

‘We can be a bridge between east and west’

PM for enhancing air connectivity

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government is working to enhance Bangladesh's air connectivity with the rest of the world.

“We’ve procured ten passenger carriers in the last decade. We’re preparing to procure two more aircrafts,” she said.

The prime minister said this while addressing the closing ceremony of the three-daylong 6th International Flight Safety Seminar 2019 jointly organised by Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) and Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel with the theme “Team Effort Can Ensure Team Safety”.

Sheikh Hasina said the declaration of civil aviation in Bangladesh as Category-1 is just a matter of time under the International Safety Assessment Program by the US Federal Aviation Authority.

She said Bangladesh’s geographical position can play the role of a bridge between the east and the west.

“This can bring economic benefits... International passengers can travel to their destinations in a short time. With that in mind, we’re developing our airports,” she said.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hands over certificate to a participant of the 6th International Flight Safety Seminar at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.
PHOTO: BSS

Our cities not ready for climate migrants

Experts tell conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite climate migration putting a new dimension in poverty distribution in both rural and urban areas, very little has been done to make the cities migrant-friendly, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

With the probability of around ten million Bangladeshis becoming climate migrants by 2050 -- who likely to end up in Dhaka, a sound policy framework should be adopted to ensure efficient use of climate funds, they also said on the second day of a three-day climate change conference in the capital.

International Center for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD); Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) and Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN) jointly organised the programme, titled “National Conference on Urban Resilience to Climate Change” at Institute of Architects Bangladesh conference centre in the city.

Mayors and officials of several city corporations and municipalities, city planners, climate activists, and officials from the Bangladesh office of German development agency

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TOBACCO INDUSTRY INTERFERENCE INDEX

Bangladesh ranks third among 33 countries, study finds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

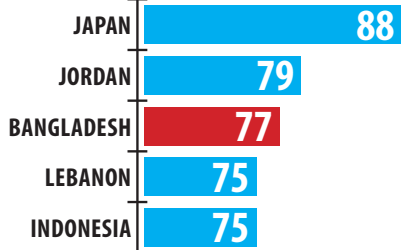
Bangladesh has ranked third among 33 countries in terms of interference of tobacco companies in government action regarding tobacco control, finds a study.

The country scored 77 points in the parameters of interference intensity behind Japan with 88 points in the first place and Jordan with 79 points in the second position, according to the study.

Uganda and the UK are the countries with the least interference, as they scored 29 and 26 points respectively [the lower the score, the lesser the interference], according to the study.

The study, titled “Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2019”, is an initiative of South-East Asia Tobacco Control Alliance -- a coalition of anti-tobacco organisations -- which has been conducted with support of Bloomberg Philanthropies and Global Centre for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC).

GLOBAL TOBACCO INDUSTRY INTERFERENCE INDEX 2019



The lower the score, the lesser the interference
SOURCE: PROGGA

Progotir Jonno Gyan (PROGGA), a Dhaka-based research organisation which covered the Bangladesh part in the study, unveiled the findings at a seminar in the capital's Cirdap auditorium yesterday.

Sharing the findings, Hasan Shahriar, head of tobacco control of PROGGA and one of the lead researchers, said Bangladesh is improving gradually in tobacco control but the progress is not

satisfactory.

Besides, strong interference of the tobacco industry in government actions hinders the improvement significantly, he added.

The tobacco companies mostly interfere in taxation, tobacco pricing and policymaking activities of the government by influencing its top officials and ministries, said Shahriar.

“They entice officials and lawmakers by providing awards and gifts in return of benefits,” he added, citing the study findings.

The study said the interference in Bangladesh gets a new dimension as the government owns some shares of British American Tobacco Bangladesh, the country's largest tobacco company.

Despite such alarming level of clout of tobacco companies, the government has not taken any preventive measure to overcome it, the report added.

The study was conducted focusing on the implementation progress of the Article 5.3 of World Health Organization (WHO) Framework

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DNCC identifies culex mosquito hotspots

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) has identified seven wards where density of culex mosquitoes is high.

