

Progress of Bangladesh evident to all Says Hasina

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday that Bangladesh is now a respected country because of its progress over the last 15 years is evident to all.

"Today's Bangladesh is different from what it was 15 years ago. Now, all respect it. Bangladesh is now a recognised role model for development," she said.

The premier made the remark while receiving donations from various financial organisations for the Prime Minister's Relief Fund at her official residence Gano Bhaban, reports UNB.

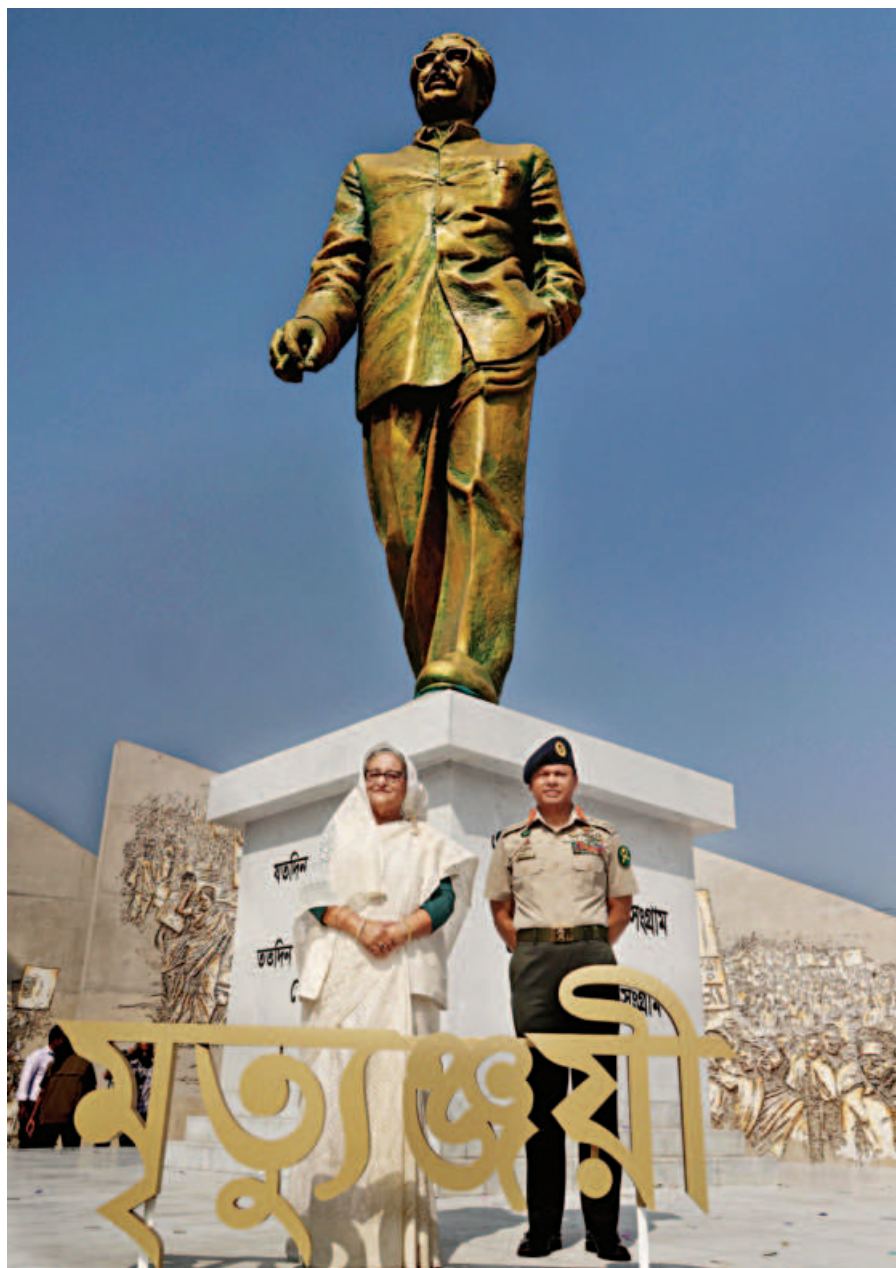
The donation was received in order to distribute blankets and other warm clothing to people in need during the upcoming winter season.

