

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-awaited 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.



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

Govt to ensure smooth supply of fertilisers

Says industries minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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

overnment 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 minister 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.

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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.

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-

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 Arif 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 re-investigation 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.

Urs at Paribagh tomorrow

METRO DESK

Annual Urs of Hazrat Shah Abdur 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.

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.

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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.

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