

Bahaddarhat

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600 crore, in Chittagong today.

She is expected to lay the foundation stone of a 5.2-km flyover stretching from Muradpur to Lalkhan Bazar in the port city.

A meeting of Executive Committee of the National Economic Council on October 1 approved the Muradpur-Lalkhan Bazar flyover project, worth Tk 462 crore.

During her visit to the port city today, Hasina will address a meeting of eminent personalities on the premises of Jamiatul Falah Mosque.

She will also inaugurate a mural of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Chittagong Press Club.

Hasina will attend functions at Chittagong Cantonment and Bangladesh Naval Academy and inaugurate the BMA Bangabandhu Complex.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

With the Eid-ul-Azha only a few days away, sacrificial animals wait to be sold at Kamalapur cattle market in the capital yesterday.

Supply huge, price low

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Frustration gripped in the minds of the traders until yesterday as the number of customers was very low and their price offers were not up to the expectation.

Abdul Hai, a cattle trader, said he came to the market at Mirpur Eastern Housing three days back with 33 bulls from Pabna but did not get any offer equivalent to the purchase price.

"I am getting an offer of Tk 45,000 for a bull that was purchased from Pabna at Tk 50,000," he said, adding that last year he had sold six bulls, out of 18, at this market six days before the Eid.

Numerous cattle markets sprang up in different districts, especially outside Dhaka, and this might bring down the prices of animals and

traders might have to count losses like the previous year, he added.

Expressing frustration, Md Tota Mia, a cattle trader of Kushtia, said he had counted a loss of Tk 1 lakh last year as the price of sacrificial animals went down on the last day before the Eid-ul-Azha.

Some sacrificial animals were falling sick due to hot and humid weather while they were being carried by trucks and lorries to cattle markets.

Alam, who brought several bulls at Kamalapur Balur Math cattle market from Kushtia, faced a loss worth Tk 1 lakh as one his bulls died yesterday due to heat stroke.

Another cattle trader, Akhter, was passing his time in anxiety at the Kamalapur cattle market

as one of his bulls worth Tk 2.30 lakh had fallen sick due to heat stroke.

Meanwhile, the cattle market authorities in the capital had set up fake currency identifier machine with the help of bank officials.

Isfat Ara, an officer of Prime Bank Ltd's Pallabi branch, said they had brought a fake currency identifier machine to the Eastern Housing cattle market.

"We will remain busy with the machine during any monetary transaction between traders and buyers until the last day before the Eid," she said.

Rakib Imran, a member of the managing committee of the Gabtali cattle market, said they would complete installation of 10 fake currency identifier machines by today.

Cyclone Phailin eyes India's east coast

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

As a powerful cyclone was hurtling towards India's east coast yesterday, thousands of people were evacuated and the Indian civil administration reached out to the army for help.

Satellite images showed a cloud mass about a third the size of India, although weather officials said the danger zone was far narrower and would only affect coastal part of Orissa state and neighbouring Andhra Pradesh state.

The Indian Air Force sent teams to assist local disaster management agencies in shifting people out of the path of cyclone Phailin which is expected to strike today

evening accompanied by a tidal surge of up to three metres (10 feet).

It is "a very severe cyclonic storm with a maximum sustained wind speed of 210-220 kilometres an hour", the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said as it upgraded its warnings.

LS Rathore director general of the IMD, said the cyclone was gaining intensity over the Bay of Bengal and is "very close to a super cyclonic storm," the most powerful form.

"It is definitely not going to fizzle out, it is not going to weaken substantially," he told Indian television channel NDTV.

Orissa's state capital Bhubaneswar has been lashed by a strong wind

and people did shopping to stock up on food, with memories strong of the 1999 storm which killed thousands of people in the state.

Orissa Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has written to the defence ministry appealing for help, saying that "despite preparedness by the state government, the impact of a very severe cyclonic storm requires support of the defence forces."

The air force, fresh from assisting with relief efforts after massive flooding in the Himalayas in June, said two emergency teams would travel to Bhubaneswar while transport planes and helicopters would be kept on standby.

