

Dhaka wants India to give Nepal, Bhutan transit

PM tells Japanese envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh always requests India to give Nepal and Bhutan transit for boosting bilateral and regional trade and business.

"If such transit facilities are given, neighbouring countries can use Mongla Port, which will expedite the regional development," she said.

The PM said this during a meeting with newly appointed Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh Tamotsu Shinotsuka when the envoy paid a call on her at her office yesterday.

She told the envoy that the present government has planned to modernise the Mongla seaport and Japan can help Bangladesh in this regard.

During the meeting, the envoy expressed his country's willingness to cooperate with Bangladesh in modernising the civil service system of the country.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said the premier assured the new Japanese envoy of providing necessary cooperation so he could properly discharge his diplomatic duties in Dhaka.

As various matters of development

were discussed, the PM sought more cooperation from Japan in expediting national development.

Making a strong promise to make Bangladesh self-sufficient in food again, Hasina sought Japanese assistance for setting up more godowns and silos in the country for preserving extra harvests of food-grains.

She also called for more Japanese investment in Bangladesh.

Mentioning Japanese assistance in setting up the Rupsha Bridge, the PM requested the Japanese government to give more assistance in building the much-expected Padma Bridge.

She said her government has a plan to launch capital and maintenance dredging in the major rivers of the country to bring back the navigability of the rivers.

The mega-scheme also has been planned as a way to face the challenges of the world climate change.

On parliamentary democracy, the ambassador said the international election observers, including from Japan, said the people of Bangladesh successfully elected their democratic government in a free, fair, neutral and acceptable election on December 29 last year.

Hasina thanked Japan for its cooperation in holding the December 29 polls in a

free and fair manner.

The ambassador highly praised the speech of Bangladesh prime minister in the 64th session of United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The envoy said Hasina in her speech successfully pointed out "all burning issues of the world", including the challenges of climate change and food security, and guided the international community in ensuring a better world.

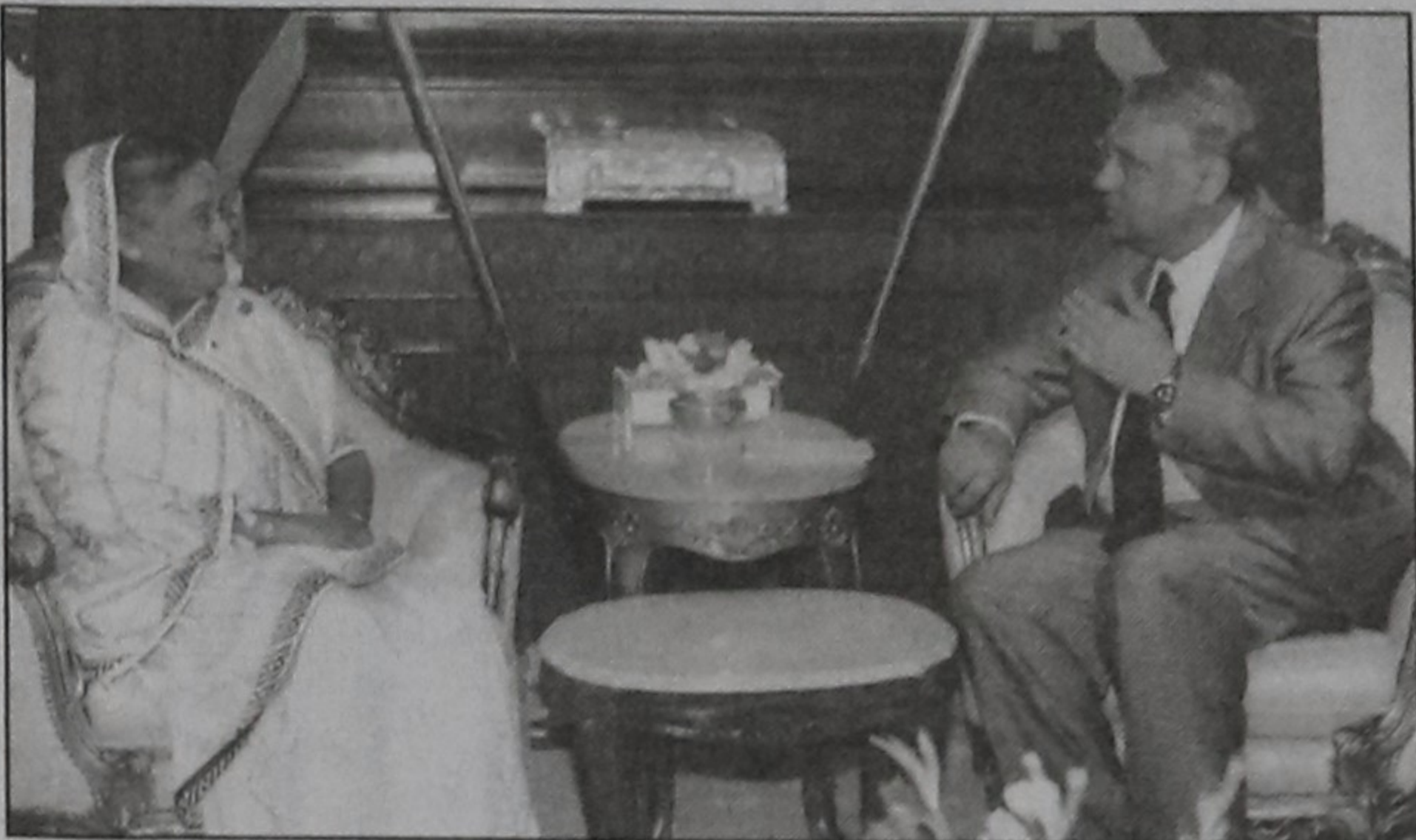
Ambassador Tamotsu Shinotsuka invited the PM to visit Japan, saying that the people of Japan and its government are eagerly waiting to welcome the Bangladesh PM to their country.

