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FROM: PIO, PID, DHAKA
Fax: 9540553/9540026
E-mail: piddhaka@gmail.com
piddhaka@yahoo.com
Web: www.pressinform.gov.bd

News Brief

Thousands of people thronged the streets and different popular places in the capital and elsewhere across the country yesterday as the nation celebrated its traditional and vibrant festival Pahela Baishakh to welcome the Bangla New Year. President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages greeting the countrymen on the occasion. The government organized various programmes to mark the day. The programmes of the day began at dawn in the city with the musical soiree of Chhayanat at Ramna Batamul. The traditional Mongol Shovajatras were brought out at divisional, district and upazila levels as it earned the international recognition.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the countrymen to stay alert so that any evil force against the country's heritage, language and culture, cannot come to power. Sheikh Hasina made the urge as she was exchanging greetings of Bangla Naboborsho with the party leaders and workers at her official residence Ganabhaban yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday greeted all Freedom Fighters of the country on the occasion of Pahela Baishakh. The Premier sent flowers, fruits and sweetmeats to the war-wounded freedom fighters and members of the martyred families at Martyred and War-wounded Freedom Fighters' Rehabilitation Centre on Gaznavi Road at Mohammadpur in the city.

Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury has said, Pahela Baishakh is a vibrant festival of Bangali culture. She said this while addressing the inaugural function of "Alponay Bangladesh", a street painting stretching across Manik Miah Avenue to welcome the Pahela Baishakh.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves Dhaka today on an eight-day official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. A Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight carrying the Prime Minister and members of her entourage will depart Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport for Dammam in Saudi Arabia today afternoon. In Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Hasina will join a parade and concluding ceremony of a joint grand military exercise. The Prime Minister will leave KSA for London on April 16 by a special flight to join the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting Summit.

The Bangladesh government and the UNHCR in Geneva on Friday signed a MoU relating to the return of Rohingyas to their homeland in Myanmar. The MOU, signed by the Foreign Secretary Md. Shahidul Haque and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, established a framework of cooperation between Bangladesh and UNHCR on the safe, dignified and sustainable return of Rohingyas in line with international standards.

Tajik Foreign Minister Aslov Sirodjiddin Muhridinovich has assured Bangladesh to extend his country's full support on the Rohingya issue. The assurance came when State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam had an official meeting with the Tajik Foreign Minister in Tashkent on Friday.

Dhaka South City Corporation set Guinness Book of World Record by organising a huge symbolic cleaning programme in the city yesterday. The city corporation made the new record when 15,313 people gathered to clean the road between Golap Shah Mazar and Zero Point in the capital.

Kamrun Nahar
Principal Information Officer
Ph-02-9546091