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**News Brief**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon the countrymen to stay alert against cohorts of 1971 war criminals. The PM made the call while taking part in a discussion to mark the Ekushey February and the International Mother Language Day in the Krishibid Institution auditorium at Farmgate in Dhaka yesterday. Sheikh Hasina in her address asked all to remain alert against those who upset the dignity of Independence and handed over the national flag to war criminals and anti-liberation forces.

The Prime Minister Gold Medal is being given to the university graduates for their outstanding academic results in honors examinations of 2015 and 2016. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will hand over the gold medals among 265 students at a function at her office today.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith has underscored the need for increasing the production of cotton to meet its growing demand in the country's ready-made garment sector. The Minister laid the emphasis while speaking at the inaugural session of the two-day 'Global Cotton Summit-2018' at a city hotel in Dhaka on Friday. Finance Minister said, the raw materials of the RMG sector are now being imported. We can meet only three percent of cotton demand from local sources. He stressed on increasing local production to narrow the huge gap.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Mohammed Nasim has said, the government has been establishing welfare centers for mothers and newborns at every union of the country to provide more health care to them. He said this while inaugurating two separate newly made 10-bed 'Mother and Children Welfare Center' at Ghoshongar and Akbar union under Patnitala upazila in Naogaon on Friday. The government would recruit 10,000 doctors in its current term to smoothen health services in the public hospitals across the country, he said.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan has said, the government never obstructs holding of any peaceful democratic movement. The Minister said this to media after attending a meeting on the law and order at Barura Upazila Parishad in Comilla yesterday. The Minister asked the members of law enforcement agencies to be tough enough against drugs. The government is determined to stamp out drug menace like militancy, he added.

The government has taken a special project titled 'She Power Project' to help create more women entrepreneurs in the ICT sector. State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak told media yesterday. The project is designed for women empowerment, he added.

Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) has won 'Open Group President Awards-2018' for innovation in developing Bangladesh National Enterprise Architecture. Open Group, a global consortium, at a function in Bangalore, India conferred the award on BCC.

A multinational exercise on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations named 'Exercise: Shanti Doot-4' will be held at Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) of Rajendrapur Cantonment from Monday. BIPSOT Chief Instructor Brig General Tofael Ahmed said this while briefing reporters at the ISPR office at Dhaka Cantonment yesterday. The event jointly organised by Bangladesh Army and the United States Pacific Command under the Global Peace Operations Initiative Program will end on March 12, he added.

The 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atrocious carnage at Pilkhana BDR Headquarters in the capital is being observed today. A total of 74 people, including 57 army officers, were killed in the carnage.

A five-day long Bangladesh Expo 2018 opened in Nepal on Friday. The event launched at the Vrikuti Mandap Exhibition Hall in Kathmandu is being participated by different organisations of Bangladesh.

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