Hasina accepted the invitation and invited her newly elected Japanese counterpart to visit Bangladesh.

Shinotsuka said "Japan has a friendly relation with Bangladesh since it attained independence in 1971 under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman."

He said the existing bilateral relations would be strengthened further in the days to come and Japan would continue to assist Bangladesh in the process of attaining the cherished sustainable development and prosperity.

PM's Office Secretary Mollah Waheeduzzaman was present.



Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

WORLD SIGHT DAY TODAY 'Two-thirds of world's blind people are female'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

World Sight Day 2009 will be observed in the country today to raise awareness about eye care among the masses.

This year the slogan of the day is 'Gender and eye health-equal access to care'.

As part of the programme of the day, a free eye camp for garment workers at Dhaka Export Processing Zone along with free vision tests at four girls' schools and colleges have been arranged in the city.

Sponsored by Grameenphone Limited, the Sight Savers International will conduct the eye camp under an ongoing project to provide free eye treatment to the disadvantaged.

"Nearly two-thirds of blind people in the world are female and they have half the access to eye care than their male counterparts. Therefore the camps will give females priority over males," said Rafiqul Islam, senior project manager of Sight Savers International.

"We want to be the development partner of the country and meet the eight targets known as the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The primary goal is to eradicate avoidable blindness by the year 2005 along with providing eye care where such services are not readily available," he added.

The two organisations have been conducting eye camps jointly all over the country providing free eye care to 27,418 patients and conducting cataract surgeries on 3,258 patients over the past year.

To mark the day Child Sight Foundation (CSF) has also organised a 10-day-long international volunteer camp

where volunteers from around the globe will interact with blind children in rural areas.

"This project is aimed to show that the blind children are not alone and people from the country and around the world are here to help them," said Natalie Johnson, a volunteer from Australia, at a meet the press at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday.

Two other volunteers Caitlín Kelly from Australia and Ferhana Yasmin from USA have stressed the need for educating the blind children about their rights to become normal children and be a part of the society.

The pilot project is being conducted in Sirajganj and Shahjapur where all the blind children were identified and given treatment by the

SCE. A number of local residents were also trained to give follow-up treatment and support to the children.

"Blind children, due to their special conditions, require additional physical and mental assistance from the family," said Dr M A Muhiit of CSE.

