

Turkey to consider duty-free access for Bangladeshi goods

Says foreign secretary

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Turkey will consider duty-free access for Bangladesh products to its market and has agreed to enhance trading and economic cooperation between the countries, Foreign Secretary Hemayet-uddin said yesterday.

"Turkey has taken note of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's call for granting duty-free access for Bangladesh products like RMG, footwear and leather goods. We are hopeful that we'll have a positive outcome to this effect in the upcoming meeting of Joint Economic Commission," he added.

Briefing the diplomatic correspondents about the prime minister's four-day visit to Turkey, the foreign secretary said a high-powered business delegation from Ankara may come to Bangladesh next month to explore the potential for investment in textile, leather, construction and other sectors.

Describing the visit as constructive and fruitful, he said, "An enormous interest seems to have grown among the Turkish entrepreneurs about Bangladesh's congenial

investment climate and cheap workforce."

Hemayetuddin told the post-visit press briefing that the Bangladesh-Turkey Joint Economic Commission, which has not met since 1992, will hold talks in Ankara in October this year to evolve a mechanism for enhancing two-way trade and investment.

According to official statistics, the volume of bilateral trade was \$114 million in 2004-05 when Bangladesh exported goods worth around \$76 million to Turkey.

The foreign secretary said Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan during the official talks assured Khaleda of taking the initiative to invest in agriculture and agro-processing sector.

He said Turkey expressed its willingness to participate in implementation of various construction projects particularly those financed by Asian Development Bank (ADB). They also wanted to provide Bangladesh railway carriages.

Hemayetuddin said Turkey has also decided to increase the number of scholarships for Bangladeshi

students from 30 to 70 and train the country's young diplomats in international relations.

Bangladesh will welcome Turkish students for higher studies in medical and engineering.

He said the next JEC meeting will discuss all these matters in detail. About not holding the JEC meet for the last 14 years, he said there might have been lapses on both the sides, but now they see potentials in the changed global scenario.

Besides, he said, the two prime ministers discussed international issues of common concern including the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan.

They stressed the need for reforming the OIC to make it an action-oriented body and develop human resources and trade among the member states. The two leaders expressed resolve to combat international terrorism and make endeavours to remove 'Islamophobia'.

The foreign secretary said the visit will hopefully advance the bilateral relations and cooperation. He said it has already marked a tremendous political impact on Turkey.

He said the Turkish people still remember the support given by Bangladesh people in their struggle for independence. They appreciate the literary works of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

"We have not forgotten the support of the people of Bangladesh during the Turkish War of Independence," Hemayetuddin quoted the Turkish premier as saying.

He said Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer during his meeting with Khaleda described Bangladeshi people as their brothers.

Secretary of the Foreign Ministry AHM Moniruzzaman, Additional Foreign Secretary Tuhid Hossain Islam, Director General of External Publicity Wing Zahurul Haque and other high officials were present at the briefing.

BSF kills 3 in 2 days

STAR REPORT

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down three Bangladeshi citizens at Baghadanga border point in Chuadanga and Wahedpur in Chapainawabganj in the last two days.

In Chuadanga, the Indian border guards shot Mintu when he was going to another village within Bangladesh territory through an approach road to Indian border at about 4:00am.

Mintu died on the spot. He hails from Sazia village of Moheshpur upazila in Jhenidah, report our Kushtia correspondent.

Later, the BSF dragged the body into Indian territory and left near main pillar no 60.

The 35 BDR Battalion sent a letter to their counterpart protesting the incident and asking for a flag meeting. The Indian side did not respond by yesterday evening.

UNB reports from Chapainawabganj: The BSF of Noorpur outpost opened fire on the cow traders near the Wahedpur frontier when they were bringing cows into Bangladesh from India through the border on Saturday evening, BDR sources said.

The dead were identified as Bashiruddin, 18, of Trishrasia village and Tofazzal, 25, of Daktarpara village in Shibganj upazila. Identity of the Indian citizen could not be known immediately. The BSF took away the bodies.

