

ECONOMIC ZONES

Prime minister to inaugurate 50 industrial units Oct 26



BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate 50 industrial units, projects and facilities in Economic Zones (EZs) on October 26 marking the 50 years of the country's independence.

Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) Executive Chairman Shaikh Yusuf Harun said the PM will virtually inaugurate 50 industrial units, projects and facilities in the EZs across the country and the BEZA will hold the event at eight venues.

"These include commercial operations of four factories at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar (BSMS) Nin Chattogram and eight factories in different privately-run Economic Zones," he added.

Yusuf said these industrial units have already invested more than \$967.73 million, and will make further investment of nearly \$331.27million.

He informed that the PM would also lay the foundation stones of 29 industrial units in different EZs, which have so far received investments of \$610 million, and are in a process of receiving \$1,922.39 million more.

The EZ facilities, to be inaugurated, include administration buildings of BSMSN, Jamalpur Economic Zone, Srihatta EZ, and Sabrang Tourism Park, he added.

Besides, the BEZA chief said the PM will formally open 20-kilometre Sheikh Hasina Sarani, 230-KVA gridline and substation at the BSMSN.

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A shallow engine-run three-wheeler drives onto the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway in Narayanganj's Rupganj. Although movement of three-wheelers on highways is prohibited, such vehicles ply different highways defying the ban, putting people at risk of accidents. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Don't let Russia blow up key dam

Zelensky calls on West as Ukraine eyes to recapture Kherson;
US says Iran troops helping Moscow 'in Crimea'

AGENCIES

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has called on the West to warn Russia not to blow up a hydroelectric dam that would flood a swath of southern Ukraine, as his forces prepare to push Moscow's troops from Kherson in one of the war's most important battles.

In a television address yesterday, Zelensky said Russian forces had planted explosives inside the huge Nova Kakhovka dam, which holds back an enormous reservoir that dominates much of southern Ukraine, and were planning to blow it up to cover their retreat.

"Now everyone in the world must act powerfully and quickly to prevent a new

Russian terrorist attack. Destroying the dam would mean a large-scale disaster," he said.

Russia accused Kyiv earlier this week of planning to rocket the dam. Sergei Surovkin, the commander of Russian forces in Ukraine, said Ukrainian forces had already used US-supplied HIMARS missiles against it in what Ukrainian officials called a sign Moscow could be planning to blow it up and blame Kyiv.

The vast Dnipro bisects Ukraine and is several km wide in places. Bursting the dam could send a wall of water flooding settlements below it, including much of the city of Kherson, which Ukrainian forces hope to recapture in a major advance, reports Reuters.

Zelensky called on world leaders to make clear that blowing up the dam would be treated "exactly the same as the use of weapons of mass destruction", with similar consequences to those threatened if Russia uses nuclear or chemical weapons.

The United States said on Thursday that Iranian troops were in Crimea and had helped fly the drones to attack Ukraine.

"We can confirm that Russian military personnel based in Crimea have been piloting Iranian UAVs and using them to conduct kinetic strikes across Ukraine, including in strikes against Kyiv in recent days," US State Department spokesman Ned Price told a briefing.

Iran has denied supplying the drones, as has Moscow.

Deaths rising on roads

FROM PAGE 1

Many sections of the Road Transport Act-2018 -- the main governing law for the sector -- have been left unimplemented, even after four years of its enactment, in the absence of necessary rules and alleged pressure from the transport associations.

BIKES, THREE-WHEELERS ADD TO RISK

At least 5,043 people were killed in 4,225 crashes in the first nine months of this year, while the numbers were 6,284 and 5,371 respectively in entire last year, according to Road Safety Foundation, indicating a rise in both numbers.

Three-wheelers, including those illegal and locally made, and motorcycles were involved in 59.49 percent road deaths this year. Bikes contributed to 37.78 percent deaths and three-wheelers 21.71 percent.

The ARI data shows a gradual rise in bike-related accidents and deaths in the last few years.

At least 1,097 people were killed in 958 bike-related accidents in 2020 while the numbers were 1168 and 1056 respectively last year.

In the first nine months of the year, at least 1,052 people were killed in 908 bike-related accidents, meaning deaths and such crashes saw 21.80 and 20 percent rise.

The number of bikes also saw a gradual and sharp rise since 2015 and experts said it has a direct link with the rise in road accidents.

A total of 3.96 lakh bikes got registered with Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) in the first nine months this year; it was 3.75

lakh in 2021.

