

## Indian FM

FROM PAGE 1  
to Delhi in the first week of October, and following two important meetings -- one at the home minister level in Delhi on August 7 and the other at the water secretary level meeting on August 8.

Foreign Minister Momen recently said it was Jaishankar's courtesy visit to Dhaka. However, a foreign ministry official said the visit will involve meetings regarding water sharing of 54 common rivers (including the Teesta), Indian Line of Credit, the Rohingya crisis, and regional connectivity and trade.

The issues will also be priorities during Hasina's Delhi visit.

**WATER SHARING**  
Teesta water sharing agreement could not be signed between India and Bangladesh during the then Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Bangladesh in 2011 due to objections from West Bengal's Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Officials at the water resources ministry told The Daily Star last week that Indian water ministry officials during the meeting in Dhaka communicated that they too felt bad as the deal could not be signed in so many years.

However, the meeting, led by Bangladesh's Water Resources Secretary Kabir Bin Anwar and Indian Water Resources Secretary Upendra Prasad Singh on August 8, decided to work on water sharing and basin management of seven common rivers -- Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Feni, Gumti, Dharla and Dudhkumar.

"Teesta is only one of the 54 common rivers. As there are some issues with Teesta, we cannot sit on [issues regarding] other rivers," a water resources ministry official of Bangladesh told The Daily Star.

The officials of the two countries also decided to conduct a feasibility study on the proposed Ganges Barrage project, especially on its impacts on the environment and people's livelihoods both in Bangladesh and India.

**ROHINGYA CRISIS**  
Bangladesh, which is bearing the brunt of sheltering some 1.1 million Rohingyas, has repeatedly requested India to play a stronger role in the repatriation of the refugees to Myanmar.

Referring to a meeting with Jaishankar on the sidelines of ASEAN Regional Forum meeting in Bangkok earlier this month, Momen said India wants early repatriation of the Rohingya refugees.

India has been criticised for not playing a strong role internationally for the accountability of the Myanmar military, which cracked down on Rohingyas in 2017. UN investigators have described the act as having "genocidal intent".

A foreign ministry official said India was expanding its connectivity in Myanmar and Southeast Asia. However, if the Rohingya crisis is not solved, the regional connectivity and development would be affected.

**ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION**  
During the home minister-level meeting between Bangladesh and India on August 7 in Delhi, Indian Home Minister Amit Shah raised the issue of illegal movement of people across the border and urged Bangladesh to take action in this regard.

Bangladesh Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told Amit Shah that no Bangladeshi goes to India illegally as the economy of Bangladesh is in good shape.

Gautam Lahiri, an Indian expert on Bangladesh, urged India to handle the issue of illegal immigration carefully and to ignore domestic compulsion amidst apprehensions that Bangladesh might get closer to China, reports India's Financial Express Online on August 16.

Jaishankar, during his visit to Dhaka, will try to find a middle ground on this issue, Lahiri said.

While there may be a difference of opinion on illegal immigrants, India will fully support Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's development agenda, Lahiri adds.

**INDIAN LINES OF CREDIT**  
Foreign Minister Momen recently told The Daily Star that Dhaka wants speedy disbursement of Indian Lines of Credit (LoC) as projects under the three LoCs worth around \$7.5 billion are facing delays mainly due to technical and bureaucratic reasons.

In the last eight years, Bangladesh managed to use \$523 million of the first LoC worth \$862 million despite various steps to expedite utilisation of the funds.

Bangladesh has so far used \$14 million of the \$2-billion second LoC. India is yet to disburse any money from the \$4.5-billion third LoC, officials said.

"I have asked the officials to take stock of projects and find the bottlenecks and ways to speed up the projects," Momen said.



Afghan men investigate in a wedding hall after a deadly bomb blast in Kabul yesterday. At least 63 people were killed and scores wounded in an explosion targeting a wedding in the Afghan capital. PHOTO: AFP

## 'IS' suicide blast kills 63 in Kabul

FROM PAGE 1  
suffering for Afghans, the suffering will continue."