The incident took place 2 kilometres off the zero point at Wahedpur, BDR sources added.

11 honoured

Ayojan, a cultural organisation, has given Honorary Awards 2006 to eleven personalities for outstanding contribution in their respective fields, says a press release.

The awardees are Dr Jasim-uddin Ahmed, Prof Dr Arup Ratan Chowdhury, Kabi Sayema Chowdhury, M Aman Ullah, Moinuddin Kalam, M Emdadul Haq Badsha, poet Advocate Sahid-unnabi, Syed Doud Ibne Alam, Akhterunnahar Alo, Mirza Nurul Gani Shovan and Anisur Rahman Ratan.

The awards were handed over to the recipients at a function at Kabi Sufia Kamal auditorium of National Museum in the city recently.

Ayojan also has accorded a reception to Dr Lutfar Rahman, chief cardiac surgeon, Lab Aid Cardiac Hospital for his outstanding contribution in medicine.

Marking the Independence Day and ninth founding anniversary of the organisation, Ayojan also held a discussion on 'Independence and Today's Bangladesh' and cultural programme.

State Minister for Water Resources Goutam Chakrabarty, Khaleda Panna, MP, Dr Jasim Uddin and Ayojan President Arshad Alam spoke at the function, presided over by litterateur Dr Ashraf Siddique.

Poor get only 3pc of govt health services

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Accountability will have to be ensured in private and public healthcare centres so that the poor people can get proper health services there, said the speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They stressed the need for strict monitoring of the activities of different healthcare centres to enforce the accountability.

The speakers said the poor people receive only three percent of their required health services from the public hospitals.

They also said the mismanagement and corruption in the healthcare system is mainly responsible for this.

The discussion titled 'Poor People's Access to Health Services' was organised by Peoples Health Movement (PHM) in association with Action Aid Bangladesh at LGED auditorium in the city.

The discussion was presided over by PHM Chairman Mohammad Shafiquddin.

Prof Abul Barakat of Dhaka University presented a research paper titled 'Barriers in poor people's access to public healthcare facilities in Bangladesh' at the discussion.

The study, conducted on 266 poor families at six divisions in the country, revealed that 23 percent of the poor who badly need healthcare services do not go to healthcare centres for lack of money.

Besides, distance of medical

centres, lack of knowledge, psychosocial and cultural barriers are also responsible for this.

"Budget allocation should be increased for the poor and it should be ensured that the outcome of the additional allocation goes to them," Dr Barakat recommended, adding that the attitude of the service centres should be poor-friendly.

He said the government should change the essential drug policy as it compels the poor to spend most of their money for medicine.

Dr Zafarul Chowdhury of Gonoswasta Kendra stressed the need for institutional accountability and asked the government to manufacture medicines of AIDS, tuberculosis and cancer so that the poor can buy them at cheaper prices.

Khushi Kabir, executive director of Nijera Kori, said the health sector should not be transferred to private sector, but if so, stern monitoring should be maintained to provide healthcare services to the poor people.

Later at the public hearing session, people who faced problems in getting access to healthcare services narrated their bitter experiences.

Country Director of Action Aid Bangladesh Nasreen Huq facilitated the discussion.

PM returns home

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister (PM) Khaleda Zia returned home early yesterday ending her four-day visit to Turkey.

Minister, chiefs of the three armed forces, diplomats and senior civil and military officials greeted the PM as she arrived at Zia International Airport at 1:54am.

Earlier, she was given a hearty send off when she left Istanbul for Dhaka Saturday evening. Turkish Minister for Cultural Affairs Ninet Chubukcu and Governor of Istanbul Maumner Gulur waved goodbye to the PM at the Kamal Ataturk International Airport.

Khaleda left for Ankara on Wednesday on a four-day visit at the invitation of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. She was the first prime minister of Bangladesh to visit Turkey.

Four bodies recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police recovered four bodies in the city yesterday.