The army and navy

were also preparing to assist.

Authorities said they have raised a "high alert" across 14 out of 30 districts of Orissa and met with local aid groups who have been asked to assist with evacuations from coastal areas.

"We have already deployed our entire disaster mitigation force on pre-storm initiatives," said Pradipta Mohapatra, special relief commissioner for the state.

The 1999 super-cyclone had wrought extensive death and devastation in Orissa. A government report on the disaster published in 2009 put the human death toll at 8,243, while 445,000 livestock perished.

Nobel Peace

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This has to be completed by mid-2014 under the terms of a UN Security Council resolution.

A team of around 30 OPCW arms experts and UN logistics and security personnel are on the ground in Syria and have started to destroy weapons production facilities, with footage of their work broadcast on Syrian television.

The OPCW said on Tuesday it was sending a second wave of inspectors to bolster the disarmament mission in the war-ravaged nation.

Since the OPCW came into existence 16 years ago, it has destroyed 57,000 tonnes of chemical weapons, the majority leftovers from the Cold War now held by the United States and Russia.

This is the second year in a row that the Peace Prize has been awarded to an organisation, following last year when the European Union took home the honour.

The Nobel Prize consists of a gold medal, a diploma and a prize sum of eight million Swedish kronor (\$1.2 million, 910,000 euros).

Planet with vast oceans

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the first time they have found rocks and water together in one place outside the Solar System.

Water and a rocky surface are assumed to be vital for the origin of life and the discovery of both substances in deep space indicates that the basic building blocks for habitable planets may be widely distributed throughout the cosmos, scientists said.

The rocky planetary body or asteroid is orbiting a star called GD 61, a "white dwarf" where the

star's nuclear fuel has been exhausted.

The asteroid is believed to be the remnants of a small, watery planet that was knocked out of its original orbit and pulled so close to its sun that it was shredded in the process.

Scientists said that the original planet was at least 90km in diameter, making it a minor planet in terms of size, and that it was once composed of 26 per cent water -- by contrast the Earth is just 0.023 per cent water.

"In these remnants lie

chemical clues which point towards a previous existence as a water-rich terrestrial body," Prof Gänsicke said.

"Those two ingredients -- a rocky surface and water -- are key in the hunt for habitable planets outside our Solar System so it's very exciting to find them together for the first time outside our Solar System," he said.

The study, published in the journal Science, used observations from the Hubble Space Telescope and the giant Keck telescope at Mauna Kea in Hawaii.

Adilur freed on HC bail

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prison, told The Daily Star.

The High Court on Tuesday granted bail to Adilur for six months in a case filed for running a "false report" on Odhikar's website. The following day, the Supreme Court upheld the HC order.

Detectives had arrested Adilur at his Gulshan residence on August 10 in the case filed under the Information

and Communication Technology Act, 2006 for tarnishing the image of the government, the state and law enforcers by publishing a "false report" on the crack-down on Hefajat-e Islam at the capital's Shapla Chattar on May 5 night.

Law enforcers on that night had flushed out several thousand Hefajat activists, who took to the streets and

resorted to violence following the Dhaka siege programme in the daytime.

Odhikar in its report claimed that 61 people were killed during the raid by law enforcers.

On September 4, police pressed charges against Adilur. Several organisations had demanded the government release the rights activist.

Home-goers suffer on highways

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Like every year, the authorities loudly announced taking up concerted effort to ease people's sufferings. But their effort seemed to be inadequate. The highway police had to struggle to manage traffic and achieved little.

Long queues of vehicles were seen on both sides of the roads at places between Alengia in Tangail and Chandra in Gazipur and even up to Joydevpur Chourasta of Gazipur, reported our correspondents from Tangail and Gazipur.

In some areas, the tailbacks stretched for around 20 kilometres.

The jams began to ease slightly with vehicles moving slowly in the afternoon, said Omar Faruque, officer-in-charge of Kaliakair Police Station.

