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Will ensure justice for every citizen: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the government wants to ensure justice for all with quick disposal of court cases to establish transparency and accountability in the country.

"We want every citizen of the country to get justice," she said yesterday.

The prime minister said this while addressing the inaugural session of the 59th Annual Council of Bangladesh Judicial Service Association at Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC).

Hasina said the government is working tirelessly to ensure the well being of people -- for a bright and secure future.

"Let us ensure the rule of law for the people of Bangladesh, so they can have a better life. We will establish Bangladesh that was dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," she said.

The premier said in order to protect the safety and welfare of the people, the parliament has passed laws and made changes to them, which the judges utilise to ensure justice for all.

"Since I am in power, I will do whatever is necessary for the development of the judiciary system," she said.

She stated that her government established special tribunals to handle cases brought under the Anti-Terrorism Act.



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Women of Baolia village in Barishal's Banaripara upazila picking Boro seedlings as the Boro farming season (usually between December and February) approaches. Each farmer is paid around Tk 100 for 80 bundles -- each of which consists of at least 200 seedlings. PHOTO: TITU DAS

REFUGEE CAMP Rohingya leader shot dead in Ukhiya

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya community leader, locally known as "Majhi", was shot dead by unidentified criminals at a camp in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar.

The incident took place at Balukhali camp (East) in the upazila around 10:30am yesterday.

Shafi Ullah, 40, was a resident and the leader of Block B of Balukhali Camp 8, said Sheikh Md Ali, officer-in-charge of Ukhiya Police Station.

A group of assailants ambushed Shafi when he was returning home. The attackers opened fire, leaving Shafi dead on the spot.

The body was sent to the morgue at Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

Police are trying to arrest the criminals, the official added.

Historic winter storm kills 55 across US

25 killed in western New York alone

AGENCIES

US emergency crews counted the grim costs of a colossal winter storm that brought Christmas chaos to millions, especially in hard-hit western New York, where the death toll reached 25 yesterday in what authorities described as a "war with mother nature."

Blizzard conditions continue to prevail in parts of the US Northeast, the stubborn remnants of a massive sprawl of extreme weather including severe cold that gripped the country over several days, causing widespread power outages, travel delays and at least 55 deaths nationwide.

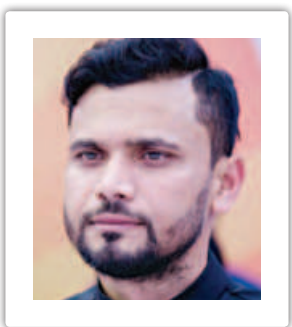
The extreme weather forced the cancellation of more than 15,000 flights in recent days including more than 1,700 yesterday, according to tracking site Flightaware.com.

Buffalo -- a US city that is no stranger to foul winter weather -- has been buried under staggering amounts of snow, with the National Weather Service forecasting up to 14 inches (0.35 meters) yesterday in addition to the several feet that have already left the city marooned, with a virtual collapse of emergency services.

The blizzard has stubbornly refused to release its grip on western New York's Erie County, where Buffalo is located and which has become the epicenter of the crisis.

"In addition to the 13 confirmed deaths yesterday, the Erie County Department of Health medical examiner's office has confirmed an additional 12 deaths, bringing

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Mashrafe now AL's youth, sports secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was elected the youth and sports secretary of Awami League yesterday.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader made the announcement after a presidium meeting of the party chaired by AL President Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban.

Hasina proposed the name of the former Bangladesh cricket team captain and the incumbent lawmaker from Narail 2 and the meeting endorsed it.

The ruling party elected

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METRO RAIL

Rally, fireworks to adorn grand opening

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities are completing the last-minute preparations before the grand opening of the country's first metro rail tomorrow.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the metro rail at the playground of sector-15 (C-1 Block) in the capital's Uttara at 11:00am by unveiling a plaque, according to sources in the road transport and highways division.

There will be fireworks.

The PM will then take part in a munajat and a civic rally at the ground.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Secretary of Road Transport and Highways Division ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, DMTCL Managing Director MAN Siddique, Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Iwama Kiminori and Jica chief in Dhaka Ichiguchi Tomohide are expected to deliver speeches.

She will unveil a commemorative stamp and a banknote there.

Afterwards, she will go to Uttara

North Station and buy an MRT Pass, they said. She will then wave the green flag to a train at the station and then get on the next train as the first passenger and take a ride to Agargaon. She is expected to be accompanied by around 200 guests during her journey.

Ruling Awami League is preparing to assemble a huge crowd to mark the launching of metro rail and to showcase one of the biggest achievements of the government

"Our preparations are almost complete," Nuri told The Daily Star yesterday.

Quader would brief the media today at the Agargaon Station ahead of the inauguration ceremony of the Mass Rapid Transit Line-6.

Meanwhile, ruling Awami League

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'Stem cell plasters' used to repair baby's heart defect

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Doctors have used "stem cell plasters" to treat a baby living with congenital heart disease for the first time, an advance that may lead to a new procedure to repair the condition without needing as many open-heart operations.

Congenital heart defects are a common anomaly seen in babies even before they are born, with studies suggesting around 13 babies are diagnosed with the condition every day in the UK.

These anomalies include defects to the baby's heart valves, the major blood vessels in and around the heart and the development of holes in the heart, explained researchers at the University of Bristol in the UK.

While doctors currently perform open-heart surgery to temporarily repair the problem, scientists said the materials used for these patches or replacement heart valves are not completely biological and cannot grow with the baby.



A man and a boy walk across the frozen Reflecting Pool towards the Lincoln Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, DC, yesterday. Inset, Vehicles are seen trapped under heavy snow in the streets of downtown Buffalo, New York.

PHOTO: AFP

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