The prime minister urged everyone to work together to ensure that the country's progress continues in the future.

She said many do not view her success in developing the country and improving people's socioeconomic conditions over the last 15 years positively.

"I have been in charge of the country for a long

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed pose for a photo in front of Bangabandhu's sculpture Mrityunjayee in the capital's Bijoy Sarani area yesterday. The premier inaugurated Mrityunjayee Prangan there.

PHOTO: BSS

India, USA exchange views on Bangladesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India and the US yesterday discussed the recent political developments in Bangladesh ahead of the national polls at a high-level meeting in New Delhi.

"We shared our perspectives very clearly on Bangladesh. We shared very clearly how we look at situations in different parts of the world, including Bangladesh, with the US side during discussions," Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra told a special media briefing.

The media briefing followed annual "two-plus-two" talks between visiting US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin and their Indian counterparts S Jaishankar and Rajnath Singh.

The talks between India and the US aim to boost defence cooperation and align the policy objectives of the two countries.

Amid allegations of irregularities in the last two national elections, the US is calling for a free, fair and peaceful election in Bangladesh, a country considered strategically important under US's Indo-Pacific Strategy.

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PM opens Ctg to Cox's Bazar rail line today

Train service from Dhaka to beach town starts on December 1



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cox's Bazar will join the railway network today when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar railway line.

Bangladesh Railway will start passenger train service on December 1.

In a separate programme, the premier will also inaugurate the channel of the country's first deep-sea port in Maheshkhali's Matarbari today and lay the foundation stone of its first terminal.

Numerous banners and festoons put up along the roads have given the coastal district a festive look.

These two projects are among the several mega projects being implemented in the district, which has already drawn international attention for sheltering 1.2 million Rohingyas from Myanmar.

Cox's Bazar is also an integral part

of the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt or BIG-B initiative, being jointly implemented by Bangladesh and Japan aiming to accelerate industrial agglomeration.

Transport expert Prof Md Hadiuzzaman said apart from opening the rail line, the government is also expanding the Cox's Bazar airport runway to upgrade it to an international airport.

It is building the much-needed deep-sea port in the district, and planning to expand the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway to a four-lane one, he said.

"So, with the multi-modal integration and direct access facilities, Cox's Bazar is being turned into a regional transport hub," Hadiuzzaman told The Daily Star.

Now, the authorities have to work to turn the entire corridor stretching from South Chattogram to Cox's Bazar into

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153 vehicles torched since October 28

Say police; BNP claims over 10,000 activists held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 153 vehicles, including 23 motorcycles, were torched across the country during the one-day hartal and nine days of blockade enforced by the BNP between October 28 and November 9.

The motorcycles, mostly of cops, were set ablaze on the day of the BNP's grand rally in the capital on October 28, according to data from the police and the Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Sixty-four buses were torched in the capital during the same period, and 64 cases were filed over the incidents.

Kh Mahid Uddin, additional commissioner (crime and operations) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, revealed this information at a press conference at the DMP Media Centre yesterday.

The BNP has called another 48-hour nationwide blockade of road, rail and waterways from 6:00am tomorrow demanding resignation of the government and general election under a non-party neutral administration.

The party yesterday claimed that at least 260 of its leaders and activists were arrested in nine cases filed in 24 hours preceding yesterday afternoon. Around 1,055 BNP men were accused in those cases, BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said at a virtual press briefing.

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Ballot stuffing won't go unnoticed

CEC tells polls officials, asks them to ensure people get to vote

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If ballot stuffing goes on inside a polling station, someone will take footage of it and the Election Commission's neutrality would be questioned, said Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal yesterday.

