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News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said, the government wants to make the children of the country as worthy citizens keeping them away from terrorism, militancy, drugs and corruption by engaging them in sports and cultural activities. The Premier said this while addressing the award-giving ceremony of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Boys U-17 and Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Girls' U-17 National Gold Cup Football Tournament at Bangabandhu National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday. The Prime Minister witnessed the final match and distributed trophies. Barisal Division became champions in the boys' section while Khulna Division in the girls' section.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is attending as chief guest at a function at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka today marking the National Insurance Day which is being celebrated in the country for the first time. On March 1 in 1960, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman started working at the then Alpha Insurance Company. Therefore, the government has decided to celebrate March 1 as the National Insurance Day every year.

The historical month of independence began today giving a heartbreaking reminder to the genocide that the Pakistani occupation forces carried out in this country from March to mid-December in 1971. The nation will observe the 49th anniversary of Independence by paying the utmost homage to the war heroes who made Bangladesh a sovereign state through a nine-month War of Independence that began on March 26, 1971 under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The month also made the nation proud for the historical 7th March speech of Father of the Nation which has been recognised by the UNESCO as part of the world's documentary heritage.

Sheikh Rehana, younger daughter of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and Bangabandhu's grand-daughter Saima Wazed Hossain paid tributes to the Father of the Nation by placing wreaths at his portrait at Bekar Hostel in Kolkata on Friday. Being a student of the then Islamia College in Kolkata, Bangabandhu used to live at the room No. 24 of Bekar Hostel during his student life.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader at a press conference Dhaka yesterday said, slight increase of power and water tariffs is unlikely to cause people's sufferings. He said, the government wants to ensure cent percent use of the power in the 'Mujib Year'. Speaking about BNP's movement seeking Khaleda Zia's bail Obaidul Quader said, BNP is waging demonstrations not against any political leader or party rather they have been carrying out an undeclared war against the court as the court did not grant bail for Khaleda Zia.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal inaugurating a police station in Chuadanga yesterday said, there is no room for communalism in the country and the ongoing situation in India will have no impact on non-communal Bangladesh as the law enforcement agencies remain vigilant. About expelled Jubo League leader Shamima Noor Papia, he said the offenders are being brought under trial after identifying them. No godfather or godmother will be spared, he added.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmu addressing a function at Ranguniya in Chattogram yesterday said, students should be given proper education alongside developing sense of modesty and civility to help build a developed nation. Meanwhile, the Information

Minister addressing an anti-drug rally in Chattogram yesterday said, during the ongoing drive against drug abuse, no mercy is being shown to anyone irrespective of political affiliation and this stance will be continued.

Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen has paid a visit to the Bangladesh Embassy in Paris on Friday. During the visit, Dr. Momen inspected the Embassy's consular service facilities and talked to the service seekers who were present there. He also enquired about the Paris Embassy's preparedness for the celebration of the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Later, the Foreign Minister addressed a function by Jalalabad Association of Paris and pledged to work with the French authorities to launch Dhaka-Paris direct flight.

Environment, Forests and Climate Change Minister Md. Shahab Uddin speaking at a function at Dhamrai in Dhaka yesterday said, around 500 illegal brick kilns and factories were destroyed last year as those kilns created air pollution in the country. Even, mobile courts are now being conducted to stop plying vehicles that cause massive smoke emission, he added.

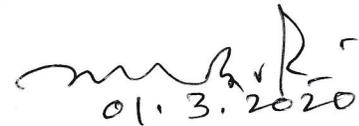
ICT State Minister Zunaid Ahmed Palak yesterday visited the proposed site of the Sheikh Kamal High-tech Park at Debiganj in Panchagarh and said, the government has taken a project to construct the Sheikh Kamal IT Park at a cost of Taka 100 crore. He also said, millions of youths will get jobs in the Mujib Year.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mahbub Ali while speaking at a function at Osmaninagar in Sylhet yesterday said, direct Biman flight on Sylhet-Heathrow route will be launched in April this year.

US Ambassador Earl R. Miller speaking at a function marking the ending of three-day US Trade Show in Dhaka yesterday said, the US firms stands ready to invest in Bangladesh as the USA has taken initiatives to accelerate private sector investment in the country.

A meeting of LDC Ambassadors accredited to the United Nations was held in New York on Friday with Permanent Representative of Bangladesh Rabab Fatima in the chair. Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished Fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue also spoke at the function. It was informed in the meeting that twelve countries including Bangladesh will walk out of the LDC group in the next decade.

Deputy High Commission of Bangladesh in Kolkata has taken year-long series of programmes on the occasion of the 'Mujib Year'. As part of the programmes, all officials and employees of the Deputy High Commission will pay homage to Father of the Nation by placing wreaths at his mausoleum at Tungipara today.



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