individuals."

Bangladesh has already attained significant progress in food and energy security, education, poverty alleviation, empowerment of women, social welfare and development with sustained economic growth, Hasina told her Bhutanese counterpart.

"As we strive to reach our goals, we want the valuable cooperation of our friends and neighbours to strengthen our government's initiatives, including regional connectivity designed to make all of us in the region prosperous," she said.

She said great opportunities lie before the countries in South Asia and urged all to seize those opportunities together.

Hasina said nowadays the democratic institutions are stronger, and the economy is on a sound footing. "The rule of law and human rights are established, and terrorism with all forms of extremism is on the wane," she said.

The PM recalled her two visits to Bhutan after assuming power--bilateral visit to Bhutan in 2009 and for 16th Saarc Summit in 2010. "Your visit to Bangladesh now is of special significance as it would forge further

enviable bonds between our two neighbouring countries," said the Bhutanese PM.

She also recalled Bhutan's contribution to Bangladesh's Liberation War. "The Kingdom of Bhutan has a special corner in the hearts of all Bangladeshis, and a permanent niche in the history of Bangladesh," she said.

Bangladesh and Bhutan share ancient linkage, common cultural values, religious traditions and geo-political realities, Hasina said.

The PM said history records exchanges between Buddhist scholars of Paharpur and Mahasthangar in Bangladesh, and the ancient monasteries of Bhutan.

Hasina expressed her happiness to know that PM Thinley would visit the world's largest mangrove forest, the Sundarbans, and the world's longest golden sandy beach in Cox's Bazaar.

She said that the visit of her Bhutanese counterpart at some of ancient Buddhist relics to rediscover the past ties, and the Chittagong Port to see the potentials for use by Bhutan for transit to third countries would be significant one.

The Bhutanese prime minister widely appreciated the proposed enhancement of ties. "There are immense opportunities of Dhaka-Thimphu relations and we need to explore them for mutual benefit," he said.

The Bhutanese premier also reviewed scopes of enhanced trade relations while he suggested enrolment of more Bhutanese students in Bangladesh's medical institutions.

Thinley highly appreciated Bangladesh's development initiatives under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina expecting the dreams of "Sonar Bangla" to be realised by her incumbent government.

He also paid rich tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and recalled that the then Bhutanese King had felt proud of his personal acquaintance with Bangabandhu, whom he considered as one of the world's greatest leaders.



Some 500 aspirant migrant workers to Korea begin a hunger strike at Muktangan in the city yesterday, as the state-run recruiting agency BOESL dropped their names from the list.

PHOTO: STAR

Increase capacity to send migrant workers

Malaysian team urges Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Malaysia thinks Bangladesh should increase its capacity in recruitment of overseas jobseekers in the Southeast Asian country.

The visiting Malaysian delegation told Bangladesh officials this at a meeting at the conference room of Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited (BOESL) on Sunday night, said meeting sources.

During a meeting with the home ministry officials, the delegation yesterday requested to help stop illegal immigration from Bangladesh, as it is a problem in Malaysia.

A six-member delegation led by

Malaysian Home Ministry Senior Deputy Secretary General Dato Raja Azahar bin Raja Abdul Manap arrived in Dhaka on Saturday to check the immigration procedures in Bangladesh.

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Secretary Zafar Ahmed Khan said earlier there was a lot of malpractice in the labour recruitment process, which led to a freeze early 2009.

So Malaysia now wants to recruit Bangladeshi workers through state arrangements, he noted.

In this backdrop, the Malaysian delegation on Sunday night, during a visit to BOESL, said BOESL sent less than 4,000 workers in 2010 and fewer in

the previous years, an official of the expatriates' welfare ministry told The Daily Star.

On contact, BOESL Managing Director Md Abdullah said the issue was not raised that prominently.

However, it is true that government as a whole and BOESL did not send workers abroad in large numbers, he said.

"But, if we get more work, we will surely increase our capacity," he added.

There are around 5 lakh Bangladeshis in Malaysia, most of whom are irregular, told delegation members to the home ministry, quoted Abdullah.

Zafar said they requested the Malaysian delegation to regularise the present irregular Bangladeshi workers.

Mercury dips further in N region

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cold wave in the country's northern districts yesterday hit the lowest temperature of the season, 5.3 degrees Celsius in Rajshahi.