This was disclosed by DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam yesterday at a press conference held at Nagar Bhaban.

“We deployed two entomologists and 10 trainees to identify hotspots (breeding grounds) on October 7 and they have identified the hotspots for culex mosquitoes,” said Atiqul.

“We are taking action at the identified breeding grounds to control the culex mosquito population,” he added.

The mayor said they are prepared to check culex mosquitoes and have also

taken a yearlong action plan to eliminate any other mosquito, including Aedes.

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Code of conduct soon for community police

Says Police Headquarters

COMMUNITY POLICE (Performance Indicators)	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018 -2019 (June)
Open House Day	9,661	8,123	8,958	8,641
Public Rally (Rally, School Visit)	44,002	52,955	58,865	77,427
Anti-Crime Meeting	51,959	76,587	83,119	78,453
Dispute Resolution	1,01,793	1,19,853	1,27,937	96,448

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Community police are planning to set up a complaint box to address the allegations of misconduct against government officials and ensure necessary lawful actions in this regard.

They have also planned to create awareness against smuggling, food adulteration and corruption. As a part of ensuring “best practice” to prevent crime and maintain law and order, they have undertaken the work plan.

Police Headquarters (PHQ) prepared the work plan marking Community Policing Day, to be observed across the country on Saturday, Sahely Ferdous, assistant inspector general of PHQ (crime prevention

cell), told The Daily Star yesterday.

The other plans include: ensuring area-based security by forming a team (8-10 members) and creating awareness through religious scholars on child marriage and false interpretation of religions.

According to PHQ database, there are around 60,000 community police committees, which have around 11.13 lakh community police members (CPM).

From July 2018 to June this year, community police have solved around 80,000 disputes, including family issues and conflicts centring lands, said AIG Ferdous.

They also helped law enforcers arrest some 27,173 accused, she said, adding

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Simulators for train drivers

Railway initiates project to address manpower shortage

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

For the first time in its history, Bangladesh Railway (BR) is introducing a locomotive simulator to train entry-level loco masters.

The move came at a time when BR is facing a serious shortage of instructors and loco masters to operate trains, forcing many of them to work extra hours to keep the service operational, officials said.

The state-of-the-art motion simulators will help entry-level loco masters cut short their field-level training period, improve skills and ultimately help government's bid to enhance the service, they added.

BR has set up the diesel locomotive simulators -- one broad gauge and another meter gauge (MG) -- nearby Kamalapur Railway Station at a cost of Tk 15.60 crore. Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon will inaugurate the locomotive simulators today.

Spanish firm “Lander Simulator and Training Solution” supplied the simulators. The company also constructed the building where those were installed and provided training to four persons including three instructors, said Project Director Nur Ahmed Hossain.

Under the same project worth Tk 733 crore, aided by Asian Development Bank, BR will procure 10 MG locomotives and four relief cranes.

At present, BR has 1,129 loco masters, sub-loco masters and assistant loco masters against the sanctioned post of 1,742. Usually, senior loco masters train the entry-level ones. BR has 386 trains and at least two loco masters (senior and assistant) are

required for each.

“Due to a shortage of manpower, train drivers are overworked,” said an official. He said the railway can overcome the situation through fresh recruitment. “But to become a seasoned train driver, a person needs to have at least eight years of experience,” he added.

Md Shamsuzzaman, director general of BR, said, “Use of these simulators will help Bangladesh Railway fill up the shortage as well as develop efficiency of drivers quickly.”

“This way, we will get experienced drivers within the shortest possible time,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said many developed countries use such simulators to train drivers. Introduction of such state-of-the-art device is a historic event for BR, said the DG.

HOW IT WORKS

These custom-made high-tech simulators will run on virtual tracks. In the first phase, 300km parts of the Dhaka-Chattogram and Dhaka-Khulna routes have been digitised and are being used in the simulator, said the project director.

