

PM for foolproof cyber security

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed the need for foolproof cyber security of digitised documents to ensure that the country can reap the maximum benefits from digitisation, keeping cyber criminals at bay.

"All need to stay alert so that the secrecy of the financial sector and classified information could not be breached in any way. We will also have to take measures so that nobody can commit crimes taking an advantage of our digital facilities," she said.

The PM was addressing the opening ceremony of Digital World-2016, the country's largest digital exhibition, at the International Convention City Bashundhara.

The ICT Division in collaboration with Bangladesh Computer Council, Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) and A21 Programme of the Prime Minister's Office organised the three-day event, with the theme "Non-stop Bangladesh".

Hasina said there were some problems with the digitisation process in the country. "So, we'll have to boost our capacity about cyber security. We'll train up manpower and procure

necessary equipment."

The government, she said, was going to enact a law, Digital Security Act 2016, for giving legal protection to the digitisation system.

Under this law, there would be a world-class digital forensic lab, a cyber security agency, a cyber-incident response team and a high-level digital security council, the PM told the programme.

About the Bangabandhu-1 satellite project, she said it was progressing fast. Bangladesh could even export satellite bandwidth after the commissioning of the country's first satellite in 2017, she added.

The PM went round different stalls at the exhibition venue and inaugurated six Smart Buses which would be used to impart training on ICT to women.

Chaired by ICT Division State Minister Zunaid Ahmed Palak, the programme was addressed, among others, by Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Post, Telecommunication and ICT Ministry Imran Ahmed, BASIS President Mostafa Jabbar and ICT Division Secretary Shyam Sunder Sikder.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inside a "smart bus" that has ICT training facilities. Six such buses, which will provide ICT training to women, were inaugurated by the PM during the "Digital World-2016" expo at the International Convention City Bashundhara yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

Clinton, Trump set for final debate

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Wallace, the event begins at 0100 GMT today, before a televised audience expected to number in the millions.

The candidates will be asked about the debt and entitlements, immigration, the economy, the Supreme Court, foreign flashpoints and their fitness to be president.

The past two debates quickly degenerated into highly personal, mudslinging attacks that pushed substantive policy issues to the side.

Clinton "should do what she did in the two first debates which was largely remain calm, deflect criticism and attacks and let Donald Trump continue to self destruct," said John Hudak, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

"If your opponent's ship is sinking you don't throw them a life preserver," he said.

DEBATE LESSONS

Trump undoubtedly will draw on the lessons of the past two debates, and sharpen his attacks on Hillary over Syria and Libya.

The jihadist attack on the US diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya on September 11, 2012 remains a burning issue among Republicans, who hold the former secretary of state partially responsible for the deaths of four Americans, including the ambassador.

Trump has invited Patricia Smith,

the mother of a communications expert killed in the attack, to attend the debate, according to Yahoo News. During the last debate, he invited four women, three of whom had accused former president Bill Clinton of sexual assault.

An average of recent national polls shows Clinton with about 46 percent support to 39 percent for Trump and 6.4 percent for Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson.

Trump predicts an electoral surprise, or "new Brexit," on November 8.

But as he's lost ground, the New York billionaire has attacked the election process itself, complaining of a massive conspiracy to rig the elections against him.

"The press has created a rigged system and poisoned the minds of the voters," he said Tuesday.

"Either we win this election or we lose the country."

'STOP WHINING'

In a stinging rebuke, President Barack Obama on Tuesday told Trump to "stop whining" and go try to make his case to voters.

"I have never seen in my lifetime or in modern political history any presidential candidate trying to discredit the elections and the election process before votes have even taken place. It's unprecedented," Obama said, appearing with Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi in the White House Rose

Garden.

"If, whenever things are going badly for you and you lose, you start blaming somebody else, then you don't have what it takes to be in this job," he added.

The White House is increasingly concerned that Trump and his supporters will not recognize the election's outcome, plunging the country into a political crisis.

According to a poll by Politico and Morning Consult, 41 percent of American voters, including 73 percent of Republicans, now believe the vote could actually be stolen from Trump.

But Clinton's campaign believes Trump's hot rhetoric has helped Democrats -- not only by galvanizing supporters but also shifting undecided voters to their camp.

"We know that he thought that strategy of scorched earth would depress our vote, but if anything, we have found that it's helped to motivate our voters," Clinton communication's director Jennifer Palmieri said.

Democrats are beginning to target traditionally Republican states in a bid to run up the score and help win legislative races that could decide who controls Congress.

First Lady Michelle Obama will today campaign in Arizona, which has not voted Democratic since Bill Clinton's landslide win against Bob Dole in 1996.

Batting, rookies the key

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competitive throughout the next five days and trying to bring their upward graph in ODI cricket to the Test arena.

England skipper Alastair Cook, who will become the most capped player in England cricket history today, agreed that they had an advantage as far as Test cricket was concerned.