"They said the visually impaired children especially in rural areas tend to be ridiculed by their peers and are usually excluded from different social activities which hampers their normal growth as children," he added.

There are over seven lakh blind people in the country out of which around 40,000 are children according to a London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine study conducted in 2001.

Govt to ensure smooth supply of fertilisers

Says industries minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Industries Minister Dilip Barua yesterday said the government would take all necessary measures to ensure smooth supply of fertilisers to meet the demands of farmers in the coming months.

He said this while addressing a press conference at his ministry office at Motijheel in the city.

The minister said the government has formed a taskforce to oversee smooth distribution of fertilisers. An additional secretary of the agriculture ministry is the head of the committee with representatives from industries, communications and

shipping ministries, among others.

He said the country has demands of a total of 38.84 lakh MT fertilisers in the 2009-2010 FY -- 29.51 lakh MT urea, 6.70 lakh TSP and 2.63 lakh DAP.

The Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) would supply the total urea and 1.11 lakh MT TSP and 1.52 lakh MT DAP and others would be provided through private imports, he said.

The minister said after production and importing of urea, there would be a reserve of 4,54,284 MT urea at the end of the FY.

Dilip Barua said the government has taken a decision to appoint five to nine sub-dealers in every union to ensure smooth supply of fertilisers. The government would finalise the recruitment of sub-dealers within October 15 and issue identity cards for them to keep accounts of fertilisers given to them.

He said his government did not remove fertiliser dealers appointed by the previous BNP-Jamaat coalition and caretaker government in a bid to develop a sustainable fertiliser distribution system in the country.

He said they have already directed the local administration to take tough measures to check trafficking of fertilisers from the country and import, legally or illegally, of low quality fertilisers from neighbouring countries.

Directions have also been given to destroy the factories that sell adulterated fertilisers, said the minister.

He said the government is planning to set up two fertiliser factories at Fenchuganj in Sylhet and in Sirajganj. The Fenchuganj factory would be set up with the help of China, he said adding that the gov-

ernment are looking for new donors for constructing the Sirajganj factory.

The industries minister said the government has formed a high-powered committee comprising officials of shipping, industries and communications ministries to offload imported fertilisers so that there is no impact on fertiliser distribution among the dealers.

Speaking at the press conference, Secretary to the industries ministry Dewan Zakir Hussain said this time the government would preserve half of the imported fertilisers at Mongla port and unload from there to ensure smooth supply of fertiliser in the north-western region of the country which needs the highest quantity of fertiliser.

He also said that a cell has been set up at the Mongla port to monitor unloading and supply of fertilisers.

CPB RALLY BLAST BNP leader Arif's bail prayer rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected a bail petition of BNP leader and Dhaka City Corporation ward councillor Ariful Islam in the CPB rally blast case.

Judge ANM Bashir Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order rejecting the bail petition filed by the defence lawyers on September 30.

During the hearing, the defence lawyers told the court that their client was implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy to harass him. Moreover, his (Arif) name was not in the first information report (FIR). So, they prayed for granting bail to their client, the lawyers said.

On the contrary, the prosecution opposed the bail saying that the investigation officer (IO) gathered important information from the arrestee about the blasts.

Earlier on September 15, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) arrested Arif from his Malibagh residence for his alleged involvement in the CPB rally blasts.

Later, he was taken on a six-day remand in three phases for interrogation.

On January 21 in 2001, the heinous bomb attacks were launched at a Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) rally that killed five people and injured 50 others.

Following the bomb attack, CPB President Manjurul Ahsan Khan filed a case with Motijheel Police Station, saying a group of anti-state conspirators made the attack.

The police arrested 12 people at that time, but the CID submitted the final report on December 17, 2003, as correct, impartial and reliable evidences were not found to prove the charges against the arrestees.

The IO submitted a petition with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court for reinvestigation into the case on January 27, 2005 and the court directed him for fresh probe into the case after two days.

Earlier, CID arrested Harkat-ul-Jihad-al Islami's (Huji) leader Mufti Abdul Hannan and several other Huji members for their involvement in the bomb blasts. Moreover, two members of Laskar-e-Taiba of India were also shown arrested in the case and they were taken on remand for interrogation.

