

Dhaka, Tokyo to enhance defence co-op

BSS, Tokyo

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Japanese counterpart Kishida Fumio have welcomed the commencement of the negotiations on the agreement concerning the transfer of defense equipment and technology.

The two premiers decided to elevate the bilateral relationship to a “strategic partnership” as a guiding principle to lead the two countries’ journey into the next 50 years and beyond, according to a joint statement issued in Tokyo yesterday.

They expressed determination to enhance cooperation, specifically cooperation for peace and stability in the region and beyond, and expansion of cultural cooperation and people-to-people exchanges.

Hasina is now on an official visit to Japan at the invitation of the Japanese PM.

The two leaders welcomed recent frequent port calls at Chattogram by vessels of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and the high-level mutual visits of the JMSDF and Bangladesh Armed Forces.

They agreed to continue promoting security cooperation such as mutual visits by vessels and aircraft, unit-to-unit exchange, training programmes and goodwill exercises.

Hasina and Kishida have decided to consider opening Defense Wing in Tokyo and National Security Wing in Dhaka in their respective embassies in the near future.

They also agreed to enhance dialogue among the respective diplomatic and defense authorities to identify possible ways to strengthen security cooperation.

Kishida explained Japan’s efforts for fundamentally reinforcing its defence capabilities and strengthening diplomatic efforts.

Hasina talked about Bangladesh’s plan and initiative for modernising its armed forces under the Forces Goal 2030.

Both the PMs acknowledged the efforts by the two countries to contribute to their respective regional security.

The Bangladesh premier acknowledged the establishment of the Official Security Assistance by Japan, a new cooperation framework for the benefit of armed forces and other related organisations of like-minded countries for deepening security cooperation. She looked forward to future cooperation under this framework.

The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to realising a free and open Indo-Pacific based on the rule of law, where the rights, freedom and sovereignty of all countries, regardless of size or power, would be protected by international law, rules and norms.

Invest in Bangladesh

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Bangladesh is a country of 170 million people and it has a growing market.

“With our pragmatic policies and vision, Bangladesh is guaranteed to emerge as a regional hub for investment, industrialisation and exports to diverse destinations in the region and beyond.”

Returns on investment have been consistently high, she said. “Besides, business friendly fiscal and non-fiscal policies and incentives, stable democracy, prudent governance and leadership guarantee your investment will return good value.”

During the Covid-19 pandemic that severely impacted trade and investment, Bangladesh was able to tackle the crisis through effective measures and interventions.

“Our economy has shown strong resilience, maintained growth, and is still sustaining the pressure from the volatile world financial situation and supply side constraints.”

Bangladesh maintained its growth and achieved 7.1 percent GDP growth in 2021-2022 fiscal.

“Despite the Ukraine war, we are projecting a 6.5 percent growth rate in the current fiscal year.”

At the event, 11 memorandums of understanding between companies from Bangladesh and Japan were signed in the presence of the prime minister.

Nor’wester

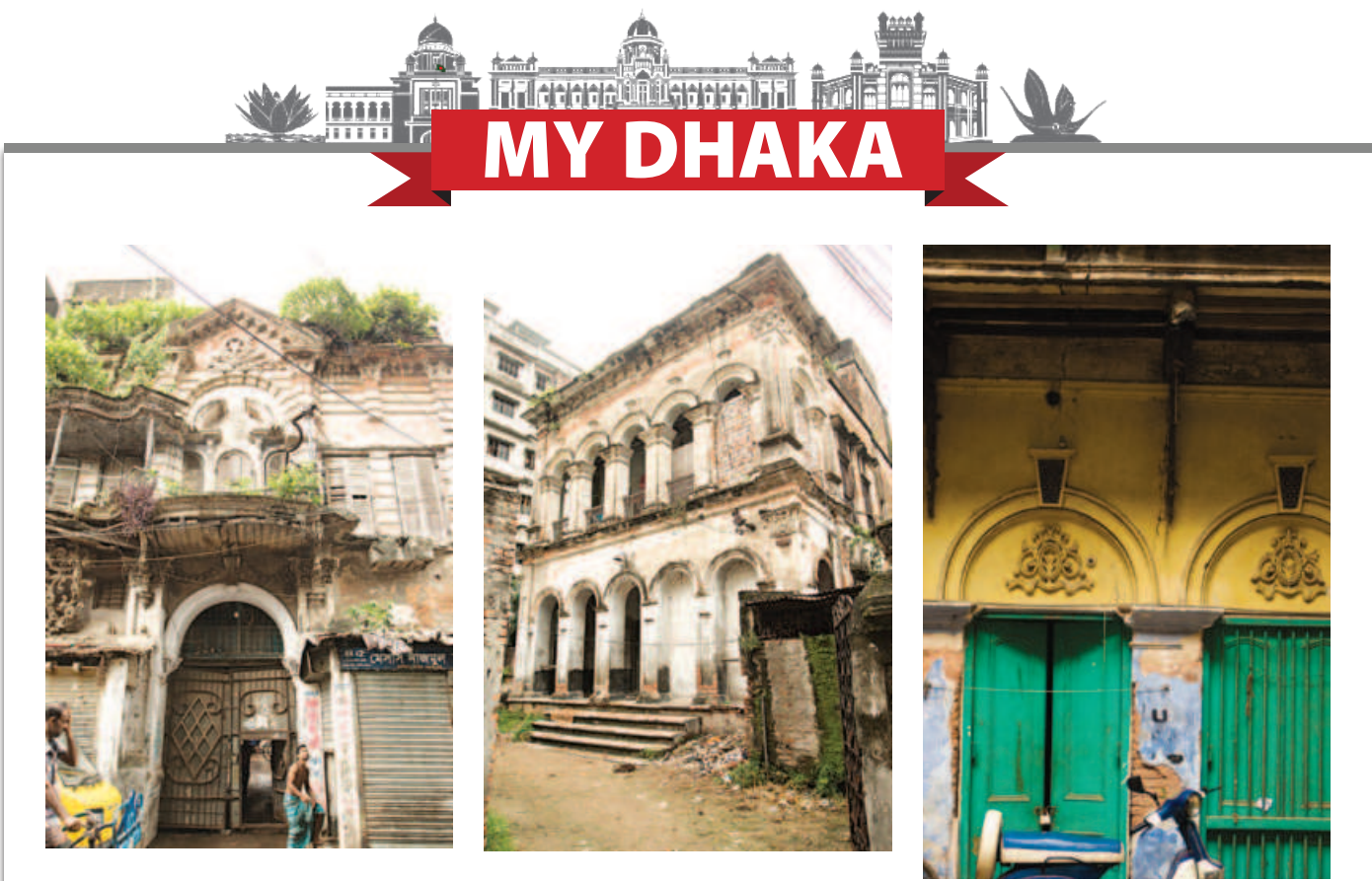
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“There is no chance of heavy rain; some parts of the country will have light to moderate rain in the next few days,” he said.