The bride's father told TOLONews 14 members of his family were killed. **BLOODSHED AND TALKS**  
Wedding halls have become a big business in Kabul as the Afghan economy slowly picks up and families spend more on celebrations. Big, brightly lit halls now line some suburban streets of the city, and bombers have targeted them before.

At least 40 people were killed

in a wedding-hall blast in Kabul in November.

There has been no let-up in fighting and bomb attacks in Afghanistan over recent months despite the talks between the United States and the Taliban since late last year.

In the northern province of Balkh, 11 civilians were killed yesterday when a roadside bomb blew up their van, police said.

President Ashraf Ghani, in comments on the Kabul blast before the IS claim, said the Taliban could

not "absolve themselves of blame for they provide a platform for terrorists".

The Taliban have been fighting to expel foreign forces and re-establish an Islamic state since they were ousted in October 2001, weeks after the September 11 attacks on the United States.

Both US negotiators and the Taliban have reported progress after eight rounds of talks since late last year. But some Afghans were sceptical about the effort, amid the carnage.

US President Donald Trump has

made no secret of his desire for a US pullout from Afghanistan and an end to America's longest war.

But there are concerns among Afghan officials and US national security aides that Afghanistan could plunge into a new civil war that could see a return of Taliban rule and international militants, including IS, finding a refuge.

Some 14,000 US troops remain in Afghanistan, training and advising Afghan security forces and conducting counterinsurgency operations.

## Hasty move helped none

FROM PAGE 1  
university, slowing down its administrative work.

Since 2017, the university has not appointed any new exam controller to manage the affairs of the 2.5 lakh college students.

"No new deputy exam controller or assistant exam controller has been appointed since 2015," said a deputy exam controller recently. "Only a few section officers were hired last year," he added, refusing to give his name.

Another deputy exam controller, who oversees the seven colleges, said about 20-25 administrative officers were recruited in the last fiscal year. "But we need at least 15 more to do the work smoothly," he said, requesting anonymity.

The DU has five deputy exam controllers, 15 assistant exam controllers, and 26 section officers.

Apart from exam controllers, the university needs college inspectors who check on the activities of the colleges and make visits to report the situation first-hand.

The university right now has only one college inspector, one assistant college inspector, and one section officer.

The assistant college inspector, Abdul Kuddus, said no new appointment was made in his office yet, but the university is at the final stage to create 10 posts of college inspector.

Meanwhile, then vice chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique denied that the re-affiliation decision was taken hurriedly. He said it was a government

decision which they implemented.

Asked why the DU authorities did not appoint required staff in the last two and a half years, Vice Chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman said that the then administration could have done it. "Many things happened unscientifically," he added.

"We are working on the issue. We have formed a committee to resolve the crisis."

When Prof Arefin was asked the same question, he said some extra people were needed, but the university could manage the situation with the existing workforce.

"We have an adequate workforce because the university used to have the same workforce when the colleges were affiliated with DU before 1992."

In August 2014, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked the education ministry to re-affiliate the colleges with respective public universities. But differences of opinion between National University and some public universities delayed the process.

In November 2016, the education ministry decided to start the process by handing over the seven colleges to DU with the president's approval.

The goal was to improve the quality of education, reduce pressure on the NU, and put an end to session jams at the colleges.

The NU was established in 1992 to take over the affiliated colleges of the public universities in Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong. At the time, it was said NU would help break the cycle of session jams and improve education

standards.

It now oversees 2,300 educational institutions with more than 20 lakh students.

**PROTEST, COMMITTEE FORMED**  
Students of the seven colleges first took to the street in July 2017, demanding publication of results, exam schedules, and re-evaluation of answer scripts. Since then, they organised street protests on at least seven occasions.

