



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with recipients of the Independence Award 2011 at Osmani Smriti Auditorium in the city yesterday. Seven personalities, Dhaka University and Bangladesh Police were given the accolade this year.

PHOTO: PID

9 GET INDEPENDENCE AWARD PM for economic emancipation

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the people to work together to reach the fruits of the nation's independence to every citizen through attaining economic emancipation.

"The nation that has gained independence and sovereignty through a war cannot suffer from poverty and illiteracy," she said at the Independence Award 2011 distribution ceremony at Osmani Auditorium in the city.

Two institutions - Dhaka University in education and Bangladesh Police in the category of independence and liberation war and seven personalities - Gaus Khan (posthumous), Sangharaj Jyotipal Mahathero (posthumous), Dr Neelima Ibrahim (posthumous), Nutan Chandra Singho (posthumous), AKM Shamsuzzoha (posthumous), Air Vice Marshal (rtd) Abdul Karim Khandaker, Beer Uttam in the category of independence and liberation war, and M Abul Hashem Khan in culture received the Independence Award, the highest state recognition, from the prime minister.

Each award recipient was given a gold medal, Tk 2 lakh and a certificate. Award recipient Planning Minister Air Vice-Marshal (rtd) AK Khandaker also spoke at the function, moderated by Cabinet Secretary M Abdul Aziz.

Inspector General (IG) of Police Hasan Mahmud Khandaker, Dhaka University VC Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique received awards on behalf of their respective institutions while family members received the posthumous awards.

Youth killed in 'shootout'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal was killed in a 'shootout' between his accomplices and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in the city's Shyampur area under Kadamtali Police Station early yesterday.

The deceased, Gopal Chandra Das, 32, was a professional killer and accused in 11 cases, mostly for murder, police said.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-10 went to the area where Gopal and his cohorts were holding a meeting near Wasa pond at about 1:30am, said OC of Kadamtali police.

Sensing their presence, the criminals opened fire at the elite force members, prompting them to retaliate. Gopal was caught in the line of fire and died on the spot though his cohorts managed to flee the scene, said police.

Rab recovered a foreign-made pistol and a bullet from the spot.

Limit scope of parliament boycott

Suggests Suranjit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League (AL) lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta yesterday proposed to reduce the scope for lawmakers to remain absent from parliament proceedings to end the parliament boycott culture.

According to the constitution's article 67, a parliament member shall vacate his seat if he is absent from parliament, without leave of parliament, for 90 consecutive sitting days.

While participating in the discussion on thanks giving motion of the president's address, Suranjit, also co-chair of the parliamentary special committee on constitution amendment, said the provision should be amended to repeal the word "sitting".

Usually, the House goes into each session after around 60 days. His proposal means that no MP will be able to remain absent from the House proceedings for more than three months. Moreover, no MP will be allowed to dodge an entire session of the House.

The existing provision gives MPs scope to remain absent for over 10 to 11 consecutive months from proceedings as the House needs around a year to have 90 sitting days.

JS body for MP's code of conduct bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday recommended that the House pass a bill on code of conduct for lawmakers.

It came up with the recommendation after scrutinising a bill placed by ruling AL lawmaker Saber Hossain Chowdhury.

The parliamentary standing committee on private members' bill and resolutions suggested the passage of the bill at a time when the House witnesses frequent use of indecent and vulgar words by MPs in their speeches.

"Duties, responsibilities and behaviour of lawmakers are very sensitive for the state. People expect their representatives in parliament will work for development of the country, and behave themselves," said committee chief Abdul Matin Khasru.

In a brief statement tagged with the scrutiny report, Khasru said, "We humiliate ourselves before the public if we use indecent, vulgar and attacking words in parliament."

Khasru, also a former law minister, said such behaviour does not create employment for an unemployed youth, and cannot provide rice and wheat or even medical treatment for the poor.

"It is possible to uphold the dignity of the House through practising democratic norms and culture and showing mutual honour," he said.

The committee proposed passing the bill with some modifications.

On the aims and reasons of placing the bill, Saber Hossain said, "There is no alternative to a positive role of lawmakers for building a progressive, fair and rational society." The bill proposes formation of a nine-member ethics committee headed by the speaker to investigate allegations against lawmakers. The committee will have representatives from lawmakers of all political parties.

"If a lawmaker receives gifts or services worth over Tk 10,000, he or she will have to inform the ethics committee," the bill proposed.

A legislator must not receive any gift if it influences his or her duties as an MP, it said.

On freedom of speech in parliament, the bill says lawmakers' speeches must follow the norms of democracy and tolerance.

Their speeches must be objective, thoughtful and logical. They should consciously avoid causing harm to any individual who does not enjoy the same privileges.

Bashundhara chairman gets bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted bail to detained Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan Shah Alam in two separate cases in which he was earlier sentenced to a total of 10 years in jail.

The bench of Justice Md Shamsul Huda and Justice Abu Bakar Siddiquee passed the orders after hearing two separate appeals filed by him recently against the lower court verdicts.