Just like training of pilots, the trainees would be given random situations to deal with in the simulator, which include emergency stops and signal changes.

Asked how it will reduce training period, the project director said after basic training, an assistant loco master has to have more than six months’ field-level experience. This device will reduce it to three months, he said.



PHOTO OF THE DAY

AMRAN HOSSAIN



Dhaka University students enjoy a leisurely bicycle ride at Curzon Hall using JoBike, an app-based bike-rental service that was launched on the campus last week. The service is available to university students, teachers and staff at low cost through smartphones, and can be used only within the university premises.

DHAKA TODAY

TALK

Geographies of Imagination by
Olani Ewunnet
Venue: Goethe-Institut Bangladesh
Time: 6pm

DIALOGUE

SDG 16 and Human Rights
Organiser: Voice
Venue: VIP Lounge, Jatiya Press
Club
Time: 9am

CELEBRATION

United Nations Day
Organiser: UNESCO Club of the
University of Dhaka
Venue: Institute of Modern
Language, Dhaka University
Time: 10am

FESTIVAL

Heritage Handloom
Organiser: SME Foundation
Venue: Gardenia Grand Hall,
Gulshan-2
Time: 2pm

FAIR

Dolphin Fair
Organiser: United Nations
Development Programme in
Bangladesh
Venue: Liberation War Museum,
Agargaon
Time: 10am

TALK

Future in the Bay of Bengal
Venue: American Center, Baridhara
Time: 12pm

Online hate can incite offline harm: UN expert

UNB, Dhaka

The UN’s monitor for freedom of expression has called on governments and companies to move away from “standardless policies and inconsistent enforcement” and to align their laws and practices against hate speech with international human rights law.

“The prevalence of online hate poses challenges to everyone, first and foremost the marginalised individuals who are its principal targets,” said David Kaye, the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression, in a landmark report that reinforces legal standards to combat online hate.

Unfortunately, the Special Rapporteur said, states and companies are failing to prevent hate speech from becoming the next “fake news”, an ambiguous and politicised term subject to governmental abuse and company discretion, according to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

“Online hate is no less harmful because it

is online,” the Special Rapporteur said. “To the contrary, online hate, with the speed and reach of its dissemination, can incite grave offline harm and nearly always aims to silence others. The question is not whether to address such abuse. It is how to do so in a way that respects the rights everyone enjoys.”

In the report, presented to the UN General Assembly on Monday, Kaye urged that states meet their obligations by turning to key human rights treaties and the leading interpretations of human rights law by the Human Rights Committee and the 2013 Rabat Plan of Action.

He expressed particular concern about governments that use “hate speech” to restrict legitimate expression under the guise of “blasphemy” or fail to define and enforce hate speech rules according to human rights law's rigorous standards of legality, necessity and proportionality, and legitimacy.

“Governments and the public have legitimate concerns about online hate,” the special rapporteur

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DEATH OF TEEN AT FERRY TERMINAL

HC seeks reports from shipping ministry, DC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday sought two separate probe reports over the death of 13-year-old Titash Ghosh, who died in an ambulance on its way to Dhaka on July 25.

The HC bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahsan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader passed the order, asking the shipping ministry and the deputy commissioner of Madaripur to submit the reports by November 7, the next date of the hearing.

The bench was hearing a writ petition filed by Advocate Md Jahir Uddin Limon, chairman of rights organisation Legal Support and People's Rights, seeking Tk 3 crore compensation for Titash's family.

The lawyer submitted an application seeking an HC directive upon the shipping ministry and Madaripur DC to submit their reports.

Advocate Limon told The Daily Star that the shipping ministry has reportedly probed the incident of Titash's death and found Joint Secretary Abdus Sobur Mondal responsible for the delay of ferry, which led to his death.

The Madaripur DC has also conducted an inquiry into the incident through an additional district magistrate.

Neither the shipping ministry nor the DC submitted the probe reports to the High Court, the lawyer said.