He went on to say that there is a possibility of heavy rain across the country in the first week of June.

The country witnessed severe heatwaves for several weeks before Eid.

The capital on April 16 recorded its highest temperature in decades with the mercury soaring to 40.6 degrees Celsius.



The Dhaka we know today is a rapidly pacing monstrous city with a dazzling skyline and busy city dwellers pulsating through its streets. Counterintuitively, confined within the same borders of Dhaka is another part of the city that is quieter, where life is laidback, and where every alley has historical stories to tell.

The Dhakaiya pride

FARIHA AMBER

The tales of old Dhaka are as interesting as its people – it is them who make these up after all, the Dhakaiyas. But how much do we know these Dhakaiyas? Aimlessly walking down the lanes dressed in a silk Punjabi, paired with a gold chain while joyfully chewing on some good old paan – is that all there is to being Dhakaiya?

Being a Dhakaiya myself, I honestly cannot put the blame on the non-Dhakaiya populace for picturing Dhakaiyas to be as such. The image of Dhakaiya people has been portrayed in such a manner via drama and movies that this distinguished picture now acts as a direct portraiture of the typical Dhakaiya.

But there is more to being a Dhakaiya than just having lachhi and kachhi, chewing on paan, and living in a house with an “uthaan”. And just as these are perceived as characteristic Dhakaiya traits, so is the matter of Dhakaiya pride.

Most Dhakaiyas take pride in the fact of just being born into a Dhakaiya family, and view it as a privilege of some sort, to the extent of boasting about being the original tenants of Dhaka city,



asking the leavers during Eid to never return, and flaunting generational wealth. While it is good to be happy about one’s lineage, maintaining a certain threshold is necessary before arrogance sweeps in.

And sadly, for many Dhakaiyas, such is the case.

Despite being part of the same

city, many classify themselves as the elite and the other party as peasants. I personally know people who use the term “Bangal” as a derogatory remark, as if it is embarrassing to be anything but a Dhakaiya.

Dhakaiyas also take pride in the rich heritage of food, and rightfully so. But using this acquired richness as a form of condescension is where the line should be drawn. Some Dhakaiyas also have their rendition of “maache bhaate Bangali” in the form of “polao kormay Dhakaiya”!

But it is not only Dhakaiyas who perceive themselves as another being, many non-Dhakaiyas look down on people living in old town, making fun of their dialect being too loud, dressing sense being too flashy, and behaviour being very unsmart – none of which should be perceived with a negative connotation.

But it is this mix of people that makes up the beautiful city we live in, whether through lineage or through moving in. And we Dhakaiyas love hosting, and truly believe in the statement “the more, the merrier”. Apart from the Dhakaiya pride taking over some tenants, Dhakaiyas love to welcome dwellers into the place we all call home.

Police arrest fugitive wanted in 11 cases

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Lalmonirhat police yesterday arrested a convicted criminal wanted in 11 cases who had been on the run for the past four years.