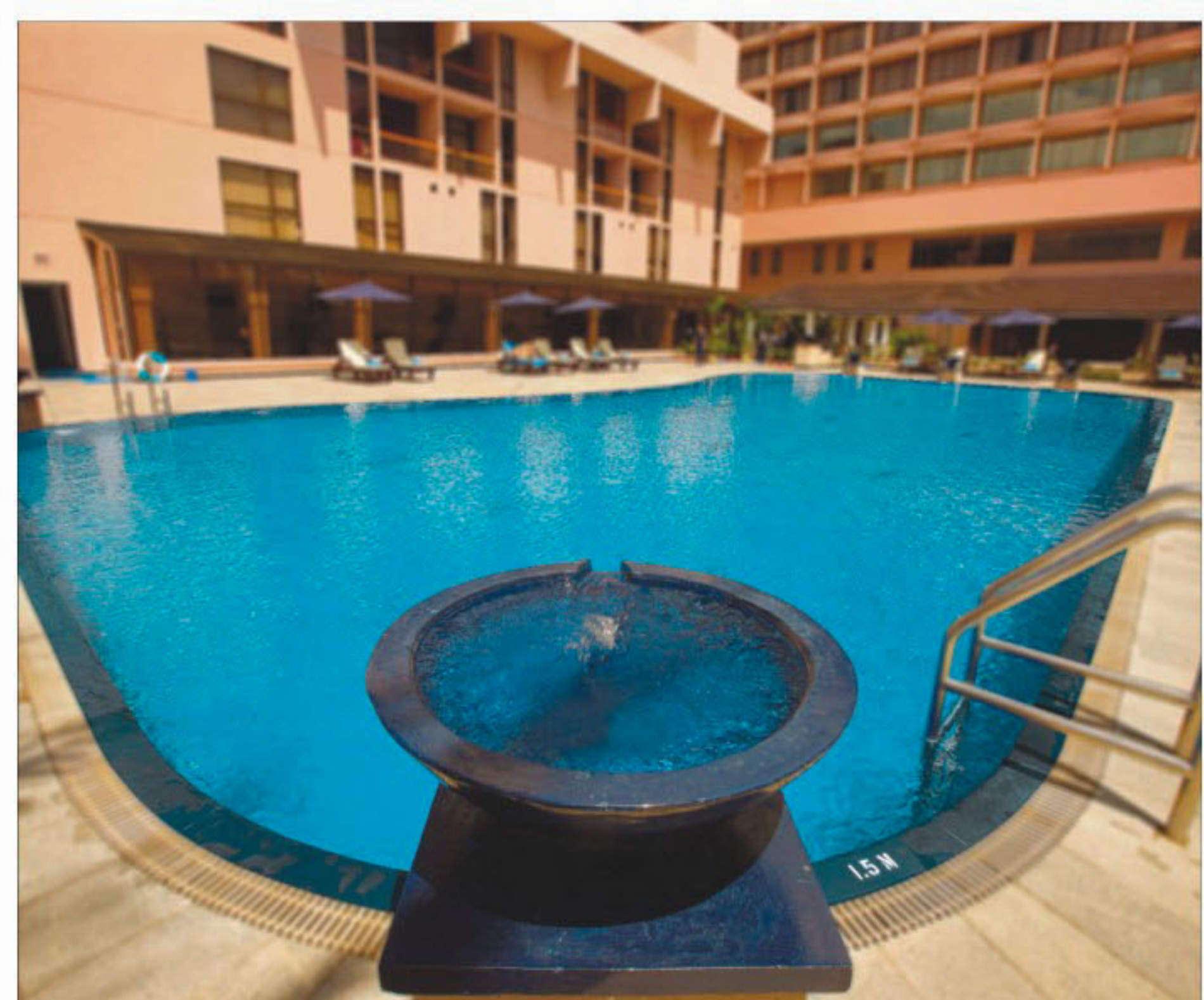
Shah Alam recently filed the appeals through his lawyers with the HC against the trial court judgments that sentenced him to 10 years' imprisonment in the cases which were filed on charges of evading tax and keeping illegal currency.

His lawyer Anisul Huq told The Daily Star that there is no bar to his client's release from jail following the HC orders.

On July 7, 2007, a Dhaka court sentenced the Bashundhara Group chief, his wife and three sons to two years' rigorous imprisonment for illegally keeping local and foreign currencies amounting to Tk 23 lakh at their residence.

An anti-graft tribunal on September 30, 2007 handed down eight years in jail to Shah Alam in the case filed by National Board of Revenue.

Shah Alam was sent to jail on March 20 this year after he surrendered before a Dhaka court in connection with the cases.



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Artists perform a country song at the weeklong programme at Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday, marking the 40th Independence Day tomorrow.

PHOTO: STAR

Muggers foil man to see his dead son

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SA Bari, an employee of a private firm, was returning home late Wednesday night after he learned that his six-year-old boy died about half an hour ago.

Bari could not reach home. Muggers stabbed him en route as he arrived near Nabisco of the city around 4:00am yesterday and took away money in cash and the mobile phone.

With critical wounds in the abdomen, he is now under treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The ill-fated father neither could see the body of his son, nor could join the burial.

Bari's wife Shaila Akhter Lovely informed him of the death of their son, Sami, around 3:30am.

Soon he left his office of Apex Polymer Corporation Ltd in Tejgaon industrial area, for which he worked as a supervisor.

After being stabbed near Nabisco area, Bari somehow managed to return to his office with his hands on the wounds. He was rushed to DMCH by the security guards there.

Youth held with Tk 8 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) recovered Tk 8 lakh from a youth in Mirpur of the city yesterday.

Mokibul Huq Sumon, 28, to swindle the money out of his boss, fabricated a story and lodged a complaint with Rab-3 headquarters in Tikatuli Wednesday.

The complaint said he was robbed of the money near Buet mosque in Shahbagh Tuesday.

But Rab officials suspected Sumon and started interrogating him. At one stage Sumon admitted that he manufactured the story to misappropriate the money.

With the money he was handed over to Shahbagh police station. Sumon, an employee of a private firm, was carrying the amount to his office, said Shahbagh police.

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