

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 communications system.

She disclosed the ambitious plan when a 31-member delegation of Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) led by its president Rakibul 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.

'Develop railway through proper management'

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-

tion or company, Prof Khan Sarwar Mursid, 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 Mursid urged the government to form a board comprising members of the civil society, environmentalists and

representatives from rail, water and road transport authorities to monitor the activities in the transport sector.

He said travelling by rail is cheaper and more comfortable than travelling by any other transport. Besides, railway saves fuel and does less damage to the environment.

He also observed that the condition of Bangladesh Railway worsened due to lack of proper planning.

"If we can develop Bangladesh Railway through a proper planning, it would become the most popular transport," Prof Mursid said.

The committee also called on the government to develop waterways through proper steps, including river dredging.

It urged the government to formulate strict laws to protect riverwater from pollution.

Joint conveners of the committee Justice Mohammad Gholam Rabbani, Prof AMM Saifulah and SM Shaheedullah and member-secretary Abu Naser Khan were present at the press briefing.

Prof Abdur Rashid and Brig Gen (retd) 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 (retd) MA Halim, Saima Jalil, Advocate Ahsanullah and Prof Abu Muzaffar Ahmed.

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

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

Annual Urs of Nizamuddin Aulia begins April 13

METRO DESK

A five-day 705th annual Urs of Sultan Mashaikh Hazrat Khawja Nizamuddin Aulia, Mehboob-e-Elahi (RA), will begin at Dargah Sharif in New Delhi on April 13 (Rabiu Sani 16 to 20, 1429H), says a press release.

Qul Sharif (special fateha) will be held at 10:00pm (after Esha prayers) on April 16 and special qul will be held at 11:00am on April 17.

Besides, special prayers will be held on all the five days.

Schoolboy dies of food poisoning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hasina told the delegation that the government will set up an Expatriate Bank and an Expatriate Welfare Bank for safe migration and transaction of remittances of the Bangladeshi 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 consumers and efforts will go on to ensure "utmost welfare of the people."

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

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 Abdur Rashid and Brig Gen (retd) Giasuddin Ahmed have been dropped from the new presidium, BDB Office Secretary Wasimul Islam said.

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.

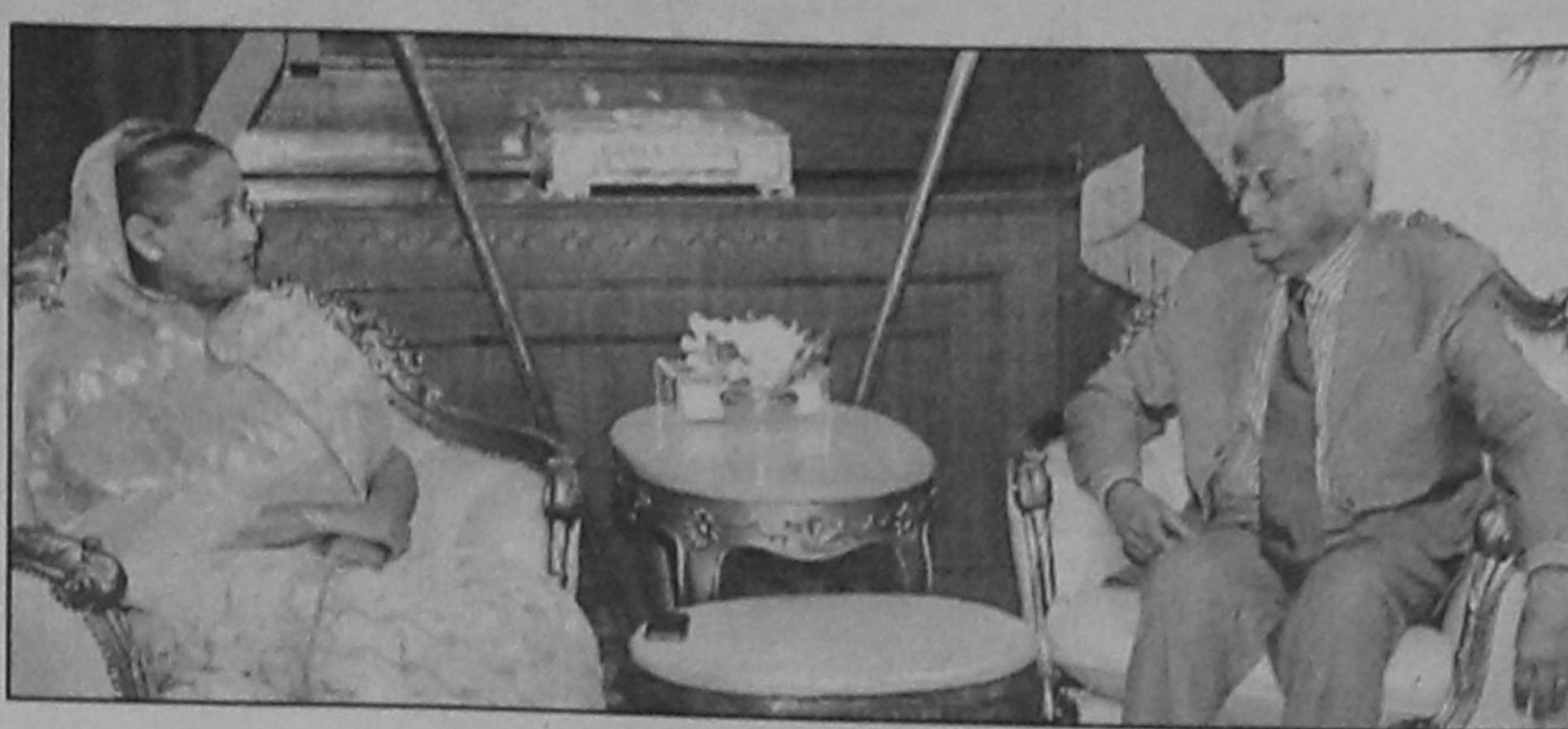


PHOTO: PID

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 Abdur 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 in the natural disasters.

The minister said more scopes should be created for the NGOs to come forward to eliminate poverty and raise awareness among people about disaster preparedness.

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 disasters.

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 Kant Majumder also spoke at the seminar while UNDP Assistant Country Director Dr Aminul Islam presented the keynote paper.

BSF guns down Bangladeshi cattle trader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

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

The victim was identified as Md Kachhima Uddin, 45, son of Kachhima Uddin of village Khiyari-Mamudpur under Katia Union.

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

FROM PAGE 16

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 recalled.

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 the 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 Tangail 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.



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

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowsers 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 Jessor 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.

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 Jessor 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	26.0	78
Chittagong	32.3	84
Rajshahi	31.0	53
Khulna	34.5	81
Barisal	33.6	89
Sylhet	31.9	71
Cox's Bazar	33.5	72
		74

Dinkal journos stage sit-in

DU CORRESPONDENT

Journalists of Dainik Dinkal unit 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 Sambadik-Sramik-Karmochari Oikya Parishad Fazle Imam, and former DUJ president Elahi Newaz Khan spoke at the programme.

Discussion

Time: 3:00pm

Reception

Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote will accord a reception to lawmaker Tarana Halim. Venue: Public Library auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

Exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of an earthenware exhibition titled 'Rab