

EU support in trade hailed

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni appreciated the cooperation of the European Union not only in the development sector of Bangladesh but also in trade and investment.

A seven-member EU parliamentary and UNFPA delegation called on Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni yesterday in the city.

She apprised the delegation about the recent socio-economic advancement that Bangladesh has made, particularly in achieving the MDGs, says a press release.

The foreign minister recalled that during the 65th UNGA in September 2010, the prime minister of Bangladesh received the prestigious MDG Award for achieving MDG 4, i.e. reducing child mortality.

She said that the issues that UNFPA deals with are very close to our heart and coincide with our priorities. Hence, the UNFPA has been playing an effective role in achieving our goals, she added.

She also briefed the delegation about Bangladesh's achievement in disaster preparedness particularly in the management of early warning system.

The delegation praised the government for its support and cooperation in implementing various UNFPA projects.

People flock to the Open Market Sale (OMS) point to buy rice at Begum Rokeya Avenue at the city's Sheorapara defying the shivering cold yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



UNWFP operation in Bangladesh extended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP) has extended its current refugee operations for two more years to provide support to 31,000 food-insecure refugees in Cox's Bazar.

It would cost nearly Tk 77 crore, said a UNWFP press release on Wednesday.

This extension of the programme will enable UNWFP to continue its operation to improve food security and reduce malnutrition among registered refugees living in Kutupalang and Nayapara in Cox's Bazar. These refugees came to Bangladesh in 1991 following religious and ethnic persecution in Myanmar.

"The two-year extension of our ongoing programme will strengthen the food and nutrition support base and help reduce levels of malnutrition among children and women, as well as increase access to education for refugee boys, girls and adolescents," said Christa Räder, WFP Representative in Bangladesh.

Under this new phase, UNWFP will continue its ongoing activities including general food distributions, a school-meals programme and targeted nutritional support for acutely and moderately malnourished mothers and children.

WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting hunger worldwide. Each year, on average, WFP feeds more than 90 million people in more than 70 countries.

Engr's wife found dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Wife of a marine engineer allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself from a ceiling fan with a scarf in her Uttara residence in the city yesterday.

Police recovered the hanging body of Shakila Akhter Shuvra, 35, wife of KM Ibrahim Suborno, from the kitchen and sent it to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Hailing from Sudharam upazila in Noakhali district, they got married 12 years ago and were living in a flat on the second floor of a building at Sector 14.

Talking to reporters at the morgue, Suborno said they went to sleep around midnight and found her dead in the morning and blamed family feud for the suicide.

Road accidents kill 15

METRO DESK

Fifteen people were killed and five others injured in road accidents in Natore, Chittagong, Dinajpur, Satkhira, Bogra, and Pabna yesterday and on Wednesday.

Our Natore correspondent reports: Four people were killed and five others injured as a bus crashed into a private car at Manikpur of Boraigram upazila in the district yesterday.

The deceased are Rowshan Ara, 42, her sister-in-law Nasima Begum, 40, and the car driver Milton, 30, of Puthia in Rajshahi and Aftab Hossain, 13, son of Mintu Mia of Singra in Natore. They all were aboard the car.

Four of the injured were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital while Shahidul Islam, husband of Rowshan Ara, was taken to a local clinic in critical condition.

Our Ctg correspondent says: Two

workers were killed after an electric pole fell on them as they were installing the pillars at Hathajari upazila of the district yesterday.

Md Mizan, 22, and Salman Sha, 18, from Gaibandha district, were declared dead at the local health complex.

Our Dinajpur correspondent adds: A schoolgirl died on the spot after being knocked down by a speeding bus at Bottolimore in Hakimpur upazila of the district yesterday.

Rumi Akter 13, daughter of Rustom Ali of the upazila's Kamla village was a class VII student of Mirzapur High School.

Our Satkhira correspondent reports: A motorcyclist was killed after being hit by a speeding truck at Itagachha of the district's sadar upazila on Wednesday night.

Abdul Gafoor Sardar, 38, of the village Kamalnagar of the upazila, died on the way to Satkhira sadar hospital.

7 deaths at one hospital

Our Bogra correspondent reports: Seven people who were injured in separate road accidents in Bogra and Pabna yesterday and on Wednesday died at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital yesterday.

The report says three unidentified people died at the hospital who were injured in a collision between a truck and a three-wheeler at Chhatiantola on Bogra-Gabtolli road in Bogra yesterday.

Two elderly men succumbed to their injuries at the same hospital. Bashir Uddin, 70, was hit by a motorcycle yesterday and Shahed, 70, by a three-wheeler on Wednesday evening.

The hospital witnessed two more people to die. On Wednesday, Majed, 26, and Din Islam, 45, sustained injuries in a road accident at Badherhat of Bera upazila of Pabna.



PHOTO: STAR

Centenarian Hazera Khatun comes to the polling centre to vote in the Kaliganj municipality election in Jhenidah yesterday.

Hazera defies age to vote

RASHIDUL HASAN and AZIBOR RAHMAN from Kaliganj, Jhenidah

Century-old Hazera Khatun did not miss what could be her last vote in an election.

