

More int'l, domestic airports to be set up: PM

UNB, Sangsad Bhaban

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in parliament yesterday said the government has a plan to set up more international and domestic airports in the next fiscal year.

Replying to a question she said the government has adopted a plan to set up Bangabandhu International Airport as per the election manifesto. The proposed international airport will act as a bridge between the countries of East and West.

Hasina informed the House that the committee formed for the purpose has already submitted its pre-feasibility study report.

Besides, work for formulating document to set up the airport on the basis of Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) programme is under process.

The Prime Minister said Cox's Bazar Airport would be upgraded to an international standard at a cost of Tk 302.65 crore by 2012. Development of Cox's Bazar Airport Phase-1 is expected to be implemented by June 2012.

She further informed that the government has taken measures to set up a domestic airport at Rampal of Bagerhat to aid Mongla Port and the tourist spots of the area. A project titled "Construction of Khanjahan Ali Airport (Rampal, Bagerhat)" will be implemented at a cost of Tk 470.30 crore. The airport will provide quick transport facility between the south and western districts.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at the question-answer session in parliament during the PM's question hour yesterday.

On healthcare the Prime Minister said the government is committed to provide healthcare facilities to the people for which 3551 physicians were appointed on ad-hoc basis.

Responding to a question during the PM's question hour she said 1,445 nurses were also appointed recently. She said that 6,347 medical assistants were appointed at the field level.

Process is on for recruitment of another 1,581 medical assistants.

Hasina said that to provide better healthcare to the people across the country, the government already gave clearance for appointment of doctors at different levels.

The government is also distributing modern equipment to hospitals for improved treatment of patients. Strict measures have been taken to ensure attendance of doctors, officers and employees in all public hospitals, she added.

On jute sector the PM criticised the BNP-jamaat government for "destroying" the jute industry and expressed her government's firm determination to regain the lost share of jute goods in the world market.

Replying to a supplementary question, she said the "BNP-jamaat government intentionally destroyed" the country's jute sector by closing down government-owned jute mills one after another.

"As a result, we lost the share of jute in the world market and the present government is determined to regain that share."

Responding to another supplementary question, the Prime Minister said the previous BNP-led government had taken 'policy of shrinking' for the jute sector. "This was the end... they just destroyed the jute sector."

She, however, said that the golden days of jute are coming back and the government would do whatever is possible to develop this sector.

Move to create awareness on RTI

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Commission and Grameenphone are searching for ways to utilise the vast clientele of mobile phones for awareness building on Rights to Information (RTI) Act 2009, informed Chief Information Commissioner Ambassador (Retd) Muhammad Zamir.

He was addressing the launching ceremony of the book 'Reproductive Health and Rights to Information' published by Article 19 Bangladesh in the city's IDB auditorium yesterday.

He said several options are being mullied including using Grameenphone's 550 cyber cafes all around the country to disseminate information on RTI Act and its benefits. The likelihood of informative text messages for mobile phone users and voice messages for those who cannot read are also being discussed, he added.

He said Grameenphone promised to help the commission as a part of their corporate social responsibility program.

The chief commissioner also spelled out certain challenges that are currently hindering the implementation of the RTI Act. He said, "One of the major challenge is the mind set up of our bureaucrats who are not open to the idea of providing information."

He suggested amending the RTI Act in order to include responsibilities of corporate houses that are not covered by the law directly.

The chief commissioner also pointed out that record keeping is very poor in

Bangladesh. There is an urgent need for keeping records digitally, he said.

Other speakers at the ceremony stressed that all men and women must have up to date and accurate information regarding reproductive health: the type of services available, where they are offered, their rights to privacy, citizen's charter of different health service providers and where to complain.

Aimed at campaigners of rights to information, the book highlights the necessity of access to information on reproductive and sexual health. The 35-page book also identifies a number of obstacles in attaining access to information in the area.

Dr. Hameeda Hossain, executive director of Ain O Shalish Kendra said reproductive and sexual health is one of the most tabooed areas in the country where very little information is available especially to women and adolescents.

The book broke the silence existing in the area and should be circulated properly especially targeting educational institutions, she added.

A documentary film made by Mass-Line Media Centre (MMC) on the issue was also premiered after the discussion.

Tahmina Rahman, country director of Article 19 Bangladesh, Prof Sadeka Halim, information commissioner, Prof AKM Nurrun Nabi, founder chair of Population Sciences Department, DU, Kamrul Hassan Monju, executive director of MMC, Nasim Ara Haque, president of Nari Sangbadik Kendra and senior journalist Jaglul Ahmed Chowdhury spoke at the event.