Lovely Rahman, 24, was found dead at a residential hotel at Jaikhan Road under Kotwali Police Station. The body was taken to the Mitford hospital morgue for autopsy.

Morgue sources found mark of bruises in the neck of the body. Police sources said, Lovely and one Siam Rahman rented a room at the Sufia Residential Hotel identifying themselves as husband and wife on Thursday.

The employees of the hotel informed the police as they found the room locked with the woman inside till Saturday morning.

Meanwhile, Ramna police recovered body of one Syed Azmol Haider, 55, from S Alam Hotel at Moghbazar in the city. He hailed from Netrakona.

Bishnu Lal, a resident of Ganakuli Sweeper Colony under Hazaribagh Police Station, fell from the second floor of a Super Market of Farmgate and died while he was sweeping the floor in the morning.

Shahida Akhter, 17, at South Goran area fell from the rooftop of a five storey building on Saturday night. She came to visit her sister from Shariatpur.

Police sent the bodies of Azmol Haider, Bishnu Lal and Shahida to the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) Morgue for autopsy.

Training centre for English medium schoolteachers launched in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a view to meeting growing demands of quality teachers for the English medium schools, a training centre was launched in the city yesterday.

The inaugural ceremony of International Training Centre (ITC), a venture of STS group, was held at the auditorium of International School Dhaka (ISD).

Speaking as chief guest, Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk emphasised the need for teachers' training to ensure quality education.

As there is scarcity of quality teachers' training institute in the country, he hoped that ITC would play a significant role in producing quality teachers.

Director of STS Group Tipu Munshi said, "ITC was established to enhance the teaching skills of the existing teachers to international standard. We have thereby introduced the world-renowned Edexcel level 5 teachers' training programme of the UK in the centre to expose them to information and communication technology based teachers' training programme".



PHOTO: STAR

Samajik Protirodh Committee stages a demonstration in front of the High Court in the city yesterday protesting the killings at Kansat in Chapainawabganj.

'Homeopathy can cure arsenicosis'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Homeopathic treatment can cure patients affected by arsenic, claimed a homeopath of Jhenidah yesterday.

At a press conference at the National Press Club in the city, Dr Ashit Kumar Biswas said he had been using homeopathic medicine in the treatment of arsenicosis since 1993.

Presenting a research paper on 'Arsenic problem in Bangladesh: Success of homeopathy in curing', the doctor said he has cured more than one hundred patients in his district.

He however said the disease that develops within 10 to 15 years, cannot be cured within ten to fifteen days.

Ashit urged the government to establish an arsenicosis hospital for the detection and treatment of the disease.

Assistant Prof Dr Gurudas Sarker and lecturer Dr Nazrul Islam of Mirpur Government Homeopathic Medical College and Dr MA Razzak, lecturer of Tanjim Homeopathic Medical College and Hospital, were also present at the press conference.

Jamaat, Shibir sue Inqilab editor, reporters

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islamic Chhatra Shibir filed two separate defamation cases yesterday against the editor and three reporters of the daily Inqilab for what they said was running false news linking them with the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

Mohammad Tasnim Alam, central publicity secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami and Mizanur Rahman, central student welfare secretary of Islamic Chhatra Shibir, filed the cases with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM's) Court, Dhaka.

The accused are the editor of the daily ASM Bahauddin and staff reporters Abu Zahed, Harun-ur-Rashid and Omar Faruque Al Hadi.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Syed Mohammad Mujibul Haq issued summons upon the accused to appear before it on May 21. In his complaint, Tasnim mentioned that the daily ran two stories titled 'JMB's rise under the shelter of Jamaat-e-Islami' on March 9 and 'JMB held a meeting with Jamaat-e-Islami and made bomb attacks' on March 11, which were completely false and fabricated. These news were published to tarnish the image of Jamaat, he added.

Mizanur Rahman in his complaint mentioned that the daily published a news on March 10 headlined 'JMB with the help of Shibir created bombings across the country' that was baseless and concocted.

