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People reaping benefits of democracy: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the people of the country are now reaping the benefits of democracy as they got back their state power from the cantonment.



"Military dictators had grabbed the state power frequently in the past ... once the state power was in the cantonment ... As a result, there was no [required] pace in development," she said.

The PM said this while addressing the National Economic Council meeting virtually from the Gono Bhaban.

The meeting approved the 8th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025).

As the state power came back to the mass people, they are now enjoying their democratic rights fully, Hasina said.

"General people are getting the benefits ... rural people are getting the benefits ... that's the main thing," she said.

Hasina said she believes that the 8th Five-Year Plan will be very much effective in attaining the country's desired development.

In this connection, she mentioned that the government is implementing the UN-formulated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). "But coronavirus has created a problem, this is not for us alone, it's for the whole world."

Hasina said the government has been able to reduce the poverty rate significantly, while the GDP has been great.

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The waste from homes and unauthorised and authorised factories in and around the capital pollutes the Buriganga river. The water of the river has become so dirty that it has turned black. The photo was taken from Basila Bridge around 1:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Court orders ACC to seize PK Halder's flats, land

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to confiscate two flats and six acres of immovable properties of Proshanta Kumar Halder alias PK Halder in a money laundering case.

The flats are located in the capital's Dhanmondi area and properties are at Rugganj in Narayanganj, ACC Public Prosecutor Mahmud Hossain Jahangir confirmed to The Daily Star.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Mohammad Salahuddin, who is also the investigation officer of the case, submitted an application.

On January 8 this year, the anti-graft body filed a case against PK Halder on charges of illegally amassing wealth worth Tk 275 crore and money laundering.

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First ship docks in Matarbari Deep-sea Port

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The first ship has moored at the deep-sea port in Matarbari in Cox's Bazar.

The foreign ship reached the Matarbari Deep-sea Port as the authority conducted an experimental capacity test of the newly built port.

Loaded with steam generator parts, the Panama flag carrier "Venus Triumph" docked around 10:20am, sailing off from Indonesia's Pt. Pelabuhan Cilegon Mandiri port on December 22.

These apparatuses will be used for the coal-based power plant in that area, Mohammad Abul Kalam, director of state-owned Coal Power Generation Company Bangladesh (CPGCBL), said.

The CPGCBL is implementing the coal-based power plant project in Matarbari.

The ship reached Matarbari early in the morning yesterday. Later around 10:20am, the vessel was brought to the temporary jetty of the power plant.

The ship is owned by Sea Shore Marine Private Limited, while Ancient Steamship Company Limited is working agent in Bangladesh.

With the aim to navigate the ship, the CPGCBL created a 14-kilometer channel with the width of 250 meter and depth

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Bangabandhu-Umbricht meeting



Kashmiri Ministers Golam Rasulkar and Mufti Mohammad Sayeed call on Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Gono Bhaban on December 30, 1972.

December 30, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

KASHMIRI MINISTERS CALL ON PM Golam Rasulkar and Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, minister for supplies and minister for public works respectively, of the Indian State of Kashmir who are now on a private visit to Bangladesh call on Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today. They share that they are happy to see democratic institutions functioning in Bangladesh. They also express their satisfaction at Bangladesh's secular journey.

INDO-BANGLADESH CULTURAL ACCORD SIGNED

A cultural cooperation agreement is signed between Bangladesh and India in Dhaka today. The agreement provides for the

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MUNICIPALITIES POLLS

AL-backed runners win 18 out of 24

STAR REPORT

The ruling Awami League-nominated candidates achieved victory in 18 municipalities out of 24 while their arch-rival BNP-nominated candidates won in two municipalities and independent candidates in three.

BNP candidates won in Rajshahi's Putia and Habiganj's Shayesthaganj municipalities whereas independent candidates won in Dinajpur's Phulbari, Patuakhali's Kuakata and Thakurgaon's Pirganj municipalities.

Result of another municipality -- Khulna's Chalna -- was withheld as BNP backed candidate died during the polling.

The first phase election of municipalities was held on Monday in 24 municipalities.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza

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Mourning swan holds up 23 German trains



AFP, Berlin

A swan mourning the death of its companion on a German railway track held up 23 trains for almost an hour and had to be removed by firefighters using special equipment, police said.

The two birds had strayed onto the track area of the high-speed line between Kassel and Gottingen in central Germany "during an excursion", according to Kassel police.

One of the birds died, likely after getting caught in the overhead power cables, said the statement on the December 23 incident, which was made public Monday.

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BGB shoots Indian man dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

An Indian "smuggler" was shot dead by the members of Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) in Mymensingh's Halaughat upazila early yesterday, said BGB.

The man was identified as Thedian Momin, 45, of India's South Garo Hills, said police.

Mahmudul Hasan, officer-in-charge of Halaughat Police Station, said a group of eight smugglers intruded into the upazila's Suryapur Dumnikura area at midnight.

Sensing their presence, a BGB patrol team of Suryapur Camp started chasing them. While fleeing, one of the smugglers threw a sharp cutter to BGB members. One of them was injured.

In retaliation, BGB opened fire on them. One of the "smugglers" sustained bullet wounds and died on

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Mercury may start to drop from Friday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People will not get immediate respite from the bone-chilling cold as the country may not see any major improvement in weather conditions in the coming days.

Temperature may slightly rise in some areas today and tomorrow. But it may start falling again from Friday, said Ruhul Quddus, a meteorologist.

"A similar situation may continue till the next one or two weeks. Cold weather may even prevail throughout January," he told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

Meanwhile, yesterday's lowest temperature was

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 30

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:27 7:00
JAMAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:30 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A car and an autorickshaw are parked on the bicycle lane on Manik Mia Avenue and a cyclist has to go around them. The authorities are struggling to free the reserved lane for cyclists. The photo was taken a few hours after a mobile court conducted a drive there to keep the lanes free yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

50 journalists killed in 2020

Says RSF, highlights murders in India, Pakistan, Mexico

AFP, Paris

Fifty journalists and media workers were killed in connection with their work in 2020, the majority in countries that are not at war, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said yesterday.

The figure shows an increase in the targeting of reporters investigating organised crime, corruption or environmental issues, the watchdog said.

It highlighted murders in Mexico, India and Pakistan.

Eighty-four percent of those killed this year were "deliberately targeted" for their work, RSF said in its annual report, compared to 63 percent in 2019.

"For several years now, Reporters Without Borders has noted that investigative journalists are really in the crosshairs of states, or cartels," said Pauline Ades-Mevel, RSF editor-in-chief.

Mexico was the deadliest country, with eight killed. "Links between drug traffickers and politicians remain, and journalists who dare to cover these or related issues continue to be the targets of barbaric murders," said the report.

None of the Mexico killings had yet been punished, added RSF, which has compiled annual data on violence against journalists around the globe since 1995.

Five journalists were killed in war-torn Afghanistan, it said, noting an increase in targeted attacks on media workers in recent months even as peace talks between the government and Taliban are ongoing.

RSF also highlighted the case of Iranian opposition figure Ruhollah Zam, who ran a popular social media

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