

Govt plans country's own satellite: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh (PM) Hasina yesterday unveiled a major plan of her government to install country's own satellite for modernizing its communication system.

She disclosed the ambitious plan when a 31-member delegation of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) led by its president Rakibur Rahman met her at the Prime Minister Office (PMO) and discussed economic issues of vital importance.

During discussion, the delegation urged the PM to ensure stability of the capital market, which experienced some shocks in recent times after a bull run.

Reiterating her government's strong commitment to attain maximum prosperity in the national economy, Hasina said the government keeps a

sharp eye on the country's capital market.

"Capital market will be kept stable and its smooth management will be ensured," she told the delegation.

The premier laid emphasis on good coordination between the country's public and private sectors for overall development.

She mentioned the previous Awami League government's various initiatives for the flourishing of television channels, mobile companies and banks in the private sector.

When the issue of country's food security came up for discussion, Hasina apprised the DSE delegation that country's present food stock is satisfactory and more godowns and silos will be set up to increase food storage capacity.

The PM and the delegation also discussed the recent crisis in labor markets of Bangladesh.

Hasina told the delegation that the government will set up Expatriate Bank and Expatriate Welfare Bank for safe migration and transaction of remittances of the Bangladesh workers.

The premier also stressed on strengthening the rural economy to enhance the buying capacity of the rural people.

About the prices of essentials, she said the government has already brought prices of various essentials within the buying capacity of the commoners and efforts will go on to ensure "utmost welfare of the people."

Finance Minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhit, Finance Adviser Moshirur Rahman, PMO Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad and chairman of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute Salman F Rahman were present.

Schoolboy dies of food poisoning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A schoolboy died allegedly due to food poisoning at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) after having an ice cream from a street vendor yesterday.

The dead was identified as Mohammad Naim, 8, son of Nasir Uddin of Kamrangirchar at Lalbag in the city. He was a student of class II of a local primary school.

Family sources said he started vomiting after having an ice cream from a street vendor at Kamrangirchar around 10:30am yesterday.

Ambia Khatun, grandmother of Naim, said he had an ice cream from a street vendor near his residence after returning from school at about 10:00am.

She said he fell sick within five minutes after having the ice cream.

He was rushed to a local clinic and then shifted to DMCH where he died around 3:15pm, family sources said.

Dr Shamsuzzaman, an indoor medical officer (Paediatric ward) of DMCH, told The Daily Star that Naim was suffering from food poisoning that might have been caused by the ice cream.

BDB presidium reconstituted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh (BDB) reconstituted the presidium and the national executive committee of the party.

Prof Abdul Rashid and Brig Gen (ret'd) Giasuddin Ahmed have been dropped from the new presidium, BDB Office Secretary Wasimul Islam said.

Members of the reconstituted presidium are Dr MA Mannan, Prof Nurul Amin Bepari, Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Halim, Saima Jilil, Advocate Ahsanullah and Prof Abu Muzaffar Ahmed.

Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and Maj (ret'd) MA Mannan, president and secretary general of BDB, are ex-officio members of the presidium.

US embassy staffs donate blood

METRO DESK

American and Bangladeshi employees of the US Embassy in Dhaka have donated their blood at the blood donation programme of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society in the city, says a press release.

The health unit of the embassy, which planned the event with the Red Crescent Society, hoped that it would encourage greater participation of others in blood donation programme throughout Bangladesh.

"This collaboration between the embassy and the Red Crescent Society will also strengthen our partnership and provide needed blood supplies for hundreds of Bangladeshis," said Dr Michael Morris, regional medical officer of the embassy.

Donating blood gives others a chance to live, he said, adding that blood donation is very common in the US through schools, offices and places of worship.

Dinkal journos stage sit-in

DU CORRESPONDENT

Journalists of Dainik Dinkal Union of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday staged a sit-in programme on the National Press Club premises in the city saying that it is a conspiracy to stop the publication of the newspaper.

During the three-hour-long programme starting from 11:00am, they also demanded payment of their dues for 13 months and implementation of the 7th Wage Board, says a press release.

The speakers said they are passing their days in great miseries and urged the authorities concerned to resolve the crisis immediately.

BFUJ Secretary General M A Aziz, Co-chairman of Sangbadik-Sramik-Karmochari Oikya Parishad Fazle Imam, and former DUJ president Elahi Newaz Khan spoke at the programme.



Chief Election Commissioner Dr ATM Shamsul Huda calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

'Raise awareness about disaster preparedness'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food and Disaster Management Minister Md Abdul Razzak yesterday urged the NGOs to come forward to eliminate poverty and raise awareness among people about disaster preparedness.

He said people would be able to take more effective measures to face disaster if poverty can be eliminated.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at a seminar on 'Involvement of community in disaster preparedness' at YWCA auditorium at Mohammadpur in the city.