Numerous cattle-laden trucks heading for Dhaka and empty trucks leaving after offloading cattle largely contributed to the jams. Besides, the law enforcers blamed some drivers for not following traffic rules.

Saiful Islam, driver of a tobacco-laden truck which was stranded at Nagar Jalpai in Tangail Sadar upazila, said he started journey from Chittagong Wednesday morning but could manage to reach only Tangail. "I don't know how much time it will take to reach Bogra," he said.

Level crossing on the highway at Dherua area in Mirzapur is another major reason for the jam as the authorities had to stop traffic frequently for trains.

Sumon Ahmed, said he started his journey on a newspaper-carrying bus

from Dhaka around 3:00am and reached Tangail at noon, even though it was a three-hour journey.

The employees of Roads and Highways Department in Tangail were seen repairing potholes at different places on the highway yesterday.

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader, however, blamed cattle carrying trucks for stopping at different places and creating jams.

Inaugurating a 10-lane Nabinagar intersection on Dhaka-Aricha highway, he said he had ordered to prevent the cattle-carrying trucks from stopping at any point on the highway, reports UNB.

On Dhaka-Chittagong Highway, hundreds of passengers faced untold suffering following the breakdown of a lorry on Meghna-

Gumti Bridge in Comilla at 9:30am yesterday, reports a correspondent in Comilla.

Police removed the vehicle from the highway around 12:30pm.

However, highway police said the incident disrupted traffic on the highway for about six hours, creating a 20-kilometre tailback from Eliatganj to Daudkandi toll plaza.

FERRY TERMINALS
Around 500 cattle-laden trucks heading for Dhaka got stranded at Daulatdia ferry terminal as officials at the terminal were giving priority to buses.

"We asked the cattle traders to move just after evening," Zillur Rahman, deputy general manager of BIWTC Aricha region said.

The situation at Mawa-Kawrakandi was, however, normal with a moderate rush in the morning.

Tension rises over Oct 25

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government from October 25 as per the current constitutional framework to oversee the next parliamentary polls. The elections will be held 90 days before the expiry of its tenure on January 25.

The AL has decided to hold a rally in front of its central office on Bangabandhu Avenue on October 25 to highlight government's successes and seek public mandate in the next parliamentary polls, Dhaka city AL General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya told The Daily Star.

The BNP will stage a rally the same day to press for the restoration of a non-party caretaker government to oversee

the next general polls, said one of its senior leaders. But the party is yet to get permission for holding the rally in Suhrawardy Udyan or Paltan.

BNP Standing Committee Member MK Anwar said they had planned for the event "much earlier".

"But the Awami League has announced a counter rally just because it wants to obstruct our programme," he said, adding that public sufferings will be multiplied and there would be negative impact on the economy," he said.

"Thus the departure of the present government will be more painful."

The BNP sources said if it does not get the permission, BNP

Chairperson Khaleda Zia might announce a seven-day nonstop hartal from a programme of pro-opposition lawyers in the capital on October 26.

AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said if the BNP holds a peaceful rally, the government would rather help the party. If the BNP tries to create any chaos, the law enforcers will take action.

The AL leader warned of resistance and counter attacks if Jamaat or any other parties strike law enforcers or the AL men anywhere in the country.

The Rab, police and also the BGB will remain alert to the possibility of violence, according to sources in the agencies.

Italy rescues more than 500 migrants off Sicily

AFP, Rome

Italy rescued more than 500 migrants in the Strait of Sicily in the early hours of yesterday as part of several coastguard operations, authorities said.

In the first operation, a Maltese vessel rescued more than 200 migrants on two rubber dinghies who had put out an SOS call while they were still in Libyan waters.

A boat flying a Bahamas flag also rescued 118 migrants, while in another operation a Navy vessel called on a tugboat to rescue 175 migrants from two more boats.

Meanwhile yesterday morning, Italian divers found another body from the refugee shipwreck last week off the coast of the island of Lampedusa, raising the death toll in the tragedy to 312.

Deadline

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The Saudi authorities had set July 4 as the deadline of the amnesty.

Later, following the demand of the foreign nationals the amnesty period had been extended till November 4.