A favourable government policy on bikes, a very poor public transport system and traffic congestion, especially in Dhaka, are major reasons behind the boom.

But poor infrastructure, especially a lack of dedicated bike lanes, bikers' tendency to violate traffic rules, many bikers lacking licence and training are reasons behind rising bike crashes, they added.

The situation led the authorities to announce in July this year that no bike would be registered from September 15 unless its owner has a driving licence.

But the authorities were forced to defer the date till December 14 following the demand of the bike manufacturers and importers.

Till May this year, the number of registered bikes and issued licences were 36.50 lakh and 23.50 lakh respectively, which means 13 lakh bikers do not have licences.

The government also failed to execute the ban on three-wheelers on highways and formulate regulatory guidelines and the illegal vehicles continue to cause fatal accidents.

Experts said operations of slow-moving vehicles like locally made three-wheelers with poor safety features, alongside speedy vehicles on highways, often lead to accidents.

These accidents cause relatively more casualties due to the poor structure of these vehicles.

The number of such vehicles started to increase in the early last decade and the authorities had to ban three-wheelers on 22 major highways

in August 2015.

Yet these vehicles continue to ply the highways with their number increasing amid the shortage of public transport and they become a major income source for many, especially in suburban and rural areas.

The number could be 30-40 lakh now, according to the sector insiders.

Even Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader on several occasions expressed helplessness over curbing such vehicles.

The ARI data also shows the number of road accidents involving three-wheelers tripled last year compared to 2020. There were 312 accidents involving three-wheelers in 2020 and the number rose to 939 last year.

In this situation, the ministry, in June 2019, formed a committee to recommend measures to control the operation of these vehicles and following its recommendation, the ministry prepared a draft regulatory guideline in November last year.

However, the draft is yet to be functional.

Contacted on Wednesday, Mahbub-E-Rabbani, director (road safety) of BRTA, also admitted that most of the accidents are taking place due to the operations of three-wheelers and bikes on highways, often violating rules.

OLD PROBLEMS NOT SOLVED

Prof Hadiuzzaman said it's a known fact that vehicles operating without fitness is a major reason behind road crashes but still thousands of unfit vehicles ply the roads.

A total of 5.42 lakh registered

vehicles, which were supposed to go through fitness tests, did not take the mandatory fitness clearance certificates till October 15 this year and they are operating on the roads, allegedly due to poor monitoring by the authorities.

Although many vehicles have fitness certificates, those are not fit actually because there are questions about the quality fitness testing, which is done mostly manually.

Drivers without valid licence and trainings, faulty road design, and illegal markets and structures along the highways are other known reasons behind road crashes, but these problems could not be solved in the last two-three decades, he added.

Saidur Rahman, executive director of Road Safety Foundation, said that in the last few years, especially after the road safety movement in 2018, the authorities have made many promises but their initiatives mostly remained confined to forming committees and giving recommendations.

A "vested quarter" is benefiting from the "anarchy" in the sector, and discipline cannot be brought here unless there is a strong political commitment of the government, he told The Daily Star on Thursday.

BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder said changing the situation is difficult unless everyone plays due roles.

"Everyone has to obey law," he said at a press conference arranged at BRTA headquarters yesterday.

Replying to a question, he said they have manpower shortage to enforce the law properly.

Khulna tense

FROM PAGE 1

In the morning, BNP Secretary General Fakhrul at the party chairperson's Gulshan office in the capital said, "They [law enforcers] are arresting BNP leaders and activists and common people. I am urging [the government] not to create any problems in the Khulna rally. If any problem arises, only the government



Awami League men march through Khulna city's Shibbari intersection area in a procession yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

will have to take the responsibility."

At the BNP office on KD Ghosh Road in Khulna, BNP Vice Chairman Shamsuzzaman Dudu told reporters that 60 BNP leaders and activists were detained in Khulna city and the districts of Khulna division on Thursday night.

Shafiqul Alam Tuhin, member secretary of Khulna City BNP, said police created panic among BNP

supporters by raiding their houses and harassing them.

Nur Mohammad Mazumder, chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), yesterday said transport operation was suspended in Khulna on political grounds.

The BRTA was not aware about the strike, he said while briefing journalists in the capital on the eve of National Road Safety Day.

As part of the BNP's programmes in the divisional cities, Khulna city unit of the party organised the rally to protest the price hike of fuel and daily essentials, and the deaths of five party men allegedly at the hands of police in Bhola, Narayanganj, Munshiganj and Jashore.