Advocates Nazrul Islam and Golam Rahman Bhuiyan moved the cases on behalf of the complainants.

Case Against Jugantor

Former chairman of National Women's Corporation yesterday filed a defamation suit against the former editor, publisher and a reporter of the daily Jugantor for running "a series of defamatory stories on different dates".

Masuda Hossain filed the case with the CMM's court and the magistrate summoned the accused to appear before the court on May 21.

The accused are former editor of the daily Abed Khan, publisher Salma Islam and staff reporter Shafiq Alam Dolan.

Barrister Mahub Uddin Khokan and Advocate Taherul Islam moved the case on behalf of the complainant.

Training course on PR from Apr 23

Bangladesh Institute of Communication Studies and Public Relations (BICSPR) will hold a two-week training course titled 'Public Relations and Modern Techniques of Public Relations' beginning April 23, says a press release.

The course is open for professional PR men and also for people keen to build career in public relations. The last date for submitting nomination/application is April 22. Interested persons are requested to contact executive director, BICSPR (phone: 8617912, 9674224, mobile: 01715 822778) for details.

Force govt to accept reforms: Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government will not implement the opposition's reform proposals in a bid to rig the upcoming national election.

"On one hand the prime minister is saying that she will not implement the reform proposals while on the other the BNP secretary general is exchanging letters," said Hasina posing a question, "What is true?"

The opposition leader was speaking at a joining ceremony at the AL office at Dhanmondi in the city.

Akram Hossain, president member of Bangladesh Jatiya Party (Nazir) and former UP chairman of Fultala and HMA Rauf, former president of Dumuria unit of Jatiya Party (Ershad) in Khulna, and Majibul Huq, former UP chairman of Fatikhahar in Chittagong joined the AL with hundreds of their supporters.

"To establish people's franchise and ensure a free and fair election we have placed the reform proposals. Now we have to be united to force the government to accept our demand," Hasina said.

Referring to the arrest of two militant

kingpins Shaikh Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai, the AL chief said the government has failed to arrest other members of the JMB network.

Hasina said the government will have to identify the patrons of the militants, otherwise it will not be possible to curb terrorism.

She reiterated her demand for international interrogation of the two top JMB leaders alleging that they are being provided with all facilities in the name of interrogation.

Hasina was also critical of the prime minister for killing and repressing opposition leaders and workers and said, "Your master Yahya Khan could not annihilate Awami League and so you will not."

"The alliance regime is playing with the fate of the countrymen and people want to get rid of this situation," the opposition leader said.

She urged this 'terrorist, corrupt and fundamentalist' government to save the country.

Akram Hossain, HMA Rauf and Majibul Huq also spoke on the occasion.

Reforms in political parties stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Good governance demands political party reforms in terms of structural, behavioural and values changes, and accountability to the people, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They also said children should be groomed from the early age and be imparted with knowledge, skill and positive attitude to provide a new web of leadership replacing the current trend of confrontational leadership.

Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) in cooperation with Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh (CDRB) organised the seminar titled 'Governance: A New Paradigm in Politics' at RC Majumdar Auditorium of Dhaka University yesterday.

Prof M Ataur Rahman conducted the seminar while Chairman of CDRB Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley presented a keynote paper.

Shelley spoke of five components of good governance: state building, nation building, economy building, easy access to public offices and a free, strong and impartial judiciary.

So far our one and only achievement is our independence in 1971 and since then on we could make hardly any advancement compared to that of other nations on the globe, he added.

Pointing to the pervasive corrup-

tion in our country, he said common people are the victims of corruption while the educated office-bearers are perpetually engaged in breeding corruption. So a top-down reform is necessary to curb corruption in the country.

Prof Rahman said the crux of governance is that we have plethora of profound theories while our practices are faulty. We only have 'procedural part of democracy' while the substance is yet to be achieved.

He also said the aim of governance is to ensure individual freedom, peaceful coexistence and individual as well as collective development.

He said governance does not mean passive role of the governed, rather the responsibility is two-way and the people are to play an active role to ensure good governance.

