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News Brief

Bangladesh is considered one of the key emerging economic powerhouses in South Asia. This was stated by Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa while addressing at the third day of the event celebrating the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence as the guest of honor at the National Parade Ground yesterday. He said Bangladesh remains an important trading and investment partner for his country. Paying deep tributes to Bangabandhu, the Sri Lankan Premier said, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman dedicated his entire life for wellbeing of the people of Bangladesh. Despite setbacks, Bangladesh continues to flourish under the apt leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina that is the best honour to Bangabandhu, he added. Rajapaksa said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's proposal to promote a "Blue Economy" in the Bay of Bengal continues to inspire their approach on maritime affairs. Despite many challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, Rajapaksa said he was here in person today with the message of solidarity from the people of Sri Lanka.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while delivering speech at the third-day programmes of the nationwide celebrations of the Birth Centenary of Bangabandhu and golden jubilee of the Independence urged all to take a vow to materialise dreams of Bangabandhu by building a developed and prosperous Bangladesh through bringing smiles on the faces of distressed people. Describing Sri Lanka as a close friend of Bangladesh, the Premier said, cordial relationship between the people of our two countries will be stronger and stronger in future.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov, in a video message said Russia remembers Bangabandhu, Father of the Nation, as an outstanding political figure, a devoted fighter for the freedom and happiness of his people and a true friend of Russia. Lavrov said Bangabandhu was the first ever Bangladeshi top-ranking official to pay an official visit to Moscow in March 1972, less than two months after the diplomatic recognition of the State of Bangladesh by the Soviet Union. The Russian Foreign Minister said symbolically, the commemoration of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's centenary is followed back to back by the celebration of the 50th anniversary of independence of Bangladesh. He said Dhaka actively engages in addressing current global challenges, including fight against poverty and climate change. As a major troop contributor to the UN peacekeeping operations, it continues to largely contribute to the conflict settlement process across the globe, he said. Lavrov assured Russia is ready to continue bilateral political dialogue and mutually beneficial practical cooperation with Bangladesh.

Earlier, Sri Lankan Prime Minister arrived in Dhaka on a two-day visit to join the golden jubilee celebration of Bangladesh's independence and birth centenary of Bangabandhu. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received her Sri Lankan counterpart at the airport. A guard of honor was given to the Sri Lankan premier by a smartly turned out contingent drawn from Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force there. As part of the programme schedule, the Sri Lankan Premier paid homage by placing a wreath at the National Martyrs' Memorial at Savar. He attended a cultural programme and banquet hosted by the Bangladesh Prime Minister at Hotel Intercontinental in Dhaka last evening.

Visiting Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa assured that Colombo would cast its vote for Bangladesh in next membership election to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC). Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen said this at a press briefing after calling on Sri Lankan Premier yesterday. Currently, Bangladesh is a member of the UNHCR for the 2019-21 tenure while Dhaka would like to run again for the membership election for the next three-year period, he said. During the meeting, Bangladesh Foreign Minister briefed the Sri Lankan Premier about the current situation of Rohingya crisis and sought Colombo's proactive support in this regard as a friendly nation of Myanmar. The Sri Lankan Premier assured that his country would remain beside Bangladesh in resolving the crisis. Later, a Foreign Ministry's press release added that Bangladesh also seek Sri Lankan support in its election as the regional director of WHO's South East Asia Regional Office-SEARO in 2023. The Sri Lankan diplomats showed interest to build its permanent Sri Lankan mission building in Dhaka as like India, the USA and Turkey.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader at a regular press briefing on contemporary issues yesterday said, those who destroy the country's communal harmony are the allies of BNP. He said, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government is committed to ensuring coexistence and security of the people of all religions. The government has already instructed the authorities concerned to take stern actions against those involved in the Sunamganj incident, those involved in this incident should also be punished likewise in the past, he added.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud said, the incident of Shalla in Sunamganj is part of conspiracy against the country. While addressing a memorial meeting organized by the Zillur Rahman Parishad at the National Press Club in Dhaka yesterday he said, the conspiracy is being fuelled when different heads of state are visiting the country to discuss about Bangladesh's progress on the occasion of the Mujib Year and the golden jubilee of independence. Recalling the late President Zillur Rahman with deep respect, the Information and Broadcasting Minister said, Zillur Rahman is the symbol of politeness and good behavior.

Special doa and munajat were held at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation and golden jubilee of independence of Bangladesh. Islamic Foundation Bangladesh organised the special events after Jumma prayers, according to a press release yesterday.

The US House of Representatives has introduced a resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of our independence recognizing leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his declaration of independence on March 26, 1971. It also recognized courage of freedom fighters and subsequent nine-month long Bangladesh's liberation war that led to displacing and killing millions of Bengalese, according to a press release of Bangladesh mission in Washington DC received in Dhaka yesterday.

The World Bank's Board of Executive Directors on Thursday approved \$500 million in financing from the International Development Association to help Bangladesh vaccinate 54 million people against COVID-19, said a World Bank press release yesterday.

With the death of 18 more people yesterday, the number of deaths from Covid-19 in Bangladesh rose to 8,642. At the same time recovery count rose to 5,19,141, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. With the detection of 1899 new cases, the total number of Covid-19 cases rose to 5,66,838. A total of 60,33,269 people have so far been registered to receive COVID-19 vaccines till yesterday. Total number of vaccine receivers stood at 46,87,824.

Swedish Minister for International Development Cooperation Per Olsson Fridh, at the conclusion of his visit to Bangladesh yesterday said, Sweden will remain a partner of Bangladesh for its future journey as the partnership in the past decades grew stronger. During the weeklong visit from March 13, the Minister had constructive discussions with representatives of the government, including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Dr. AK Abdul Momen, Finance Minister Mustafa Kamal and Environment Minister Md. Shahab Uddin.

The eighth death anniversary of former President Zillur Rahman, a veteran politician, a Language Movement hero, an organiser of the Liberation War and one of the close associates of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, is being observed today. Zillur Rahman died of old-age complications at a Singapore hospital on March 20 in 2013.



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