DU 'Gha' Unit admission test Dec 18

DU CORRESPONDENT

The admission test of 'Gha Unit' for first year honours courses under social science faculty at Dhaka University (sessions 2009-10) will be held on December 18 instead of December 4, says a press release.

The decision was taken at meeting of the Deans' Committee with Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique in the chair, held at the administrative building.

The meeting also decided that campus branches of Sonali, Agrani and Janata banks will remain open on October 17 for selling admission forms.

LeT leader Emadullah on fresh remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch (DB) of police yesterday took Laskar-e-Taiba (LeT) leader Emadullah on a three-day fresh remand to find out more about absconding members of the organisation.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mehedi Hassan passed the remand order after DB Inspector Mohammad Ashraf Hossain, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, produced Indian national Emadullah alias Mahbub before the court on completion of his four-day remand.

The IO also submitted a petition seeking a ten-day remand to know how many members of their organisation have been hiding in different parts of the country.

In the forwarding report, the IO mentioned that he gathered several names and addresses of Laskar-e-Taiba members who are active to commit any offences. So, the arrestee needs to be remanded to find out several other Laskar-e-Taiba members and their whereabouts, Ashraf said.

DB police arrested Emadullah on September 30 from the city's Gabtoli area. He was arrested following confessional statements of two other top leaders and Indian nationals -- Mufti Obaidullah alias Zafar and Maulana Mansur alias Habibullah who were arrested here in July.

Later, a case was filed with Darus Salam Police Station against Emadullah for staying in Bangladesh illegally.

A nephew of detained Mansur, Emadullah is a resident of Padmapukur village under Bagda Police Station of Uttar Chobish Pargana district of West Bengal in India.

Sources said Emadullah became the Bangladesh chapter chief of Pakistan-based militant organisations Lashkar-e-Taiba and Harkatul Zihadia Islamiya Azadia and Indian militant outfit Asif Reza Comandao Force after the arrest of Obaidullah and Habibullah.



Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and at many places over Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely to occur at one or two places over the country, Met office said.

It said day temperature may rise slightly over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:39pm today and rises at 6:53am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 32.7 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 24.0 degrees Celsius at Feni.

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 | 30.9 | 25.8 |
| Chittagong | 31.0 | 26.0 |
| Rajshahi | 32.4 | 26.2 |
| Khulna | 31.5 | 26.8 |
| Barisal | 31.1 | 25.5 |
| Sylhet | 30.9 | 25.9 |
| Cox's Bazar | 32.7 | 25.2 |

| | Morning | Evening |
|-------------|---------|---------|
| Dhaka | 83 | 90 |
| Chittagong | 76 | 83 |
| Rajshahi | 94 | 92 |
| Khulna | 82 | 93 |
| Barisal | 90 | 89 |
| Sylhet | 89 | 97 |
| Cox's Bazar | 75 | 81 |

HC order not to torture Aman during interrogation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the authorities concerned to interrogate with caution detained former BNP state minister Amanullah Aman at the jail gate in a case against him.

An HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Rais Uddin also asked the authorities not to torture Aman during the interrogation.

The Detective Branch of Police arrested Aman at Zia International Airport on September 29 in connection with an attempt-to-murder case filed by a party colleague.

The court came up with the order upon a petition filed by Zahidul Haque, a cousin of Aman.

The petitioner prayed to the court for a direction on the authorities not to torture Aman during the interrogation, as the police filed a petition with the lower court for permission to take Aman on remand.

Hearing of the petition for the remand will be held today, he said.

Osman Gani, a BNP leader and businessman from Aman's constituency Keraniganj, filed the case with the Mohammadpur Police Station on May 31.

The case statement says he came under a gun attack on Salimullah Road in Mohammadpur on May 29.

Advocate AJ Mohammad Ali appeared for the petitioner while Deputy Attorney General KM Zahid Sarwar Kajal stood for the government.

Urs at Paribagh tomorrow

METRO DESK

Annual Urs of Hazrat Shah Abdul Rahim (RH) Shah Saheb of Paribagh will be held on the Paribagh Mazar premises in the city tomorrow (Friday), says a press release.

Munajat will be offered at 11:30am.

