



"Floods, droughts, heatwaves, extreme storms and wildfires are going from bad to worse, breaking records with alarming frequency."

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warns of impact of climate change



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## RECLAIMING VOTERS' TRUST

# EC banks on technologies

Set to unveil electoral roadmap today

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The Election Commission plans to tap into modern technologies in the next national election as part of its efforts to win back people's confidence in polls, say EC officials.

Apart from using Electronic Voting Machines in 150 constituencies, the commission will use CCTV cameras in polling centres, Geographic Information System for demarcating constituencies and updating information on voting centres, and also introduce apps to provide voters with election-related information, a number of EC officials told The Daily Star.

They said the EC's main challenge is to restore the voters' confidence in election

and the use of modern technologies is its best option for overcoming it.

"The entire world is advancing with the help of technology. Why should we lag behind? EVMs and CCTV cameras have been proved to be very effective tools in holding free and fair elections ...," Election Commissioner Rashida Sultana told this newspaper yesterday.

She said they had used EVMs and CCTV cameras in a number of elections that were largely peaceful.

"It is not possible for an individual to cast multiple votes or fake votes through

EVM. In the past, we found that the use of muscle power was almost absent in those polling areas where CCTV cameras

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RAINDROPS KEEP FALLING... A school student smiles as she closes her eyes and lets the rain wash over her face in the capital's Mirpur. She was on the way home from school when the opportunity to enjoy the rain presented itself.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## US team unhappy over HSIA security

Resumption of Dhaka-NY direct flight 'delayed further'



RASHIDUL HASAN

The wait for direct flights on the Dhaka-New York route may get even longer after a visiting US delegation gave a negative report on security at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

There have been no flights on the route, the only direct one between Bangladesh and the US, since 2006.

"They [the delegation] have given a negative report as those who came from New York to inspect the security arrangements at the airport were barely checked [by the

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## 12 policy reforms for \$1.5b WB loan

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The World Bank has set forth 12 conditions for extending budget support of about \$1.5 billion to Bangladesh over the next three years.

The conditions were put forward during the Washington-based multilateral lender's quarterly tripartite meeting on September 11 and 12, according to finance ministry officials familiar with the discussions.

Earlier in June, the government sought budget support to offset the fallout of the Ukraine war on the Bangladesh economy.

Of the \$1.5 billion, \$250 million would come from the 'Bangladesh Green, Resilient and Inclusive Development Policy Credit (GRID DPC)' programme and another \$250 million from the 'Bangladesh Second Recovery and Resilience DPC' scheme.

The project under which \$1 billion would be extended would be decided during the forthcoming visit of Martin Raiser, the WB's vice-president for South Asia, next week, the officials said.

Save for two Bangladesh has met the

conditions for the GRID DPC, which would be approved by the WB board in April next year.

The country can expect \$250 million each year under GRID DPC from 2023 to 2025. And should the country commit to more ambitious policies, the WB would increase the credit amount.

The ambitious policies include energy efficiency and renewable energy policies, foundational steps for establishing carbon pricing, particularly the creation of an emissions registry and monitoring, verification and reporting (MRV) system.

For the other DPC, which would be approved by the WB board in March next year, the government is yet to meet any of the 12 conditions, which encompass reforms in fiscal policy and financial sector and setting guardrails to future shocks. The conditions for the \$1 billion loan would be tangential to this DPC's.

One of the conditions is getting the cabinet to approve the National Tariff Policy, which would bring down the tariffs and simplify the tariff structure.

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**"The funds will help in meeting the government's budget deficit, prop up foreign exchange reserves and give impetus to the reform plans."**

Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of WB's Dhaka office

## BUSINESS

### Floating exchange rate, finally

Bangladesh has finally embraced a floating exchange rate as the central bank adjusted its interbank foreign exchange rate yesterday in line with market realities.

As a result, the taka lost its value by 11.73 per cent, the sharpest depreciation faced by the currency in the country's history. It has fallen by 25 per cent in the past year against the dollar. The USD traded at Tk 95 on the interbank forex market on Monday. But it rose to Tk 106.15 yesterday, data from the Bangladesh Bank showed.

STORY ON BI

## ICAO ELECTION EU states seek Dhaka's support against Moscow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The European Union and its like-minded countries have sought Bangladesh's support against Russia in the upcoming election to the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

The election will be held during the ICAO assembly from September 27 to October 7 in Montreal. Russia is running for ICAO council membership in the election.

EU Ambassador to Bangladesh Charles Whiteley and ambassadors of the UK, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Denmark said this to Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen at the foreign ministry on Monday.

"We expressed our position and sought Bangladesh's support. It's up to Bangladesh what it does," one of the ambassadors told The Daily Star yesterday.

ICAO earlier condemned Russia's violation of Ukraine's airspace and termed it inconsistent with the principles of Article 1 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

The European Commission welcomed the ICAO decision to call on Russia to immediately cease its infractions of

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## New horizon in healthcare

PM set to inaugurate country's first super specialised hospital today

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

The much-needed BSMMU Super Specialized Hospital, first of its kind in the country, will be inaugurated today.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to virtually launch it at an event organised on the hospital premises.

The programme will be presided over by Health Minister Zahid Maleque, while Md Saiful Hassan Badal, secretary of the health education division, will attend as the special guest. Lee Jang Keun, ambassador of Republic of Korea to Bangladesh, will address the event as the honourable guest.

With state-of-the-art equipment and modern operations, the hospital will provide treatment only to patients referred by any public or private hospital, or a physician, Project Director Zulfikur Rahman Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

In a recent press release, Dr Sharfuddin Ahmed, vice chancellor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), said, "This specialised hospital will be an alternative option for many Bangladeshis opting to go abroad for treatment. Some 5,000-8,000 patients will receive outdoor services at the hospital."

Officials said the hospital will provide specialised treatment at a cheaper cost.

They, however, said the hospital will not be in operation before January since at least 40 percent of the equipment has not yet been installed and the appointment of the

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A partial view of the BSMMU Super Specialised Hospital in the capital's Shahbagh. The state-of-the-art medical facility is set to be opened by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today. The hospital is expected to provide better treatment to patients and help reduce the tendency to travel abroad for treatment.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## MITU MURDER Babul, 6 others charge-sheeted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Police Bureau of Investigation yesterday submitted a charge sheet against seven people, including former superintendent of police Babul Akhter, in a case filed over the murder of his wife Mahmuda Khanam Mitu.

Abu Jafar Mohammad Omar Faruk, of the PBI metro unit and also the investigation officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet to a Chattogram court.

The six other accused are Kamrul Islam Musa, Ehteshamul Haque Bhola alias Haniful Haque, Motaleb Mia Wasim, Md Anwar Hossain, Md Khairul Islam Kalu and Md Shahjahan Mia, court sources said.

Of those charge-sheeted, Babul, Wasim, Shahjahan and Anwar are now behind bars, while Ehteshamul secured bail from a higher court. Musa, who was Babul's informant, and Kalu have been on the run since the murder.

The PBI dropped the names of Saidul

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