Expand paralysis treatment facilities

Experts say at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All the government and private medical college hospitals across the country should open treatment and rehabilitation units for the paralysed patients, medical experts opined at a roundtable yesterday.

Treatment facilities for the paralysed patients are insufficient compared to the number of patients across the country, they said.

The total number of paralysed patients in the country is between 15 and 20 lakh at present with another 15 to 20 thousand is adding up to the number every year, said Professor

Abdul Awal Rizvi, also the director of National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics Rehabilitation (NITOR), commonly known as Pongu hospital.

There are some 140 to 150 beds at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) and NITOR, Professor Rizvi said.

"So we need to open units at all the medical college hospitals across the country to ensure treatment facilities for the paralysed patients," he said while speaking at the roundtable titled "Paralysis and Rehabilitation: Our Duties" organised by the Bangla daily

Prothom Alo at its conference room.

The two main causes of paralysis are stroke and spinal cord injury, speakers said, adding that one can sustain spinal cord injury from road accidents or falling from a high position.

Valerie Taylor, who is the chief executive officer of the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP), stressed on the need for setting up treatment and rehabilitation unit of a multi disciplinary team comprising neurosurgeon, physiotherapist, occupational therapist and language therapists at the government medical

college hospitals.

She suggested people to control their diabetes problems and high blood pressure to prevent stroke.

Dr Shahidur Rahman, associate professor of physical medicine department of BSMMU, said the government can also ask the private medical colleges to set up treatment and rehabilitation units for the paralysed patients.

AKM Anwar Ullah Chowdhury, professor of neuromedicine department of BSMMU and Sohrab Hossain, chief of physiotherapy department of CRP, among others, spoke on the occasion.



Teachers and students of Gono Bishwabidyalay (University) in Savar bring out a procession celebrating completion of its 12 years yesterday.

TODAY

Memorial meet
Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (Bilia) will hold a memorial meeting to mark the 15th death anniversary of former Attorney General Aminul Haque. Venue: Bilia auditorium, Time: 6:30pm.

Roundtable
Save The Environment Movement (Poba) will hold a roundtable on use of tannery waste in poultry feed. Venue: Poba auditorium, Time: 11:00am.

Debate competition
The voluntary organisation "Manush" will organise an awareness oriented debate competition. Venue: Northern College Auditorium, Time: 10:00am.

Seminar
Bangladesh Association for the Aged and Institute of Geriatric Medicine (BAAIGM) will organise a seminar on "Complications due to old age, its treatment and prevention". Venue: Probin Hospital, Agargaon, Time: 11:00am.



BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir speaks at a protest organised by BNP at Muktagong yesterday.

8th wage board for newspapers in due time

PM tells JS

UNB, Sangsad Bhaban

The government will consider announcing the 8th Wage Board for newspaper industry in due time if it is necessary, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told parliament yesterday.

Replying to a question during the PM's question hour, she said the process is going on to implement the 7th Wage Board. The government has already announced the policy for advertisement and supplementary issue of the newspaper industry. "By this, the rate of government advertisement has been doubled," she said.

The prime minister said a tripartite monitoring cell has been formed to look into the implantation of the 7th Wage board for the welfare of journalists and employees of newspaper industry. "The cell is monitoring the activities round the clock."

She said the present government is working for the welfare of journalists and employees of newspaper industry.

UK STATE MINISTER CALLS ON KHALEDA

Politics through parliament instead of streets stressed

UNB, Dhaka

British Minister of State for International Development Alan Duncan after meeting with BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday afternoon said his country preferred politics in Bangladesh be conducted through parliament instead of the streets.

He told newsmen that they want to see parliament work effectively with a good set of rules where any member can express his political views freely.

The British minister said he discussed with Khaleda how parliament works in Bangladesh. "I am very aware of and concerned about the

condition of democracy in Bangladesh," he said, adding they did not want to make any judgment about it as it is an internal matter.

He said those who were elected should perform in parliament to make it effective as well as be allowed to speak freely to question the government on different issues.

Duncan said he had constructive talks with the opposition leader. Relation between Bangladesh and UK is very strong and they remain committed for international development programme in Bangladesh.

Khaleda congratulated the new UK government led by David Cameron and wished

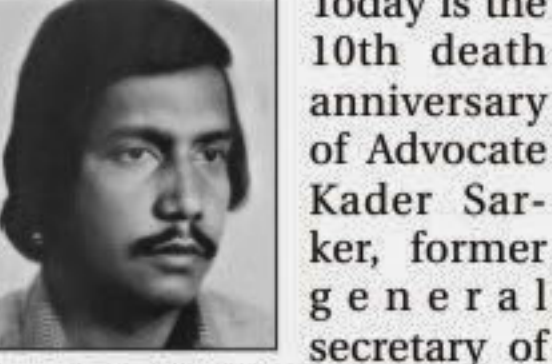
his success.