He said houses with weak structures are affected the most in the natural disasters.

The minister said more scopes should be created for increasing the income of the people by increasing the production of the agricultural products in the disaster-prone areas.

He said the government is giving more emphasis on disaster preparedness than post-disaster relief work.

At present the Red Crescent Society has 42,000 volunteers in the coastal areas and their success in facing different natural disas-

ters has also been lauded in international arena.

Bangladesh has succeeded in cutting the loss compared to the past thanks to disaster preparedness, he added.

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Advocate Shamsul Haq Tuku said the Bangladeshis have become bold after facing the natural disasters.

Environment and Forests Secretary Dr Mihir Kanti Majumder also spoke at the seminar while UNDP Assistant Country Director Dr Aminul Islam presented the keynote paper.

MIGRANT WORKERS ON STRIKE Baira offers help in resolving crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As 30 migrant workers, who fell victim to fraud, have continued their strike at Zia International Airport in the city, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) yesterday offered its assistance for an amicable solution to the problem.

The workers who went to Malaysia 22 months ago through the recruiting agency Tantai Overseas came back on Sunday as they did not receive work permit.

In a press release, Baira said, "We will fully assist the government in punishing Tantai Overseas if the agency is found responsible during any investigations by the government."

Baira took the decision at an emergency meeting on April 8. It urged the government to take steps to look into whether Tantai Overseas has deceived the workers.

Baira also observed that the demonstration at the airport might have been part of an attempt by a syndicate to tarnish the image of Bangladesh workers, recruiting agencies and the government.

The 30 workers went to Malaysia in May 2007, but their employers neither got their work permits issued nor pro-

vided them jobs. They were employed some times, but the salaries they received were taken away by the agents, the returnees said.

"We had to take money from our home for our survival," said Abdul Hannan, a returnee.

They made repeated complaints to Tantai Overseas, the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, and Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, but none helped them, he said, adding that they would not leave the airport before receiving compensation.

Joy visits ailing father

UNB, Dhaka

Sajib Wajed Joy, son of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, arrived in Dhaka early yesterday.

Joy who lives in Boston, USA has been here to see his ailing father scientist Dr M Wajed Miah and mother Hasina, a source in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

Joy yesterday visited his father at Square Hospital in the city.

He is likely to stay here for about two weeks, sources said.

BSF guns down Bangladeshi cattle trader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down a Bangladeshi cattle trader on Wednesday night at Bhairagbar border under Birampur upazila in Dinajpur.

The victim was identified as Md Kachhim Uddin, 45, son of Kachhar Uddin of village Khyiar-Mamudpur under Katlajura.

Police quoting villagers said the BSF men of Bhimpur camp fired at least one bullet killing the cattle trader who was returning home.

Police sent the body to Dinajpur Medical College and Hospital for autopsy after filing a general diary with Birampur Police Station yesterday.

When contacted BDR officials of Phulbari 40 Battalion confirmed the incident and said they have lodged a protest with the BSF.

No action

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requirements and the type of workers Malaysia needs and so on," the recruiting agent said.

This is the reason why manpower brokers and even Malaysian employers continued to go on confidently with illegal practices, he noted.

This is also reflected in a statement of Talat Mahmud Khan, labour counsellor of Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, who has been recently called back.

During a recent interview in the high commission in Kuala Lumpur he told The Daily Star: "Recruiting agencies do not have any representative in Malaysia and so they became dependent on brokers."

He thinks if the recruiting agencies get the approvals directly from the employers instead of any middlemen like manpower brokers it would be better.

Businesses said the problem started when Malaysia started manpower recruitment in 2006.

The then Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) President and BNP lawmaker MAH Salim and his men struck a deal with Malaysian authorities for fresh manpower recruitment opening scopes for a vested quarter to indulge in underhand dealings, said a then Baira leader.

"The then government had barely played any role in this regard; Baira used political clout while dealing with Malaysian authorities," he said.

As a result, the jobseekers paid Tk 2 lakh to Tk 2.5 lakh to go to Malaysia while the government rate was only Tk 84,000, he added.

The high payment even did not ensure their jobs; when they arrived in Malaysia they were left stranded in the airport for days and confined to "godowns". They were jobless and those who got jobs remained unpaid for months.

Employers did not help them get medical tests done, issue or renew work permits. They even confiscated passports and forced them to take money from home to get back passports.

When such exploitation and sufferings went on unabated workers and their families urged the recruiting agencies repeatedly to take measures but all their efforts went in vain.

A single example of 30 workers who returned from Malaysia on April 5 is enough to substantiate it. These workers went to Malaysia in May 2007 but employers neither got their work permits issued nor were they provided jobs.

They repeatedly complained to Tantai Overseas, their family members wrote to the agencies and to the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), but of no use.