Helped by a relative a stooping Hazera braved chilly weather to turn up at Shoieb Nagar Madrasha polling centre yesterday to cast her ballot.

"I'm more than 100 years old...but I don't want to miss the vote," said the woman after casting her ballot. "May be this is the last vote of my life."

To Hazera old age and ailment proved weaker to her desire to choose a representative of her choice.

"This is our own election. I want to select my representative," said Hazera, shivering in the biting cold.

At the centre Hazera was not the only old woman to vote. Rani Bala, 75 and Dipika Rani, 80, also came and cast their ballots.

25 NGO projects approved to fight climate challenges

UNB, Dhaka

The Ministry of Environment and Forests yesterday approved in principle a total of 25 non-government organisation (NGOs) projects to face climate change challenges in the country.

"We have discussed the NGOs' projects at the 8th meeting of Climate Change Trustee Board and reviewing these projects, we approved in principle 25 projects, which will be beneficial for the people," Minister for Environment and Forests Dr Hasan Mahmud told reporters after the meeting at the Secretariat in the city.

He said the physically visible works (projects) like biogas plant, energy saving burner supply, water preserver and rainwater harvesting project were approved at the Climate Change Trustee Board meeting.

Dr Hasan Mahmud informed that 28 projects were approved under the Ministry of Environment and Forests earlier to face the adverse impacts of climate change.

He said that the meeting decided to keep the money for the permanent climate fund approximately Tk 5.5 crore at different banks.

The State Minister said the government has also taken a capacity-building project aiming at strengthening local government to face the climate challenges.

Chaired by Minister for Environment and Forests Dr Hasan Mahmud, the meeting was attended by Food and Disaster Management Minister Dr Abdur Razaque, Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan, economist Prof Kholiqzaman, and cabinet secretary and Environment and Forest Secretary Dr Mihir Kanti Majumder.

SC clears way for Narsingdi polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Supreme Court yesterday cleared the way for holding Narsingdi municipal election, scheduled for January 17.

A bench of Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque stayed a HC order that, on January 11, stayed the election process for 15 days.

The apex court stayed the HC order till disposal of its rule that had also asked the election commission and government to explain why candidature of Lokman Hossain, a mayoral candidate, should not be declared illegal.

The Appellate Division passed the order following a petition filed by Lokman Hossain against the HC order.

In response to a writ petition filed by another mayoral candidate Abdul Matin Sarker, the HC on January 11 asked Lokman to appear before the court within seven days to prove whether he is a fugitive.

TAX EVASION Hearing on charge framing against Hashem deferred

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday deferred the hearing on charge framing against Partex Group Chairman MA Hashem till February 6 in connection with a tax evasion case.

Judge Mohammad Zohurul Hoque of the Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after Hashem's lawyer submitted a time petition seeking adjournment of the hearing.

Hashem was not present in the court due to his illness.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) on August 23 last year filed the case with the Sessions Judge Court against Hashem, also chairman of United Commercial Bank Ltd, for evading tax.

Satellite in three yrs

BSS, Dhaka

BTRC Chairman Maj Gen (retd) Zia Ahmed yesterday said the government is soon to appoint consultants in a couple of days to launch its first satellite in the space.

He said, "Thirty consulting firms have submitted proposals after expressing their interest in this regard following the publication of advertisements in the newspapers."

"BTRC (Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission) is scrutinising these proposals." On completion of the scrutiny, a competent firm will be appointed very soon, he added.

"We are hopeful we would be able to launch our first satellite within three years, as International Telecommunications Union (ITU) has allocated slot for this."

Ahmed was briefing journalists at BTRC head office in the city yesterday to highlight the government's success in two years in the telecom sector.

He also cited the steps taken in the last two years for telecom sector's development saying the commission is working relentlessly to build a Digital Bangladesh and materialise the Vision 2021.

Bangladesh's membership to the 167-member ITU is one of the biggest achievements of the government in the telecom sector, said the BTRC chairman.

The number of telecom subscribers in the country has risen to 6.97 crore from 4.60 crore in the last two years, he said.

"The teledensity rate has clocked to 47.80 percent from 32 percent in the last two years, as 90 percent people and 90 percent areas of the country have been brought under the telecom network."

The number of Internet subscribers doubled in the last two years as the commission has reduced the bandwidth charge significantly, he said. "The government has decided to further cut the bandwidth charge."

Upon Airtel's entrance, he said, "Nothing happened wrong; whatever was done in this regard is for the country's greater interest of investment."

The BTRC chairman said the National Frequency Allocation Policy has been finalised for optimum utilisation of frequency. "From now on allocation of frequency will not be made free."

Kulkhani

The Kulkhani of Late Muhammad Aminul Huque, renowned Senior Newscaster of Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television, President of Bangladesh Shagbad Pathak Shamittee, Head of the Human Resource and Transformations Division of AB Bank Limited and former Head of Human Resource of Standard Chartered Bank, Aktel (Robi), Navana Group, Kafco and Action Aid will be held today (Friday), 14th January 2011, Baad Asr at DOHS Baridhara Mosque (arrangements to accommodate female guests have also been made).

Friends, relatives and well-wishers are requested to kindly attend and pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

In humble request
Mother, Wife, Son, Daughter and Family.