Speaking at the inauguration of a training session for polls officials, he urged top field-level administration and police officials to remain neutral while performing election duties.

"If you need to exercise your power for the sake of performing duties, do it.

"Voters should be able to cast their votes independently. That's what we want to see," he said.

Election commissioners also urged the officials to make sure no one is barred from exercising their voting rights.

If the ballot boxes are stuffed inside [the polling booth], someone may capture the incident. When it is aired, our neutrality may be called into question ... Our failures and inefficiencies will come to the fore.

Kazi Habibur Awal
Chief Election Commissioner

The second round of the two-day training for divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners, deputy inspectors general of police, superintendents of police, and regional election officers began at the Electoral

Training Institute in the capital.

This training for divisional commissioners of Dhaka, Mymensingh, and Sylhet, metropolitan police commissioners of Dhaka and Gazipur, DIGs of Dhaka, Mymensingh, and Sylhet ranges, DCs and SPs of Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Mymensingh and Narsingdi was slated for October 29-30. But it was deferred twice due to BNP-Jamaat's programmes.

Habibur said the whole country is enthusiastic about the election. "It even got a global dimension. Countries around the world are interested in this election."

DCs and SPs play an important role during elections and they have been instructed to work in a coordinated way, he added.

"The election is nearing. Schedule for the polls might be

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400 YEARS OF 'FIRST FOLIO' Shakespeare portrait sent to edge of space

CNN ONLINE



William Shakespeare's influence over the world remains unwavering more than four centuries after the renowned dramatist began his career.

To mark the continued resonance of the famed playwright's words 400 years after the publication of his "First Folio" on November 8, 1623, British

filmmaker Jack Jewers has sent a portrait of Shakespeare along with a speech from one of his best-known works to the edge of space.

Around 1,000 copies of the folio, originally published as "Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories & Tragedies," were printed seven years after his death. The volume of more than 900 pages included a collection of 36 plays. Without it, 18 plays, including "Macbeth," would have been lost, according to Reuters.

Attached to a weather balloon, with a camera and GPS tracker, the portrait, accompanied by a speech from "A Midsummer Night's Dream," was taken to Earth's upper atmosphere, according to a press release from InVerse Films. A team from aerospace company Sent Into Space helped with the space flight.

Tigresses move to sixth with Pak series win

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh moved to sixth on the ICC Women's Championship standings after clinching the three-match ODI series against Pakistan with a seven-wicket win in the final game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The top six teams on the table will qualify for the 2025 World Cup directly, while the other two spots will be filled through qualifiers, in the eight-team tournament which will take place in India.

Bangladesh have 11 points from 12 matches, with three wins, a solitary tie, four losses and as many no results.

"We are moving ahead keeping in mind that we want to avoid playing in the [World Cup] qualifiers. The more points we can collect, the better our chances will become to play the tournament directly. Our focus is just that going into every series," skipper Nigar Sultana Joty told the reporters after the game yesterday.

A poor batting display let Bangladesh down in the opening match last week when they were bundled out for 81, while bowlers bailed them out in the second match where they posted 169. The batters finally showed up yesterday as a record 125-run opening partnership for Bangladesh from Murshida Khatun and Fargana Haque set up a 167-run chase.

Fargana scored a 113-ball 62 as she put away five fours

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Bangladesh players pose for a photograph as they celebrate their seven-wicket victory, which helped them to a 2-1 series win, following the third Women's ODI against Pakistan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Full prisons and false charges' Guardian article highlights political crackdown in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Guardian yesterday ran a story on the current political situation in Bangladesh focusing on the arrest and harassment of the opposition leaders and activists amid BNP's anti-government movement just months before the national election.

In the report, the British newspaper mentioned that almost 10,000 opposition leaders, supporters and activists were arrested after protests broke out against the government.

"The sheer number of arrests of opposition leaders, activists and protesters in Bangladesh in the past few weeks is a good indicator of how

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