"England as a cricketing nation plays more Test cricket than Bangladesh, which helps us, but we don't play a huge amount in these conditions," England's highest Test run-scorer said yesterday. "Home advantage and home conditions play a big part at the moment due to the length of tours [and] preparation periods. We have to learn fast -- three days of cricket [the two two-day warm-up matches against BCB XI, the first of which saw a first-day washout] isn't a huge amount of time for a lot of the guys to be in, and I haven't seen any of it. We have to think on our feet and be ready."

That is what Bangladesh will have to look to exploit over the next five days -- England's unfamiliarity with the conditions and the stifling port city heat. And that seems the arrangement if Mushfiqur's allusions to a different kind of plan that a side packed with spinners can exploit are to be believed.

While there has been much bemoaning the paucity of options in the pace department and the fact that

four newcomers have entered the squad, there are two near-confirmed debutants who may provide cause for optimism.

The first is Mehedi Hasan Miraz, perhaps the best off-spinner in the country, picked specifically to neutralise England's army of left-handed batsmen. His exploits as captain in the Under-19 World Cup earlier this year, in which Bangladesh reached the semifinals, revealed a shrewd cricketing mind as well as a more than capable batsman. If selected, his partnership with Shakib Al Hasan, the country's premier spinner will be one of the things for Bangladesh fans to look forward to.

The other probable debutant is young batsman and limited-overs star Sabbir Rahman. The coach had said that they will look to find a place for him in the eleven and if that is the case he can be trusted to bring some aggression to Bangladesh's batting as asking him to curb his style for the longer form will be a disservice to him and the team.

He can afford to play that way because, unlike the bowling department, Bangladesh's top six bears a very firm and assured look.

"There are five, six batsmen who play all three formats," Mushfiqur said yesterday. "Whether it is Imrul [Kayes], Shakib, Tamim [Iqbal], [Mahmudullah] Riyad bhai, Mominul

-- they are all in good form. So if someone from the top four can play a big innings and we get more than 300 in the first innings it will be a big plus for us."

That number of 300 is an interesting one because either Mushfiqur has set his sights painfully low or he knows that the pitch will turn from day one. Even if it does, the batting line-up is the only real positive going into this match and fans will hope that -- with so much doom and gloom surrounding Bangladesh's inability to take 20 wickets -- Bangladesh can bat England out of the match. Judging by the squad where 11 of the 14 selected are capable with bat in hand, that seems to be the plan.

At any rate, with the heat on full blast in Chittagong, it seems a no-brainer to win the toss and bat today, especially if the pitch will turn as much as expected. That is where the selectors may gamble a bit and go with the left-field option of playing Soumya Sarkar as the second seamer along with Shafiqur Islam, an idea that has gathered some steam as he has been a regular bowler in the nets the past two days. On the other hand, another newcomer in Kamrul Islam Rabbi may get the nod as he has been known as someone who can bowl well with the old ball.

Regardless, there may be little else for the pacers to do than take the shine off the ball for the spinners.

Quick move to execute 3 projects

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Of the three firms selected, China Railway Construction Bridge Engineering Bureau Group Co Ltd will upgrade the 176km metre-gauge railway track from Akhaura to Sylhet to dual-gauge track.

The initial estimated cost of the project is \$1.87 billion, of which China will provide \$1.76 billion and the rest will come from the Bangladesh government.

A dual-gauge provides two separate track gauges. Normally, a dual-gauge track consists of three rails, two "vital" (or gauge) rails, one for each gauge, plus a "common rail" -- although sometimes commonality is not possible and four rails are required.

China Civil Engineering Construction Cooperation has been selected for constructing a 173km dual-gauge double-line rail track from Joydevpur to Ishwardi. Of the estimated cost of

\$941 million, China will provide \$753 million. The government will pay the rest.

The job of expansion and modernisation of Mongla Port facilities has been awarded to China National Complete Engineering Corporation for an estimated cost of \$550 million. China's assistance in this project has been estimated at \$249 million while the rest will come from the government fund.

The first two projects have initial approval of the Planning Commission. Details of the Mongla Port project were not immediately available.

All the three companies have been selected without any bidding.

Last year, the government signed separate MoUs with these companies for the jobs.

With the companies selected, the ministries concerned will now start, upon cabinet approval, negotiations

with them for inking the commercial contracts, said a finance ministry official.

The projects will then be placed before the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) and the Purchase Committee. The loan deals with Chinese Exim Bank will be signed after the final approvals of the two bodies.

Under the existing policies, China offers soft loan through its Exim Bank at 2 percent interest. The commitment charge is 0.2 percent and management fees 0.2 percent. The loan repayment period is 20 years including five years of grace period, said the finance ministry official.

A railway ministry official said the project costs had been determined based on the primary appraisal of the projects, and that the cost may go up.

According to the rail ministry's proposal, once the dual-gauge rail line

on Akhaura-Sylhet section is completed, the travel time from Dhaka to Sylhet will come down by two hours and from Dhaka to Chittagong by three hours. At present, the travel times are seven hours and 10 hours respectively.

The track is an important part of the Trans-Asian Railway route. So it has a crucial role in regional connectivity, according to the proposal.

