

## Stay alert

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"You resisted with an iron hand the evil plot of BNP-Jamaat-Shibir to create anarchy in the country aiming to foil the 10th general election," she said.

The premier said the present government is in power just to serve people.

"You're the citizens of the country, it's our duty to look after you, too," she told the BDR personnel.

She also stressed the need for maintaining mutual respect and honour among members of the BGB saying discipline, humanity, respect and honour to seniors and above all mutual sympathy can only strengthen the force.

Hasina expressed firm optimism that the BGB will one day become a world standard peacekeeping force saying they should not do anything that could damage the country's image.

Recalling the tragic BDR mutiny incident, Sheikh Hasina said her government has completed the reforms of the force within the shortest time and brought those committed the crimes to justice.

Among many other steps, nearly

20,000 additional troops have been recruited since 2009 following the new organisational structure, said the PM.

Terming BGB as "ever-vigilant sentinels of the border", Sheikh Hasina said her government has increased its strength to make the force more capable in safeguarding the country's land boundaries.

Talking about 479-kilometer long porous border with India, the Prime Minister said her government already approved two sectors, five battalions and 92 BOPs for the BGB. Most of the projects have already been implemented, she said.

With full implementation of the projects, the entire Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) would be much more protected, she added.

Later, the prime minister responded to a number of questions raised by the members of the BGB attending the Darbar.

BGB Director General Major General Aziz Ahmed delivered the welcome address at the Darbar attended by ministers, state ministers, MPs, diplomats and high civil and military officials.



A family builds a tent with a tarpaulin sheet next to their razed home in Suridaspara of Naniarchhar of Rangamati after Bangalee settlers torched 57 homes of the indigenous people on Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR

## Fingers pointed

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Suridaspara to destroy 4.5 lakh pineapple plants and 20,000 teak saplings on 10 acres of land in ethnic dominated Suridaspara and predominantly Bangalee Bogachhari.

It would have taken between 100 and 200 people to do the job and it still would have taken them hours, they said, adding that the UPDF could have brought in people from elsewhere for the job keeping people of Suridaspara in the dark.

Half-heartedly denying the UPDF's involvement, Supan Chakma, convenor of Naniarchhar Bhumi Roksha Committee, said, "They [Bangalees] could go to police and get compensation for the damage, but they can't attack and torch houses of the indigenous."

Chairman of Burigati union Pramod Chakma had no doubt that it was an act of the UPDF. "I don't believe Bangalees can do this but I believe the UPDF did it... They did it by bringing in people from distant areas."

The land on which four Bangalees grew pineapples is on the Rangamati-Khagrachhari road and a couple of kilometres from Khilchhari army camp and Bogachhari police camp.

The land used to be cultivated by indigenous people until it was taken over by two settlers a decade ago with government lease. Since then, the piece of land had been an apple of discord for the two sides.

UPDF's central committee member Uzzal Chakma claimed that the villagers who had lost their land to settlers might have done this and the UPDF was wrongly being blamed.

He told The Daily Star that the arson was aimed at ousting the ethnic people from the villages.

## Cuban House backs revival of US ties

AFP, Havana

Cuba's parliament on Friday unanimously ratified a deal reached between Havana and Washington normalizing relations after a half-century of hostility.

"The Cuban parliament today gave its unanimous support" to the bilateral thaw, which was outlined Wednesday in a speech by President Raul Castro, the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina said shortly after the start of the session.

Castro is chairing the twice-yearly meeting of parliament in a session

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## Green power

FROM PAGE 1

and feeding it to the national grid. Fifty kilowatt power is enough to run a hospital or a commercial or an office building like the secretariat.

The feed-in-tariff (FIT) system is a concept popular in the west for promoting expensive green power alongside conventional power generation. The system guarantees the renewable energy producer electricity tariff higher than the existing rates. It also offers cost-based compensation for renewable energy producers, providing price certainty and long-term contracts that help finance projects.