Khulna District Bus-Minibus Owners' Association announced the suspension of services ahead of the BNP rally, but said in an official statement they were doing this in protest against the operation of three-wheelers on the highways.

The Khulna unit of Bangladesh Launch Workers Association also announced a 48-hour strike to press home a set of demands that include wage hike.

[Our correspondents in Khulna and Jhenaidah contributed to the report.]

Windies crash out of T20 WC

FROM PAGE 1

The match between Australia and New Zealand will begin at 1:00pm (BST) while the other Super 12 fixture on Saturday, between Afghanistan and England, is scheduled for a 5:00pm (BST) start.

Going back to yesterday's actions, disciplined bowling from the Irish restricted the West Indies to 146-5 in Hobart, with Gareth Delany taking a career-best 3-16 before they romped to the target with nine wickets and 15 balls to spare.

Opener Paul Stirling, at his seventh World Cup, ended on an unbeaten 66 while Andy Balbirnie made 37.

It snapped a 13-year drought of failing to make round two, having reached it once previously in 2009.

Zimbabwe are in round two for the first time on their sixth attempt after they beat Scotland by five wickets with skipper Craig Ervine hitting a half-century and Tendai Chatara taking 2-14.

They limited the Scots to 132-6 with tidy bowling before rattling through the run chase with nine balls to spare.

But it was a disaster for the West Indies, who won the tournament in 2012 and 2016 but came to Australia

with a new-look team after the likes of Chris Gayle, Dwayne Bravo and Kieron Pollard retired, and Andre Russell was overlooked.

After the West Indies won the toss and batted, the Irish bowlers sent down nine dot balls among their first 15.

In frustration, Kyle Mayers launched at a delivery from Barry McCarthy and was caught for one.

The dangerous Johnson Charles slammed 4-4-6 off Curtis Campher but his luck soon ran out, gone for 24.

Evin Lewis (13), Pooran (13) and Rovman Powell (6) didn't last as King (62 not out) pushed the scoreboard forward.

In reply, Ireland got off to a cracking start with Stirling and Balbirnie blazing 54 off the first five overs.

Balbirnie fell to the spin of Akeal Hosein, but Stirling, in his 177th international, kept going and with Lorcan Tucker (45 not out) saw them home.

In the latter game, Scotland batted first but lost Michael Jones in the first over.

Opener George Munsey gave them hope with his ninth T20 half-century, but their 132-6 was always reachable.

Cooling devices making city hotter

FROM PAGE 1

Usually, heat released from an AC with a capacity of one tonne can melt one tonne of ice in 24 hours, the study said.

Titled "Rise in urban heat and power demand due to usage of ACs in buildings", the study was published in a virtual press conference yesterday.

Redwanur Rahman, urban planner and development researcher at IPD, conducted the study between November 2021 and August this year.

The study says if AC units with a total capacity of 28 lakh tonnes are run at 22 degrees Celsius, it would result in consumption of 19,783MW power. As much as 6,623MW could be saved if those ACs were operated at 26 degrees Celsius.

Consumption of power is driven up by the increased use of the cooling

devices, which is contributing to the rise in urban temperatures.

Redwanur Rahman told The Daily Star that people are resorting to ACs amid rising temperatures, leading to further heating up of Dhaka, making it a vicious cycle, as the heat given off by the machines contribute to the city's rising temperatures.

"The situation worsened as the capital is fast losing its green coverage, open spaces and water bodies which act as heat absorbents and keep [temperatures in] the city within tolerable levels..." he added.

IPD Executive Director Adil Mohammed Khan, one of the three supervisors of the study, told The Daily Star that the government must make a policy to determine where usage of AC is a necessity and where it is a luxury.

"We must adopt a policy like

Japan, USA and India did," he said, adding that these countries "made it compulsory to use ACs at 28, 25.5 and 24 degree Celsius respectively".

Akther Mahmud, adviser of IPD and also professor of urban and regional planning at Jahangirnagar University, said, "As ACs consume the lion's share of power, we must rationalise power consumption. The design of buildings in our country is done in a way that detaches the dwellers from nature. We must design our buildings in a way that will reduce dependence on ACs."

Ashrafur Islam, project director of Detailed Area Plan of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), said the heat in Dhaka is increasing to the extent that it might prompt a reverse migration to rural areas.

"Small plot owners build their buildings using every bit of their land