Duncan's visit to Bangladesh is the first of a minister of the new UK government led by David Cameron. He called on Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office at 5:15pm.

UK acting High Commissioner in Dhaka Duncan Norman and BNP chairperson's advisers Reaz Rahman and Sabihuddin Ahmed were present at the meeting.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



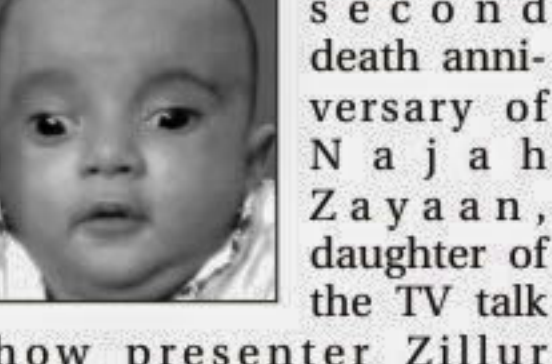
Today is the 10th death anniversary of Advocate Kader Sarker, former general secretary of Bangladesh Krishak League, Bogra district, says a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his village home at Takahut, Kalai in Joypurhat.

Relatives, political colleagues and friends are requested to attend the milad and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Najah Zayaan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the second death anniversary of Nahaj Zayaan, daughter of the TV talk show presenter Zillur Rahman, says a press release.

Zayaan passed away on July 15, 2008 only after 4 months and 6 days of her birth.

On the occasion, prayers will be offered at her grave at Zilpur graveyard and a milad mahfil will also be held. Relatives and well-wishers are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Microbus catches fire in Ctg port

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

An imported reconditioned microbus caught fire and was damaged inside Chittagong port yesterday afternoon.

Fire fighters extinguished the fire before it could spread and damage other vehicles parked nearby.

The microbus kept on A-B car shed caught fire all of a sudden at around 12:30pm, said sources in Chittagong Port Authority (CPA). Plumes of smoke emitting from the vehicle could be seen from a distance.

Headed by CPA Traffic Officer Abdul Quayum, a three-member inquiry committee was formed with CPA Security Inspector

Abul Kashem and Inspector Musa Al Noori from the fire service to investigate the incident.

When contacted CPA Deputy Terminal Manager Enamul Karim said, "It is not unusual that small blasts may take place and blow off window panes of imported vehicles due to formation of gas inside them. But it is the first time that any vehicle caught fire here."

"However, the reason behind the fire could be better explained by fire experts and after the inquiry committee submits its report," said Karim adding that compensation would be provided if negligence of duty is found on the part of CPA.

WEATHER

Rise in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at a few places over all the seven divisions with moderately heavy falls at places in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:49pm today and rises at 5:20am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 24.8 degrees Celsius at Rangamati.

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	34.4	26.6	71	76
Chittagong	31.5	25.5	78	86
Rajshahi	34.5	26.2	80	71
Khulna	33.5	26.5	79	80
Barisal	31.9	25.7	84	79
Sylhet	34.4	25.8	76	70
Cox's Bazar	32.5	25.3	80	78

Mahmudur's release demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of journalists' unions yesterday demanded unconditional release of Amar Desh acting editor Mahmudur Rahman and withdrawing the declaration of the daily's cancellation.

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) organised a human chain in front of the High Court and sought justice from the High Court on the cancellation of the declaration of the daily.

They warned the government of tougher action if their demands are not met, says a press release.

BFUJ President Ruhul Amin Gazi, Secretary General MA Aziz, DUJ General Secretary Muhammad Baker Hossain and Daily Amar Desh Deputy Editor Syed Abdal Ahmad spoke at the event.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday voiced concern over the passing of a procurement bill fearing political and administrative influence in public procurement processes, says a press release.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said the passing of Public Procurement (Amendment) Bill 2010 would allow political and administrative influence in public procurement pre-

venting the government from fighting corruption.

He said appointment of tax ombudsman had created a possibility of ensuring transparency in tax management adding that decision to abolish the post would not be good without assessing why expected result was not produced.

He suggested the government hold extensive discussions within the administration and with civil society before eliminating the post.

NIKUNJA-KHILKHET

1000 phones out of order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL) has taken necessary measures to restore telephone communication at the city's Nikunja-Khilkhet and its

adjacent areas, said a press release yesterday.

It also said telecommunication will resume within two or three days.

Telephone cables of this area were stolen leaving around 1000 telephone sets dead since last Monday.