The minimum temperature in Dinajpur was 6.7C while it was in 7.1C Syedpur, 7.2C in Chuadanga, 7.6C in Iswardi, 8.0C in Rangpur and 8.6C in Bogra yesterday. The capital saw minimum temperatures of 12.5C yesterday and 14.2C on Sunday, according to Dhaka Meteorology Department.

Our Dinajpur correspondent reports that at least 10 people including eight children died of cold related illness in the last three days at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital.

In Rangpur, severe cold disrupted the regular life as many could not go out for work or to schools. The sufferers are largely the poor children and the elderly, reports our correspondent.

Sadekul Alam, meteorologist of Dhaka Met Office, told The Daily Star that cold waves are normal during the month of January. Usually, a cold wave lasts three to five days. After that, the temperature starts to rise till another wave hits, he added. The wind from the Himalayas is causing the cold wave. The weather will remain dry in the next 24 hours with the cold wave prevailing, said Dhaka Met office.

HC directive to reinstate 28 SIs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

High Court (HC) yesterday directed the government to reinstate 28 sub-inspectors, who were sent to forced retirement during the BNP-led alliance government.

The HC bench of Justice Mohammad Momtazuddin Ahmed and Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore also ordered the government to provide all due facilities to the sub-inspectors from the day they were sent to force retirement.

The verdict came following three separate writ petitions filed with the HC in October and September by the sub-inspectors challenging their retirement.

NU admission test result published

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National University (NU) published result of honours first year admission test yesterday.

The result will be available on www.nu.edu.bd; www.nu-ba.info; www.nu-bsc.info; and www.nu-bbs.info. Students can also send 4636 from any mobile number writing 'nu AT rollNo' in the message text.



BNP Standing Committee Member Abdul Moyeen Khan, second from left, speaks at a press conference in the city yesterday. On his right is BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and on his left is former education minister Osman Faruque.

PHOTO: BNP

AL RIVAL FACTION RALLY IN CTG Unite for active city unit Says Afsarul Ameen

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Primary and Mass Education Minister Afsarul Ameen at a rally here yesterday called upon leaders and activists of Awami League (AL) to unite in forming an active unit of the party in Chittagong.

Termining the need for a dynamic functional committee to fulfil the dream of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he said, "We now want new leaders in the city committee, not the old ones."

He was addressing a rally organised by a faction of AL city unit observing

two years of government and Homecoming Day of Bangabandhu at Laldighi Maidan, chaired by AL city unit Vice President Nurul Islam BSC.

Mentionable, other faction of AL city unit led by President ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury organised a rally under the banner 'Grand Alliance' at the same venue on Sunday.

"Government arrested war criminals and will start their trial within a short time," said Afsarul, adding that a section is plotting against AL to stop the trial.

Pointing to the rival faction, Afsarul said, "We arranged this programme to inform the party's history and

Bangabandhu's to the new generation, not to compete with others."

Nurul said the day's rally proved that nobody could destroy mainstream of AL.

Criticising Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) leader Mainuddin Khan Badal's previous day's speech, Nurul said he (Badal) is a parliament member who won in the election in collaboration with AL and now is delivering speech against a rally by AL.

Lawmaker Akhteruzzaman Chowdhury Babu said BNP wants to destroy the country so AL has to unite at this moment.

Bodies of driver, helper recovered, rice-laden truck still missing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The decomposed bodies of two youths recovered from Banani on Sunday were identified yesterday as Nurul Islam, 32, a truck driver, and Mithu, 30, the helper.

Police recovered the bodies from a ditch near Dhaka Gate at Banani on Sunday. The hands and legs of the bodies were tied with ropes.

The miscreants killed the two and hijacked their rice-laden truck.

Nurul Islam's brother Feroz told reporters at Dhaka Medical College (DMC) morgue on January 2 that Islam and Mithu left Mohadevpur in Naogaon carrying rice in their truck for Mohammadpur Krishi Market in the capital. They had been missing since then.

Feroz identified the bodies at DMC morgue yesterday.

The rice-laden truck is still traceless.

Gulshan Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Kamal Uddin told this correspondent that police suspect that the miscreants dumped the bodies at Banani after killing the two youths elsewhere.

