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**News Brief**

The Nation celebrated the closing ceremony of the 10-day celebrations of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Golden Jubilee of Independence at the National Parade Square yesterday. Chaired by the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the program was attended by the Indian Premier Narendra Modi. President Md. Abdul Hamid joined as the chief guest, also witnessed by Bangabandhu's youngest daughter Sheikh Rehana along with others. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveiled the official logo of the golden jubilee of independence. Sheikh Rehana, on behalf of the National Implementation Committee for the Birth Centenary Celebration of Father of the Nation, presented Modi the "Eternal Mujib" memento. During the celebration the India Government on March 22 conferred the prestigious 'Gandhi Peace Prize-2020' on Bangabandhu posthumously, recognizing his unparalleled contribution in inspiring the liberation of Bangladesh. At the closing ceremony, Sheikh Rehana accompanied by Sheikh Hasina received the award from Narendra Modi. UN Secretary-General António Guterres and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's congratulatory video messages were screened at the function, while messages from US President Joe Biden, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan were read out. Later, a colourful cultural function and fireworks were presented at the closing program of the 10-day celebrations. Earlier in the morning, Indian Premier Narendra Modi arrived in Dhaka on a two-day state visit to attend the grand celebration programme. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received him at the airport. A red carpet was rolled out at the airport to welcome Narendra Modi. Shortly afterward he visited the National Martyrs' Memorial in Savar and paid homage to the heroic martyrs of the Liberation War. Later, the Indian Premier paid respect to Father of the Nation at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi 32.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing the twin mega celebrations at the National Parade Ground yesterday said, joint advancement of India and Bangladesh is urgent for the development of South Asia region. Speaking as the guest of honour, the Indian Premier said, he is very happy to be an important part of the journey of Bangladesh's advancement. Recalling the 50 years of India-Bangladesh relations, he said, the governments of India and Bangladesh have realised the sensitivity of joint advancement and would continue meaningful efforts to this end. Modi said, over 130 crore people of India conveyed greetings to Bangladesh on this occasion. Paying glowing tribute to Bangabandhu, Narendra Modi said the legendary leader sacrificed his life for 'Sonar Bangla' and "it was a matter of pride for us (India) that we had the opportunity to honour Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Gandhi Peace Award".

President Md. Abdul Hamid addressing the concluding session of the 10-day grand celebrations as chief guest put emphasis on establishing principles, morality and ideals in all sectors along with building efficient leadership for the sake of the country and its people. Referring to Bangabandhu's charismatic leadership behind the birth of Bangladesh, he said, Bangabandhu never confined himself as a friend of the Bangalis only, instead he became the friend of the oppressed-exploited people of the world. Welcoming the Indian Premier Narendra Modi, the Bangladesh President expressed his deep appreciation the unstinting moral and material support of Indian political leaders and people in the 1971 war. The President also expressed sincere thanks to the government of India for its decision to confer the 'Gandhi Peace Prize 2020' to Bangabandhu. On the Rohingya repatriation issue, he said PM Sheikh Hasina has set a unique example in the history of world humanity by providing shelter to them. The President hoped that the world community, including India, would play an effective role in solving the Rohingya crisis.

While presiding over the function Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, India is irrefutably linked to Bangladesh's 1971 birth as her counterpart in the neighbouring country Narendra Modi joined Bangabandhu's Birth Centenary and the country's Independence Golden Jubilee celebrations. Sheikh Hasina simultaneously paid rich tributes to the Indian veterans who fought for Bangladesh's independence. The Bangladesh Premier urged India to take the lead role in developing a politically stable and economically vibrant South Asia in line with Modi's "neighbourhood first" policy and being the biggest country in the region. She appreciated India for sending vaccines for preventing coronavirus to the neighboring countries, including Bangladesh calling the gesture a "reflection of that policy".



President of the United States of America Joseph R. Biden, terming Bangladesh as an example of economic progress and a country of great hope and opportunity said his country values friendship with Bangladesh and look forward to strengthen the ties over the next 50 years and beyond. US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl Miller read out his President's letter in a video message that was aired at the. Russian President Vladimir Putin in his congratulatory message, screened at the function termed Bangabandhu as an "outstanding" political leader while UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson hailed Bangladesh as "one of the fastest-growing economies in the world" and emphasised that the UK and Bangladesh share the ambition to create an even more prosperous and environmentally-sustainable future.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in a message addressed to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the occasion said, his country will deepen relations and cooperation with Bangladesh. Joint efforts in 2020, declared as "Mujib Borsho" on the occasion of Bangabandhu's birth centenary, helped boost ties and cooperation on all areas on the basis of the common interest of peoples. French President Emmanuel Macron in his message appreciated Bangladesh's progress and said Bangabandhu would undoubtedly have been proud of the achievements of his country.

US Secretary of State Antony J Blinken in a statement said, his country recognizes Bangladesh's remarkable contributions that Dhaka has made to global development. Meanwhile, the Prince of Wales delivered a video message to everyone around the world celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh, and expressed sadness that the pandemic has prevented him from visiting Bangladesh to mark the occasion.

Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres in a video message screened at the concluding ceremony extended his warm greetings and congratulations said, Bangladesh is playing valuable role at the world stage on the issues of social development and disaster preparedness and the largest troop contributor to the UN peacekeeping operations, chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum and host of thousands of forcibly displaced Rohingya people from Myanmar.


Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi jointly inaugurated "Bangabandhu-Bapu Digital Exhibition" in Bangladesh commemorating the two most-reputed leaders of this subcontinent Father of the Nation of Bangladesh and India, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib and Mahatma Gandhi at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital yesterday. Both the Prime Ministers inaugurated the exhibition in New Delhi on December 17 last during a virtual summit. After Bangladesh, the exhibition will move to the United Nations for display and later it will culminate in Kolkata in 2022.

Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen discussed bilateral and connectivity issues with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking joint efforts for the development of all countries in the region. Dr. Momen also sought effective role from India in the UN Security Council. He informed the reporters after the call on with Narendra Modi at Hotel Sonargaon in Dhaka yesterday. Meanwhile, Indian Premier while a four-member delegation lead by Raushan Ershad, Deputy Leader of the Opposition of Jatiya Party meets him at Hotel Sonargaon said, he will do his best to ink a water sharing deal on Teesta and other common rivers with Bangladesh. Modi came up with the assurance.

After few hours of landing in Bangladesh, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted in Bangla thanking Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for according him a special welcome at the airport. Meanwhile, at the second day of his visit, Narendra Modi will visit the Mausoleum of Bangabandhu at Tungipara in Gopalganj. He is expected to visit the Orakandi temple in Kashiani upazila of Gopalganj and the Jessoreswari Devi Temple at Ishwaripur under Shyamnagar in Satkhira district. He will hold a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Prime Minister's Office. At the same time, in the presence of the prime ministers of the two countries, various MoUs will be inked and a number of projects to be inaugurated virtually. Later, the Indian premier will meet President Md. Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud said, those who are busy with plotting against the country and the nation even after fifty years of independence should be rooted out. He said to reporters after placing wreath at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi 32 in the capital yesterday.

With the death of 33 more people yesterday, the number of deaths from Covid-19 in Bangladesh rose to 8,830. At the same time recovery count rose to 5,31,951, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. With the detection of 3,737 new cases, the total number of Covid-19 cases rose to 5,88,132. A total of 65,63,026 people have so far been registered to receive COVID-19 vaccines till yesterday. Total number of vaccine receivers stood at 51,39,456.

  
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