The move came as a blessing for over 1.2 million Bangladeshis who were working illegally in the Saudi Arabia, one of the largest labour markets for Bangladesh, for several years and not getting any scope to be legalised.

2 killed

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leader Harun at the remote haor village.

The deceased were identified as Kanchan, 45, and Wajik Rani. Details of the clash could not be known.

Jailed US citizen meets mother in N Korea

AFP, Seoul

The mother of Kenneth Bae, a US citizen jailed in North Korea, was allowed to meet with her ailing son Friday and said he "did not look that bad", according to a report.

Myunghee Bae met her son, being held on charges of attempting to topple the regime, at a hospital a day after she arrived in the reclusive communist state, Japan's Kyodo News agency reported.

He is said to be suffering serious health problems and to have lost more than 50 pounds (23 kilograms) since being jailed.

But Kyodo quoted his mother, known by her Korean name Song Myung-Hee, as saying her son "did not look that bad".

Bae told his mother that his health had improved, Kyodo said, adding there may be another meeting between them as she is set to stay in North Korea for five days.

Bae, a 44-year-old tour operator also known by his Korean name Pae Jun-Ho, was arrested last November as he entered the northeastern port city of Rason.

He was sentenced to 15 years hard labour on charges that he was trying to bring down the regime of its young leader, Kim Jong-Un.

Bae was transferred from a prison camp to a hospital in Pyongyang on August 5, said the Chosun Sinbo, a pro-Pyongyang newspaper published in Japan, which normally speaks for the regime in the North.

In a video released before

her departure from the US, where she lives with family members, Bae's mother expressed shock at how ill her son looked during an interview from prison in July.

"My heart was broken into pieces when his prison interview was released on July 3 because his appearance was very shocking," she said.

"He looked so different and he lost so much weight. I could not believe that prisoner was my son."

North Korea, which strictly bans religious proselytising, has said Bae was a Christian evangelist who brought in "inflammatory" material.

US officials say Bae is now very sick, and have called for his release as a humanitarian gesture.

North Korea slams US-South joint drill; vows retaliation

AFP, Seoul

North Korea on Friday threatened to "bury in the sea" a US aircraft carrier, as it slammed a three-nation naval drill involving US, South Korean and Japanese warships.

The latest warning from the isolated regime came a day after the United States launched a two-day joint military drill with South Korea and Japan off the southern coast of the Korean peninsula.

The drill involved the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS George Washington, guided-missile ships, anti-submarine helicopters and early warning aircraft.

"The war drills show that the US-Japan-South Korea tripartite military

alliance has developed into the nuclear war alliance and has become operational in actuality," the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea said in a statement.

If the three countries launch "a nuclear war while talking about 'sign' and 'preemptive attack' despite repeated warnings of (North Korea), its revolutionary armed forces will immediately mount counter-attack to bury the aggressors, provocateurs in the sea together with the carrier," it said.

North Korea has repeatedly condemned joint military drills south of the border and threatened counter-attacks that have not materialised.

On Tuesday North

Korea warned the United States of a "horrible disaster" over the latest drill and put its troops on alert.

US and South Korean officials have described the drill as a search and rescue exercise to improve readiness for humanitarian disasters.

Seoul and Washington last week agreed a joint strategy to address what they described as the mounting threat of a North Korean nuclear attack after Pyongyang restarted an ageing plutonium reactor.

Analysts have attributed the regime's recent bellicose rhetoric to its desire to attract the United States' attention and draw it back into dialogue.

The United States and

South Korea have long demanded that Pyongyang show commitment to ending its nuclear weapons programme before six-nation talks on disarmament, which have been stalled since December 2008, can resume.

Although the North's atomic test in February -- its most powerful to date -- sent tensions soaring, the temperature has been lowered in recent months after a series of conciliatory gestures by Pyongyang towards Seoul.

But acute concerns remain over the North's nuclear programme, with South Korea's spy agency telling lawmakers on Tuesday that Pyongyang has restarted its ageing Yongbyon reactor.