Abu Bakar, a student of Bangla at Dhaka College, said their third-year final exam results were published on July 10, after seven months of the exams. "We were supposed to complete the bachelor programme by July 2018."

"Dhaka University authorities also delay publication of exam schedules. Students of every session are facing a minimum of one year's session jam."

Some also alleged that the DU teachers did not evaluate the answer scripts properly.

Amalendu Paul, a degree (pass course) student of Kabi Nazrul College, said, "All 300 students of the 2014-2015 session failed at least in one course."

Asked about this allegation, DU Business Faculty Dean Prof Shibli Rubayat Ul Islam, who coordinates the seven colleges, said there was no lax in evaluating answer scripts. "But performances of the college students were poor."

According to a deputy exam controller, DU teachers evaluated all the exam scripts of the college students for the first six to seven months. "But now they handle 10 percent of the

scripts at best."

The DU students also took to the street in July, and locked all academic and administrative buildings for three days from July 22. They demanded cancellation of the affiliation.

"Usually, we have to wait for a long time to get any administrative work done. Now the burden of additional 2.5 lakh students has aggravated our sufferings," said Lisa Hossain, a student of world religion and culture department at the DU.

Ayesha Siddiq, a student of political science, said, "Our classes and examinations were suspended several times because the teachers have to conduct the viva voce of the college students."

The university students suspended the protest after a 10-member committee was formed to resolve the crisis. They would not resume demonstration until the report arrives.

The committee first sat on July 29, and sought one month's time to submit the report.

There are 43,385 students and 2,010 teachers at the DU. The university has 116 constituent or affiliated institutions including the seven colleges.

In most cases, the DU's responsibility is limited to issuing certificates and inspection of these institutions. But in the case of the seven colleges, the role is much bigger -- the university conducts most of their exam-related activities.

In 2018-19 fiscal year, Dhaka University earned Tk 21 crore from the sales of admission forms at the seven colleges.

## FBCCI to mediate

FROM PAGE 1  
they will start rawhide sale today as the government, trade bodies in the leather sector and the FBCCI decided to find a solution to the non-payment of the dues.

Humayun said The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the country's apex trade body, is scheduled to hold a meeting with the stakeholders on August 22 to resolve the issue.

There has been a big crisis in the rawhide trade since the Eid-ul-Azha as a large number of merchants stopped buying rawhide from seasonal traders, many of whom dumped rawhide by the roadside in more than a dozen districts, failing to sell those.

The merchants alleged that they were cash-strapped as the tanners didn't clear their dues before the Eid. Following the Eid, around 35 lakh pieces of rawhide out of more than one crore were thrown away by seasonal traders as they could not find any buyers, said tanners and rawhide merchants. They put the price of the dumped rawhide at Tk 100 crore.

Replying the queries from journalists, Humayun claimed that the BNP men had stockpiled rawhide and later threw those away to put the government in trouble.

"When they [the BNP] failed to do well in politics, they entered rawhide business," the minister said.

About rawhide export, the minister said it is a lengthy process. If the government thinks rawhide export is needed, it will decide on this later.

"The leather sector is a very potential one. Many vested quarters are out to damage this sector."

Every year, around 5,000 or 0.05 percent of more than one crore pieces of rawhide get damaged, said the minister, adding that he got the information from field-level traders.

But this year, the damage of rawhide was a bit more than last year's because of hot weather during the Eid-ul-Azha. Some 10,000 pieces or 0.1 percent of over one crore pieces of rawhide were damaged across the country, the minister said.

"However, we are very pleased that the leather sector is not facing any problems. We will formulate the leather policy soon," said the minister.

Salman F Rahman, private industry and investment adviser to the prime minister, said, "The extent of the damage of rawhide was a bit higher in some districts including Chittagong and Sylhet."

"But the number is not more than 10,000 pieces."