'Indira road double murder pre-planned'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The murder of a mother and her son at city's Indira Road on Sunday was pre-planned and committed by persons known to the victims, suspect law enforcers.

A murder case was filed yesterday while any suspect is yet to be arrested, Reaz Hossain, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, told The Daily Star.

Nothing was missing from the victims' house, said the OC adding, the offenders apparently entered the house with the sole motive of killing the two.

The slain woman's son Milton sold a flat for Tk 38 lakh a few days back, mentioned the police official. Police have been investigating as to where the money has been kept.

Abul Bashar, local security guard, said a CNG auto-rickshaw entered the lane around 3:30am on Sunday. Seeing Milton inside the vehicle he let it go.

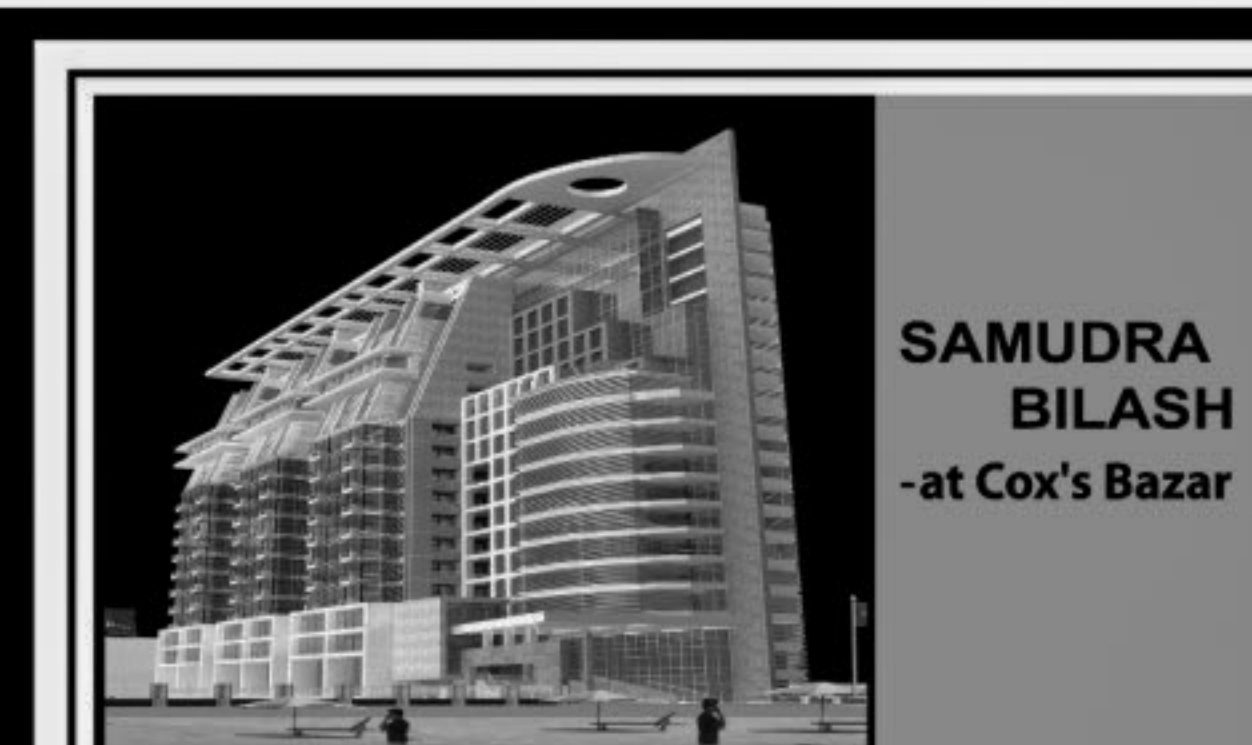
Milton used to return home late at night accompanied by friends, added Bashar.

Another security guard Tota Miah said Milton's friend Shujon went there along with another youth around 10:00am riding a motorcycle and entered the house.

They came out of the house 30 to 40 minutes later and sped away with the bike, he added.

Milton was a drug addict and after his father's death three years ago he became more indifferent and aggressive, said Joseph. He also beat his mother Virginia Rozario, 65, out of the house about six months back.

Secretary of Bangladesh Christian Association, Nirmol Rozario protested the killings.



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