

New aircraft, choppers for BAF soon

PM tells air force

UNB, Dhaka

Reaffirming her resolve to turn Bangladesh Air Force into a strategically and technically capable force, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the BAF will get Mi-171, YAK-130 helicopters and PT-6, LET-410 planes soon.

She was addressing the induction ceremony of the newly procured K-8W Trainer Aircraft to the air force fleet at BAF Base Bangabandhu at the city's Kurmitola.

The K-8W is a Chinese-built jet trainer with the state-of-the-art digital cockpit for basic and advanced jet training.

The PM hoped the induction of K-8W jet trainer will raise BAF's training capability to international standards and training would be safer and faster.

Hasina said her government, despite financial constraints, wants to build the armed forces as efficient, well equipped and modern forces and will do whatever necessary to this end.

The BAF members, working for UN peacekeeping missions, earned pride and praise for the nation, she stated.

The construction work, said the premier, of Bangabandhu Complex at Jessore Air Force Academy has been progressing fast and a new air defence radar is being installed in Cox's Bazar to ensure a full-time surveillance of the airspace over the country's huge exclusive economic zone in the Bay of Bengal.

She formally handed over the Induction Order of K-8W to Wing Commander Sharif Mustafa, commander of the parade.

Earlier, Air Chief Air Marshal Mohammad Enamul Bari and Air Officer Commanding of the base Air Commodore M Obaidur Rahman received the PM at BAF Base Bangabandhu.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, PM's advisers, ambassadors, chief of the naval staff, principal staff officer of the Armed Forces Division and high military and civil officials were present.

DCC POLLS (2011-2014) WHAT THEY SAID

As several attempts in holding the polls to Dhaka City Corporation failed, then CEC ATM Shamsul Huda in April 2010 said it seems the DCC election is jinxed. The DCC was split into two in 2011. Since the split, the prime minister and the LGRD minister on several occasions have spoken about holding the election. Huda's successor Kazi Rakibuddin too made several attempts to hold the polls. Even the schedule for the polls was announced in April 2012. But no election was held.



"The DCC has been divided into two zones only to deliver better civic services to the doorsteps of the city dwellers. Had there been adequate money in government fund, it would have split the DCC into four zones."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on November 30, 2011, a day after passage of the bill splitting DCC into two.

"Elections of the two DCCs might be held in November this year."

Hasina told a party meeting on July 31, 2014.

"The long overdue elections to the bifurcated DCC would take place early next year."

Hasina at cabinet meeting on December 8, 2014



"The government this week will appoint administrators for DCCs and request the EC to take measures for holding polls in the next 90 days."

LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf told parliament after the DCC split bill was passed.

"Under the law, the EC was responsible for holding the elections."

Syed Ashraf told parliament on March 4, 2014



"It's clear that we've been ready for some time now. The DCC south wants to increase its boundary and there are proposals to extend the DCC north's boundary as well.... If there's pressure from the high-ups, the local government ministry can swiftly demarcate the boundaries and request us [to hold the polls]."

CEC Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad said on December 9, 2014

"We have repeatedly sent letters to the ministry asking it to complete the demarcation. But the ministry kept saying it was working on it."

The CEC said on December 10, 2014



"All preparations are complete to hold the DCC polls. But what can we do if they [LGRD ministry] are not interested. We tried our best to hold the DCC polls in May. We promised to hold the polls several times but failed. It seems the DCC election is jinxed."

Then CEC ATM Shamsul Huda made the remarks on April 15, 2010 after his repeated efforts failed to hold the DCC polls.

BANGLADESHI JOBSEEKER Body lies in KL hospital for over a month

Family alleges she was tortured to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The body of a Bangladeshi female migrant jobseeker, who died in custody of a Malaysian detention centre, has been left abandoned at a hospital morgue in Kuala Lumpur for more than a month.



Kulum Akter

The victim has been identified as Kulum Akter, 35, a resident of Naria upazila in Shariatpur, Sayedul Islam, counsellor (labour wing) at Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Sharmin Akter Runa, daughter of Kulum, alleged that her mother was tortured to death in custody under the Malaysian immigration police on October 22 this year.

Another Bangladeshi female jobseeker, who returned from Malaysia on December 6, informed Runa of her mother's death the same day.

"Impossible. My mother couldn't die of any normal illness. She didn't carry any disease. She was tortured and killed," Runa told The Daily Star.