## Fears in US of bad peace deal with the Taliban

AFP, Washington

An Afghanistan peace agreement that the US seems close to reaching with the Taliban has prompted worries that President Donald Trump's desire to quickly withdraw US troops could further plunge the country into civil war.

Trump said Friday he was pleased with talks on ending the war, 18 years after the September 11, attacks that prompted the US invasion of Afghanistan in the first place.

In recent days several US officials have suggested that an accord could be imminent in discussions with the Taliban in Qatar.

The US negotiator, Zalmay Khalilzad, is expected to return to the region very soon in hopes of sealing an agreement with the Afghan rebel force.

Such a potentially historic accord has raised an outcry from an eclectic assortment of critics in Washington, ranging from neo-conservatives to former Democratic administration officials to ex-military heroes.

In tweets, interviews and op-ed pieces in newspapers they are cautioning against hastily bringing home the 14,000 US troops in Afghanistan, a warning which some hope will also score points ahead of next year's presidential election.

And they are calling on Trump to treat this war as he did North Korea and its nuclear weapons and insist on no deal rather than a bad deal.

"Under no circumstances should the Trump administration repeat the mistake its predecessor made in Iraq and agree to a total withdrawal of combat forces from Afghanistan," retired general David Petraeus, who used to command those soldiers, warned in a piece for The Wall Street Journal.

## Stay alert

FROM PAGE 1  
exchanging Eid greetings with officials at the Prime Minister's Office.

Dengue is not only seen in Bangladesh, but also in many neighbouring countries in South Asia and even South East Asia, the PM said.

In other countries like the Philippines, it has turned into an epidemic, forcing them to declare emergency, Hasina added.

The PM thanked her office as it has always been active over the dengue issue.

She said the health and local government ministries and all other agencies concerned remained active in dealing with the dengue problem.

The city corporations have also been trying to rein in the dengue, Hasina said, adding that all the authorities concerned have taken proper measures to deal with the problem.

About the country's economic progress, the PM said the GDP growth reached 8.10 percent and the government has fixed a target in the budget for the current fiscal year to achieve an 8.2 percent growth. The government has a target to reach the double digit, she added.

Mentioning that it is tough to accelerate the GDP growth from 8 percent, Hasina directed the government officials to work harder to do that.

The PM stressed the need for the revival of some pro-people programmes like "Ghore Phera" Project, "Shanti Nibash" Project, and "Oboshor" Project introduced by her previous governments.

"We had taken these schemes for the welfare of people. But their tenures have expired. So, we'll have to re-launch the projects in the public interest."

While talking about her government's steps for curbing corruption, the PM said those who take and give bribes both are equally guilty. "We could have accomplished many work faster if steps had been taken keeping that in mind."

She asked her office to strengthen its monitoring so that the work on development projects can start right after floodwaters recede.

"Since we've a good set-up, I think our office will have to strengthen the monitoring so that every ministry can prioritise work holding meetings right now .... and we can start the physical work [on the development projects taken for this fiscal year] immediately after floods," she said.

Hasina said the PMO should give special attention to taking preparations so that the projects can be implemented timely.

Mentioning that the government has undertaken various development projects in the current budget, the PM said different ministries should now prioritise work as per the development projects, keeping in mind that they get time to take preparations during floods.

Hasina said the country witnesses flood every year right after the national budget is placed. "So, paperwork on the development projects can be completed during the period of flood."

PM's advisers HT Imam, Mashiur Rahman and Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, Principal Coordinator on SDG Affairs at PMO Abul Kalam Azad, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim, and PMO Secretary Sajjadul Hassan were, among others, present at the function moderated by PM's Principal Secretary Nojibur Rahman.

## Now equally alarming

FROM PAGE 1  
Doctors outside Dhaka have also been trained, she added.  
Prof Kabirul warned that Aedes mosquitos are now out of control and everyone should come forward and take effective measures to destroy all breeding sources.

"It will require a social movement to control the situation," he said.