Joydevpur-Ishwardi track is linked with Trans-Asian Railway route 1, 2 and 3. In future, it will also play a significant role in inter-Asian and sub-regional railway connectivity.

The track will cut Dhaka-Rajshahi travel time to four hours from six and a half hours at present. The travel time from Dhaka to Khulna, Dinajpur and Lalmonirhat will come down by two hours, the proposal said.

At the moment, it takes nine to 10 hours to reach each of the destinations from Dhaka.

'Insider attack' kills 2 Americans in Kabul

AFP, Kabul

Two Americans including a civilian were killed when a gunman opened fire near a Nato base in Kabul yesterday, the military coalition said, with Afghan officials calling it an "insider attack".

No insurgent group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack, which highlights growing insecurity in Afghanistan as the Taliban step up their nationwide insurgency.

"One US service member and one US civilian died as a result of wounds sustained in Kabul today," Nato said in a statement, adding that three other Americans were wounded in the incident.

"The two individuals were killed during an attack near a coalition base by an unknown assailant, who was later killed."

An American official said the shoot-

out occurred at a military ammunition supply point near Camp Morehead, a base used for Afghan commando training.

Defence ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri earlier indicated it was a so-called insider attack, saying one Nato soldier had been killed and five others were wounded by a gunman wearing military uniform.

Nato said the Americans were conducting duties as part of their mission to train, advise and assist Afghan forces when they came under attack, adding that an investigation had been launched into the incident.

So-called "green-on-blue" attacks -- when Afghan soldiers or police turn their guns on international troops -- have been a major problem during NATO's long years fighting alongside Afghan forces.

Unhealthy, uneven urbanisation

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divided by the Jamuna, the Padma and the Meghna rivers.

Experts say urbanisation is a development phenomenon, and it can have negative impacts on economy and environment for lack of proper planning.

The filling up of lowlands in the capital and its peripheries would make it very difficult for the authorities to keep the city's environment clean and run the water supply and drainage systems properly, said AQM Mahubb, an author of the study.

The study was presented at a programme organised by the UNFPA at the Planning Commission auditorium in the capital.

According to the study, the population of Dhaka city rose by 46 percent between 2001 and 2011, while that of

other eastern cities and towns such as Sylhet, Cox's Bazar, Gazipur, Savar, Chandpur, Noakhali and Feni grew between 57 and 331 percent.

The growth of urban population in regional cities and towns such as Rangpur, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Sirajganj, Satkhira, Jhenidah, Jessore and Kushtia grew between 4.5 and 29 percent. However, only Bogra in the western region saw rise of urban population by 91 percent.

"A key factor in slow urban growth in the western region is the poor socio-economic condition of the hinterland of its urban centres. The region also has poor transportation connectivity with the more dynamic eastern part of the country," it says.

Dhaka city consists of only one percent (1371 square km) of the country's land but it has more than 10

percent of the total population, said Prof Gavin Jones, co-author of the study.

The study found that Bangladesh's urbanisation is heavily focused on Dhaka city having a population of 16.2 million. The second largest urban centre -- Chittagong city -- has a population of 3.2 million, while Khulna city, the third largest urban centre, has a population of only one million, he said.

On the other hand, Pakistan has nine major cities with Karachi having a population of 22.8 million. Karachi is followed by Lahore with a population of 10.4 million, Faisalabad with 3.7 million and Rawalpindi with 2.6 million, said Gavin Jones, professor of the Australian National University.

AQM Mahubb, professor of geogra-

phy and environment at Dhaka University, said minus growth of urban population in Khulna might have been caused by closure of major industrial units, including jute mills, more than a decade ago.

Northern cities and towns, except for Bogra, have not seen establishment of that many industrial units and related urban facilities, he said.

Besides, construction of the Bangabandhu Bridge over the Jamuna resulted in a large-scale migration to Dhaka from the north and north-western region.

Dhaka has become the ultimate urban centre for people from across the country, and some 40 percent of GDP is generated from here. But this large-scale migration has created huge problems for the city's water and drainage systems and its environment,

mentioned Mahubb.

The study says, "Such economies may fail to materialise when supplies of electricity and water are unreliable, and when the urban transport system is poorly managed, congested and chaotic, as it is in Dhaka."

Mahubb said part of the problem is weak city governance, as there are many organisations that lack coordination among them.

Nurul Islam Nazem, professor of geography and environment at the DU, said, "Over the last 50 years, Dhaka has been growing without any planning. How can we expect it to be a liveable city?"

He suggested that the government purchase lowlands around the capital to protect those.

The study recommended developing secondary towns, creating employ-

ment facilities and quality health and education facilities outside Dhaka, developing commuter train or other transport systems connecting Dhaka city to rural areas, and empowering local governments.

Argentina Matavel Piccin, UNFPA representative in Bangladesh, said that as the Sustainable Development Goals now have a motto of inclusive development, the study would help understand the status of population and help authorities plan accordingly.

Shamsul Alam, member of General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission, Naquib bin Mahubb, chief of the GED, and Abdusattor Esoev, senior programme manager of International Organisation for Migration in Bangladesh, also spoke.