Sayedul, however, said the cause of her death could be known after receiving the post-mortem report.

"We will take steps if anything the daughter alleged is found in the post-mortem report," he mentioned.

Kulum went to Malaysia on April 23 this year with a tourist visa in search of a job, said Runa.

"She went to Malaysia secretly without informing us. On reaching Kuala Lumpur, she called and informed us that she was trying to secure a job there," she added.

Runa came to know about her mother's arrest when the latter last

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

EU for talks on future elections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Major political parties should sit to figure out a mechanism for future elections and structure of the poll-time government in order to give voters a fair choice, says a top politician of the European Union.

Jean Lambert, chair of an EU delegation for relations with the South Asian countries, however, yesterday said: "We are not calling for new elections."

"We need a political solution to come from the major political parties about how a future election will be conducted and what the transitional measure will be so that all parties will be ready to participate and people can have a full and fair choice."

The EU politician was talking to reporters at the Embassy of the European Union in the capital.

Lambert came to Dhaka to take part in the Dhaka Apparel Summit organised by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association to brighten the image of the sector sullied by two industrial disasters.

She said the EU Parliament still had concerns over the January 5 elections as the full views of the people were not represented in parliament.

"The major parties have to grapple with the political issues, and that is something they only can do. Other people can offer advice and we can



Jean Lambert

offer support and whatever, but it is not going to be partisan because the solution has to fit the people of Bangladesh.

"That's the responsibility; the political parties have to find a solution that will enable the next election, whenever it is held, to give a full voice to the people," said the British politician.

During her visit, Lambert also met senior politicians, civil society members and media personalities.

On any possible breakthrough in holding talks between the ruling Awami League and the BNP, she said it seemed to her still a long way to go to narrow the gap between the two political rivals.

"But it does not mean people should give up in trying to make that happen and looking for all sorts of possibilities because it is essentially a

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

Another gold haul

FROM PAGE 1

gold at the cargo unit of the airport in the last 12 years, said Moinul Khan, director general of Customs Intelligence, at a press briefing at the airport.

The bullions concealed in three small travel bags were flown in in three cartons full of buttons, ribbons and zippers from Singapore by a Singapore Airlines flight around 8:30pm on Tuesday night. The total weight of the cartons was 83 kg.

A team of Customs Intelligence officials on receiving information identified the cartons at a cargo unit around 2:00am and scanned them to confirm that there was gold inside, Moinul told reporters. The cartons had been booked by TR and Co in Singapore for Unitek Apparels Ltd at Karnaphuli EPZ in Chittagong.

This is the second largest recovery of smuggled gold this year after 105 kg gold was seized in April from a Biman Bangladesh Airlines lavatory. The value of 43 gold bars, each weighing one kg, is around Tk 21.5 crore.

A departmental case was filed as no one was arrested in connection with the latest haul of gold bars.

Sources in the intelligence agencies have long been suspecting that a huge amount of gold is being smuggled into the country with cargo and passed out of the airport safely in the absence of

strict screening.

"The vigilance at the airport has become more effective now than before and we are foiling all efforts of gold smuggling," Moinul said.

A three-member committee headed by Customs Intelligence Deputy Director Mustafizur Rahman has been formed to investigate the incident.

"The team will visit the importer garment factory and contact Singapore airport for information about the exporter," Moinul said.

It has been asked to submit a report within 10 working days.

A case will then be filed under Special Powers Act against the people to be found responsible during the investigation for the smuggling.

Checking of garment accessories is a bit loose at the airport and the smugglers tried to take its advantage, an airport official said wishing not to be named.

The gold bars, if not seized, would have been taken out of the airport through a hanger gate or any other area at night with the help of people with security passes, he added.

Replying to a query, Moinul said customs officials had seized 710 kilograms of gold and arrested 90 people in Dhaka and Chittagong airports for their links to smuggling in the last 17 months.

Malala hopes to be PM

FROM PAGE 1

Pakistan has been jointly awarded the prize with Kailash Satyarthi of India for risking their lives to fight for children's rights.

Malala said she had been inspired by Benazir Bhutto - a woman who twice served as Pakistani prime minister before her murder in 2007.

"I want to serve my country and my dream is that my country becomes a developed country and I see every child get an education,"

she said.

The 17-year-old Malala, the youngest ever Nobel winner, and Satyarthi, age 60, collected the award at a ceremony in the Norwegian capital to a standing ovation.