The tariff for this power is pretty high, Tk 19.95 per kilowatt hour, which is four to five times costlier than that generated by local gas-fired power plants.

But during the day the plant saves all fuel cost that would otherwise have been required and the maintenance cost is minimal.

"This plant would generate 73 megawatt hours electricity a year and cut carbon emission of approximately 1,000 tonnes in the next 20 years," said Munawar Misbah Moin, managing director of RREL.

"It has been running on trial since November 26 and supplying power to

the grid. The generated power is more than 1.3 MWh," he added.

"It is the first BOO [Build, Own, Operate] solar power plant in the country, which is feeding power to the grid," he added.

This project is continuously monitored remotely via the internet and mobile phones, including power production and plant performance.

A programmable Class 0.2 Meter ensures the accurate billing, which is usually used in conventional power plants for its accuracy, he said.

Moin said it was possible to generate up to 2,000MW power by installing solar panels on roofs of different establishments in Dhaka and Chittagong.

In February, 2014, DPDC signed the agreement with Rahimafrooz to produce solar power for the national grid. Rahimafrooz signed a land lease agreement with the Public Works Department to install the plant at the Secretariat.

A power ministry official said several such power plants would be installed on other big government offices to increase solar power generation and reduce pressure on fossil fuels.

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an emotional Mozena at his farewell press conference at the American Embassy Employees' Association Club in the capital yesterday.

Mozena said Bangladesh has the world's second largest garment, 150-factory strong tannery and leather, growing generic pharmaceuticals and booming IT industries to thrive on.

The RMG sector can become the world's "best and biggest" with a much-needed transformation to ensure workers' safety, rights and wellbeing, he said.

Bangladesh is about to emerge as a major pharmaceuticals exporting country in the world and its pharmaceuticals and leather products are going to flood the US market in two to five years, Mozena went on.

An amazing development is waiting to happen in the country's IT sector as it is able to provide software at a 60 percent lesser cost than firms in India's Bangalore, he said.

Bangladesh, being geographically located right in the middle of what US President Obama calls the Indo-Pacific economic corridor connecting both South and East Asia regions, has immense economic possibilities, he said.

At the press conference, the outgoing ambassador had to face political questions as well.

A journalist inquired what Mozena had to say regarding a "common public perception" that the US wanted the BNP to come to power through the last parliamentary polls and that's why it so fervently opposed the January 5 elections.

"I don't know what to say about that... That's [for] the people of Bangladesh to sort out," he replied, adding that USA's stance on the election remained unchanged.

He hailed Bangladesh's achievement in food security and reduction of deaths during childbirth and child mortality, as part of meeting the millennium development goals.

However, Bangladesh needs to bring about a revolutionary improvement in the education sector by bringing in the best and the brightest teachers with the best salaries, and providing digital facilities like multimedia tools and virtual libraries for academic activities.

Assessing his three years' service in Bangladesh, Mozena said, "The US-Bangladesh bilateral relation at present is broader, deeper and stronger than

ever before... I am proud of the success of latest US military cooperation with Bangladesh Navy and Coastguard."

"It is a melancholic moment for me to part with beautiful Bangladesh after having served a 37-month tenure in a country rich with hardworking, resilient, warmhearted and open-minded people."

"I travelled throughout all 64 districts of Bangladesh during my tenure, walked through the villages and talked to farmers and villagers for a people-to-people relation," Mozena said.

Describing the natural beauty of Bangladesh as "hundreds of shades of greenery", the retiring US envoy added, "Now I go back to America with a great treasure of people's life stories."

Talking about his post-retirement plans, he said, "I would like to do something... that would keep me linked with Bangladesh."

Asked whether he would pay a farewell call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Mozena said, "I have no idea".

Mozena took the office of the US Ambassador to Bangladesh on November 24, 2011. He leaves Bangladesh along with his wife today. His successor Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat is expected to take over soon.

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