Kamaluddin made envoy to Iraq

UNB, DHAKA

Muhammad Kamaluddin has been appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to Iraq.

A career diplomat, Kamaluddin joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in August, 1973.

He served as a counsellor in Bangladesh embassies in Warsaw, Abu Dhabi and Rome, as Deputy Chief of Mission in Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh and director general in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said an official release yesterday.

Kamaluddin was High Commissioner to Malaysia from May 2000 - March 2002.

Farhad's death anniversary tomorrow

DU CORRESPONDENT

The 22nd death anniversary of Comrade Mohammad Farhad, former general secretary of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) will be observed tomorrow, says a press release.

CPB has called on the party men to observe the day with due respect across the country.

Comrade Farhad, also a former member of the parliament, died on October 9 in 1987 at Moscow at the age of 49.

On the occasion, CPB President Manzurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Muzahidul Islam Selim in a joint statement said countrymen will always remember Farhad's contribution to the liberation war and his effort to establish a secular society.

To mark the day, CPB will hold a discussion at its central office and will place wreaths at Farhad's Banani grave in the city tomorrow.

Besides, a milad mahfil will be held at his wife's residence at 94/F Azimpur Colony in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow.

Alfa Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 3rd death anniversary of Alfa Ali, journalist, educationist and wife of Language Movement veteran Fazle Ali, says a press release.

On the occasion, her family members have requested all to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Alfa, the elder daughter of late Akbar Kabir, a noted social worker, passed away due to a cardiac arrest on this day in 2006.

Begum Jahanara Ali

METRO DESK

Today is the second death anniversary of Begum Jahanara Ali, wife of late Principal Askar Ali, says a press release.

Friends and relatives are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Moshahid Ali, vice president of Deraipara AL and a former UP chairman, passed away in Sylhet on Tuesday at the age of 60.

He left behind two sons, one daughter and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death.

Ali was laid to rest at his family graveyard yesterday after a namaz-e-janaza at his village home at Dhanol.

Lawmakers Suranjit Sengupta and Md Matiur Rahman have condoled the death of Ali.

Protap Ranjan Talukder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Protap Ranjan Talukder, village bard and litterateur, died of cancer at his village home at Taila in Dakshin Sunamganj upazila in Sunamganj on Tuesday at the age of 65.

He left behind, his mother, wife, two sons, two daughters and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death.

Talukder was well known for Dhamaali songs in Sunamganj district.

He was cremated at his village home on Tuesday night while his Shradha will be held at his village home on October 18.

Lawmakers MA Mannan and Md Matiur Rahman have condoled his death.

World Maritime Day today

UNB, Dhaka

The World Maritime Day will be observed in the country today as elsewhere across the globe with the perils of life-threatening climate change in the spotlight.

The theme of the day for this year is 'Climate Change: a Challenge for IMO too!'

The day is used to focus attention on the importance of shipping safety, maritime security and the marine environment and to emphasise a particular aspect of International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) work.

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the occasion, urging all concerned to be more responsible in using and developing shipping and navigation systems of Bangladesh.

"Waterways have been playing a very significant role in our riverine country in transportation system from time immemorial. But the adverse effects of global climate change on water bodies, including sea-level rise, are now clearly visible," Zillur said.

He hoped that the observance of the day would play an effective role in preventing sea

pollution as well as creating awareness among the mass people to address the negative impacts of climate change.

In her message, Hasina also urged all concerned to take steps to ensure safe journey of a large number of people on the riverine routes, preventing river mishaps and ensuring all sorts of safety.

"Bangladesh is a lower-riparian country having most of its landmass very near to the sea level.

"The rise of sea level as a result of climate change and global warming is threatening the livelihood of the people and development of Bangladesh," she said.

Hasina, who also sensitised the world community in her UNGA speech on the need for tackling climate change with a synergy, hoped "our policy and measures would play a vital role in meeting the challenges of climate change."

Every year, the IMO celebrates the World Maritime Day. The exact date is left to individual governments, but is usually celebrated during the last week in September.

Shipping authorities and organisations are arranging programmes for celebrating the day with colourful events highlighting the significance of the occasion.