Saying that all children have a right to childhood and education instead of forced labor, Nobel committee chairman Thorbjorn Jagland said "this world conscience can find no better expression" than through this year's winners.

In his speech to the gathering, Jagland related how Malala was shot by Taliban gunmen two years ago and said Islamic extremist groups dislike of knowledge because it is a condition for freedom.

"Attendance at school, especially by girls, deprives such forces from power," he said.

He mentioned Satyarthi's vision of ending child labor and how he abandoned a career as an electrical engineer in 1980 to fight for that vision, reports AP.

UN urges nations to save boat people

FROM PAGE 16

received information of 4,272 reported deaths this year.

Despite the increase in the number of boat people, the international community's response has been marred by confusion over to how to tackle the problem. Some governments are more concerned about keeping people out than treating them as individuals who may be fleeing war or persecution, UNHCR said.

"This is a mistake, and precisely the wrong reaction for an era in which record numbers of people are fleeing wars," the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, said in a statement.

"Security and immigration management are concerns for any country, but policies must be designed in a way that human lives do not end up becoming collateral damage," he said.

Guterres made his comments as UNHCR opened a two-day debate with government officials, aid workers, coastguards, lawyers, academics and other experts on the matter.

It comes less than two months after

Italy announced it would halt a sea rescue mission - Mare Nostrum - that had saved the lives of more than 1,00,000 migrants from Africa and the Middle East since it began over a year ago.

Italy said the mission would end to make way for a smaller European Union scheme.

UNHCR said for the first time, people from "refugee producing countries" have become a major source of those leaving their homelands by boat, accounting for almost half the individuals undertaking sea journeys.

Most are from Syria, where conflict has raged for nearly four years, and Eritrea, where human rights experts say national service, an indefinite conscription, amounts to forced labour.

UNHCR said besides the Mediterranean, there were at least three other major sea routes being used by migrants and asylum seekers.

In the Horn of Africa, more than 80,000 people, mainly from Ethiopia and Somalia, crossed the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea between Jan 1 and end

of November en route to Yemen or Saudi Arabia.

UNHCR spokesman William Spindler told a press briefing on Friday that ethnic tensions in Myanmar and little prospect of integration in Bangladesh were driving more Rohingya, a mostly stateless Muslim people, to the open seas than before.

The vast majority use smugglers, who typically charge them very little, to make the crossings. Once they arrive they are held for ransom in secluded camps, he said.

"In some cases these people stay there for months under terrible conditions," Spindler said. "We know of beatings, torture, rape against these refugees and migrants."

Guterres called for all players to address the root causes of why people are fleeing and how to crack down on the criminal networks profiting from desperate would-be migrants.

He also highlighted the importance of having systems to deal with arrivals and distinguish real refugees from migrants.

Organic farming

FROM PAGE 16

Furthermore, in some crops - especially leguminous plants such as beans, peas and lentils - there were no significant differences in yields, the researchers from the University of California, Berkeley found.

"In terms of comparing productivity among the two techniques, this paper sets the record straight on the comparison between organic and conventional agriculture," said Claire Kremen, professor of environmental science, policy and management at Berkeley.

The study comes amid rising concerns that intense farming prac-

tices are damaging the environment, with the widespread use of nerve agent pesticides frequently blamed for declining populations of bees and other pollinators.

"With global food needs predicted to greatly increase in the next 50 years, it's critical to look more closely at organic farming because, aside from the environmental impacts of industrial agriculture, the ability of synthetic fertilisers to increase crop yields has been declining," said Prof Kremen.

The researchers based their findings on a meta-analysis of 115 studies - a dataset three times greater than any previous such paper - com-

paring organic and conventional agriculture.

The researchers suggest that organic farming can be a very competitive alternative to industrial agriculture when it comes to food production.

"Eradicating world hunger requires increasing the access to food, not simply the production. Also, increasing the proportion of agriculture that uses sustainable, organic methods of farming is not a choice, it's a necessity. We simply can't continue to produce food far into the future without taking care of our soils, water and biodiversity," Prof Kremen said.

fastest
banglalink 3G
64 district

banglalink 3G modem at an unbeatable price of **Tk 1,249** with **FREE 6GB 3G Internet**

also receive **100%** internet bonus on purchase of **1GB** or **2GB** Internet pack

start something new

*for details, see inner

to know more: 121 | 01911304121 | www.banglalink.com.bd | facebook.com/banglalink