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## Best friend honoured

*Bangladesh finally confers award on Indira Gandhi posthumously for her huge contribution to its independence; emotion-choked Sonia receives the recognition*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
 Former Indian premier Indira Gandhi was yesterday conferred the "Bangladesh Freedom Honour" for her unparalleled support and contributions to Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971.  
 Her daughter-in-law also president of India's ruling Congress party, Sonia Gandhi, received the posthumous award from Bangladesh President Zillur Rahman on behalf of Indira Gandhi at a ceremony in Bangabhaban.  
 Indira Gandhi is the first among the foreign friends of Bangladesh to be conferred the highest state honour.  
 Expressing her heartfelt thanks for the honour, Sonia recalled the tumultuous days of 1971 when her



President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina present Sonia Gandhi, the head of Indian National Congress, with the plaque of Bangladesh Freedom Honour bestowed posthumously on the latter's mother-in-law Indira Gandhi at Bangabhaban yesterday. More photos on page 3, 5



*One person made a big difference*  
 JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and HASAN JAHID TUSHER  
 If one single person other than a Bangladeshi had the greatest contribution to the birth of Bangladesh, it is indisputably Indira Gandhi. Forty years down the line, after Bangladesh gained its freedom, the nation yesterday officially recognised her great role in its liberation.  
 It was probably the

## Sonia lavish in her praise

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT  
 Indian Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi yesterday lauded Bangladesh's success and achievements in economic, social, health and education sectors and said that in some areas the country is ahead of India.  
 "Bangladesh has achieved economic and social success beyond anything thought possible at the time of its birth. You are admired world-wide

## Care is the call

*Int'l conference presses for law, awareness to ensure rights of special people*

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT  
 A two-day international conference on autism opened in Dhaka yesterday with a call for promoting legislative and policy actions to ensure quality healthcare for autistic people, especially the children.  
 The conference has brought together government leaders, policymakers, experts and activists from around the globe to discuss how to spread awareness about autism in Bangladesh and other South Asian countries.  
 Autism is a lifelong neurological dis-

## Autism initiatives hold ray of hopes

MAHBUBA ZANNAT  
 When Salma Zaman took her four-year-old autistic boy Tawfif to a diagnostic centre, she heard a man asking a nurse whether the test has any side effects on the "abnormal" baby.  
 "I know my child has some problems. But when someone terms him abnormal, it is really heartbreaking," said Salma, who attended an international conference on autism in the capital yesterday.  
 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) and Autism Speaks, a US-based organisation, jointly organised the programme attended by parents of autistic children, teachers, activists, experts and policymakers.

## Prosecute errant BSF members

*Rights body urges India*  
 STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
 Human Rights Watch (HRW) has urged the Indian government to conduct speedy and transparent probe into fresh allegations of killings, torture and abuse by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along the Indo-Bangla border.  
 "Despite orders from New Delhi to end killings and abuse and to exercise restraint in dealing with people crossing the border, new deaths and other serious abuses are being reported," said HRW South Asia Director Meenakshi Ganguly in a news release on the organisation's official website yesterday.  
 "The government has issued some positive new



PHOTO: STAR  
 The nest of a weaver bird is surely one of the miracles of nature. Known as *Babuipakhi*, the little bird is adored in the country much for its astounding craftsmanship of making nests. The photo was taken at Godagari upazila of Rajshahi recently.

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	Senior	Junior
Balls		
Overall	10.95cm	9.69cm
a =	3.49cm	3.18cm
b =	5.40cm	4.60cm
c =	20.6cm	1.91cm
Stumps		
Senior		Junior
Height	60.711 cm	48.5cm
Diameter	max 38.1 cm	3.49cm
min	3.4cm	3.18cm
Overall	width 22.86cm	20.32cm
ct Wicket		
Popping crease		
Bowling crease		3ft 2in
		96.5cm
	4.25in	
	10.8cm	

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