Similar problems sent thousands of workers back home. Many complained to the BMET. But except for a few cases, agencies are now playing hide-and-seek in giving compensation to the deported workers.

"After lodging complaint to the BMET I appeared six times for the hearing before the investigation officer (IO) but nothing has happened so far," said Mohammad Ibrahim who returned home from Malaysia after being cheated in late 2007.

He said the BMET's IO said he sent all his documents to the ministry. "It is one and a half years since I had lodged the complaint but nothing has happened."

"I don't know what nexus the government and recruiting agencies have but I cannot go to Dhaka from Mymensingh time and again because I am stony broke after spending around Tk 3 lakh for going to Malaysia," Ibrahim said.

Another returnee Enamul Haque said the recruiting agency Ardent International did not compensate them though BMET directed it to pay damages. Now the BMET again sent the letter to the expatriates' welfare ministry, he said.

"What game is this with our lives?" Enamul posed a question. Migrants' rights body, IMA Research Foundation, recorded that workers in groups lodged a total of 129 complaints with the BMET but only 47 had been settled so far.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly formed National Committee to Protect and Develop Railway and Waterways called on the government to improve the management of Bangladesh Railway instead of handing it over to the private sector.

They also called for establishing a separate ministry to handle the problem-ridden state-owned organisation.

Bangladesh Railway can be developed through improving its management instead of turning the organisation into a corpora-

CTG RING ROAD JICA team due tomorrow

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, Ctg

A five-member team of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) arrives here tomorrow on a fact-finding mission for implementation of the first phase of Chittagong City Ring Road.

The JICA team would hold meetings with the stakeholders to discuss different aspects of the final report on the portion of the Ring Road to be constructed in the first phase under Coastal Road Project involving around Tk 2,000 crore.

The five-member JICA team would stay in Chittagong till April 20 to discuss different aspects of the final report with Chittagong Development Authority (CDA), Water Development Board, Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) and other stakeholders.

It would also hold discussions with the ministries concerned and the higher authorities of the government in the capital from April 21 to April 23, said sources in CDA.

After the team on fact-finding mission returns home an appraisal team would arrive from Japan to discuss loan and other aspects by June or July before signing an agreement with the government, which is likely to take place by the end of this year, they said.

A 14.702-km road stretching from Patenga to Sagorika (near Chittagong divisional stadium) would be constructed under the Coastal Road Project one of the three major components of the Chittagong City Ring Road Project.

Three feeder roads of a total length of 6.891 km would also be constructed to complete the missing links with internal roads of the city in the first phase of the project, sources said.

tion or company, Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid, convener of the committee, said at a press briefing at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium.

The committee also placed 29 recommendations to protect and develop rail and waterways.

Prof Murshid urged the government to form a board comprising members of the civil society, environmentalists and

Swiss help for solar energy sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hasan Mahmud yesterday sought assistance from Switzerland for strengthening local government bodies and supplying solar panel to meet the demand for power in remote areas.

He made the request when Switzerland Ambassador Dora Rapold met the minister at the foreign ministry yesterday.

The minister said more than 400 women have been elected as upazila vice chairmen. Most of them are fresh as the people's representatives.

The envoy welcomed the proposal, saying that Switzerland is interested to work closely with Bangladesh for the empowerment of women.

If Bangladesh gives a formal proposal in this regard, Switzerland would consider it from a positive angle, she added.

Mahmud said Switzerland can supply solar panel to the people living in remote areas like islands, chars, hill areas, and poor and limited income group people under Swiss Development Cooperation programme.



Eminent litterateur Syed Shamsul Haq inaugurates a three-day Book Fair at Dhaka Club in the city yesterday. The daily Prothom Alo Editor Matur Rahman, extreme left, was present.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at a few places over Chittagong and at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore and Kushtia in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country with partly cloudy sky, Met Office said.

Day temperature may fall slightly over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:18pm today and rises at 5:42am tomorrow.

Highest temperature 36.7 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 19.5 degrees Celsius at Sylhet.

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
Dhaka	33.5	26.0
Chittagong	32.3	24.6
Rajshahi	31.0	23.4
Khulna	34.5	26.0
Barisal	33.6	25.0
Sylhet	31.9	19.5
Cox's Bazar	33.5	24.6



Domestic help found in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police rescued a missing domestic help from Uttarkhan in the city on April 6.

She was identified as Tamanna, 7, daughter of Abdur Rashid and Nurjahan of Mymensingh, says a police press release.

As Tamanna cannot speak about her address, she is now at the victim support centre of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Guardians and relatives of Tamanna have been asked to contact assistant police commissioner of the centre at Tejgaon Police Station or call at phone no-9110885, 999-2634 or cell phones no-01745774486-7.