Chairman of Peace and Conflict Studies Department Dr Dalim Chandra Barman, Chairman of Political Science of Dhaka University Prof AKM Shahidullah, Prof AKM Shamsul Huq and Azizur Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

Butenis to work hard to improve US-Bangladesh relations

UNB, Dhaka

The new US Ambassador to Bangladesh Patricia A Butenis yesterday said she will work hard to further improve the Dhaka-Washington relations.

"I am very delighted to be in Bangladesh. I enjoyed the warm welcome I received from foreign ministry officials, particularly the foreign minister," she told reporters after her courtesy call on Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan at his office.

Expressing a similar sentiment, the foreign minister said Bangladesh values its relationship with the United States.

The US ambassador assured him that she would work hard to strengthen bilateral cooperation in various sectors.

"It was a courtesy call, no specific issue was discussed," Morshed told reporters.

However, Morshed told the envoy that the present confrontational politics could only be overcome by strengthening the democratic process. He said like the three previous general elections, upcoming general elections will be held in accordance with the constitution.

He briefed the ambassador on the anti-terrorism measures taken by the government and asked for financial assistance from the US for the procurement of equipment for law enforcement personnel, in addition to their current training support.

EC delegation chief visits Drik library

Dr Stefan Frowein, head of the delegation of European Commission in Dhaka, visited Drik Picture Library and Pathshala and South Asian Institute of Photography, educational wing of Drik.

Dr Stefan visited different departments of Drik and Pathshala and was briefed about the curriculum of Pathshala. He discussed the prospects of Pathshala in developing collaborations with several European educational institutions for higher studies and research-oriented programmes.

Pathshala Principal Dr Shahidul Alam, faculty, staff, students were present.

Pathshala is working in association with Sunderland University, UK, Bolton University, UK, Oslo University, Norway and World Press Photo, Netherlands, on exchange programmes.

DU FISHERIES DEPT Stalemate over teacher's removal continues

DU CORRESPONDENT

Stalemate at fisheries department of Dhaka University (DU) over the demand for removal of a teacher continued yesterday.

The agitating students put the doors of classrooms, seminar-library and laboratory under lock and key.

No classes or examinations were held as part of the demonstration.

Out of around 120 students, some 50-60 have been demanding removal of Mohammad Mamun Chowdhury, a lecturer, for what they said "his misbehaviour with the students and threat to cut mark in examinations".

To realise their demands, the students will bring out procession on the campus and submit a memorandum to the vice-chancellor today.

They will also stage a sit-in demonstration in front of the administrative building at 11:30am.

Obituary



Shamsunnahar Alauddin alias Roushan Ara, wife of Lt Col (ret'd) Mohammad Alauddin, passed away at Dhaka CMH on April 15 at the age of 62, says a press release.

She left behind her husband, two daughters and one son to mourn her death.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Dhaka Cantonment Central Mosque (Allahu Mosque) after Asr prayers today.

Death anniversary



Today is the 35th death anniversary of Shahaed Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Abdul Qadir, says a press release.

Qadir was killed in Chittagong on April 17 in 1971.

Shabnam Huq

Today is the sixth death anniversary of Shabnam Huq, wife of Arham Masudul Huq, executive vice-president and company secretary of Dhaka Bank Limited, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at Tejgaon Orphanage.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

North South University organises a seminar on 'Are we prepared? Awareness and Prevention'. Venue: NSU campus. Time: 10:00am.

Discussion

Gonoforum will hold a discussion on 'National unity for the sake of national security' with Dr Kamal Hossain in the chair. Venue: Institution of Engineers. Time: 4:00pm.

Seminar

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal organises a seminar on 'Reform dialogue to resolve the present political crisis and the role of the civil society'. Venue: Reporters' Unity. Time: 4:00pm.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia.

Noakhali and Comilla in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today. Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged day temperature.

Highest temperature 37.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 21.5 degree Celsius at Sayedpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:21pm today and rises at 5:35am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	33.7	26.3	76	62