Prithis Kumar Barman, of Rajpur in Sadar upazila, was arrested from a house in Nilphamari Sadar early morning.

This was a special operation by Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station with the help of Nilphamari District Police.

Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Ershadul Alam said, “Prithis is accused in 11 cases of various crimes including drugs and theft. He was convicted in 5 cases. There are warrants against him in the remaining 6 cases.”

The location of the fugitive was determined with tracking technology, OC said.

2 school teachers hurt as ceiling plaster falls on them

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Parts of the ceiling including an overhead fan collapsed at a school classroom during an ongoing class at the dilapidated building of West Jalisha Government Primary School in Patuakhali’s Dumki upazila yesterday.

Two assistant teachers – Kabita Rani and Dalil Uddin received injuries as a result. However, the 20 children also present in class around 11:30am remained unhurt.

The injured were given treatment at Dumki Upazila Health Complex.

The school was established in 1975 as a tin shed structure and a single-storey concrete building was constructed in 1994.

The plaster of its ceiling often fell off although the school was repaired with money allocated from the emergency fund in 2022.

Dumki Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Al Imran said, “I’ve asked the primary education officer to visit the scene and make arrangements for alternative classrooms.”

70-yr-old sent to jail for raping child

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Kishoreganj court yesterday sent a 70-year-old man accused in a case filed over raping an eight-year-old girl.

Abdul Quddus, of Chowdhuryhati village in Sadar upazila, was earlier in the day arrested in the district’s Karinganj upazila.

The girl’s father lodged a case against Quddus with Kishoreganj Sadar Model Police Station on Wednesday, said Officer-in-Charge Md Daud.

Quoting the case statement, the OC said Quddus lured the child to a deserted place and raped her on Monday noon.

Hearing her screams, neighbours rushed in and rescued the child but Quddus managed to flee the scene.

The girl received medical attention at Kishoreganj General Hospital.

Dhaka, Tokyo take ties beyond economy

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largest bilateral donor, providing about \$25 billion. Presently, it is implementing some major infrastructure projects like Matarbari port, third terminal of Dhaka airport, Araihaaz Special Economic Zone and metro rail.

In the joint statement, the two PMs affirmed that the development of Bangladesh through regional connectivity would contribute to the overall stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

The two countries would continue to develop economic infrastructure, enhance regional connectivity as a new concept of Industrial Value Chain connecting the Bay of Bengal and neighbouring regions was launched.

Shahidul Haque said this is a trilateral concept involving Bangladesh, India and Japan. This can eventually connect Nepal and Bhutan, beyond northeast of India. Thus, the very goal of Bangladesh to connect the region would be achieved.

Prof Ali Ashraf of Dhaka University international relations department said Bangladesh has the “Look East Policy”, which is aimed at connecting

South, Southeast and East Asia. Connectivity centring Matarbari can be a leap forward towards this end if Japan’s plan is properly implemented.

He also said addressing Rohingya issue would be a must for the regional actors, especially Japan, India and China, to achieve the goal.

According to Shahidul Haque, “defence and security” is one component of “Strategic Partnership” but it also means cooperation in protecting the strategic interests of both the countries.

During the meet, the two prime ministers decided to set up defence wings in Dhaka and Tokyo, enhance diplomatic and defence dialogues, exchange training and cooperation between the defence forces, transfer defence equipment and technology. They also acknowledged the contribution of both countries in regional security.

Hasina stressed the need for establishment of Official Security Assistance by Japan, a new cooperation framework for the benefit of armed forces and other related like-minded countries for deepening security cooperation.

Prof Ali Ashraf said Japan has recently revised its policy on defence, but it is “more defensive, not offensive”.

As Bangladesh is also bolstering its defence capabilities and it got a large maritime area that needs to be secure, diversifying its defence cooperation is a necessity and Japan is a great partner in this, he said.

Japan has advanced technology and the two countries have trusted relations. So, having defence cooperation with Japan is a positive step, he told this correspondent.

Asked if China, the largest source of defence equipment for Bangladesh, will be uncomfortable, Ashraf Ali said, “Maybe”.

Bangladesh is not going against China by having defence cooperation with Japan. Bangladesh has defence cooperation with about a dozen countries and there was no problem for other countries, he said.

Shahidul Haque said strategic partnership also means the two countries will discuss and have policy coherence when they take positions on global events.

According to the joint statement, the two premiers elaborately spoke about the peace and stability in

this year.

Azmat, a former mayor of Tongi municipality, enjoys support from senior district AL leaders, but Zahangir has strong control over the party grassroots and junior leaders, according to sources in the party.

“Zahangir has his own vote bank. He will have support from Hefajat-e-Islam, and a section of BNP supporters as the party have decided to boycott the polls,” said an organising secretary of Gazipur city AL.

Speaking to reporters after submitting his nomination paper, Azmat yesterday said, “I read in

Ukraine and Indo-Pacific region.

In their views, the securities of Europe and of the Indo-Pacific are inseparable and conflict in any region has ramifications in the Indo-Pacific.

A day before the PM’s visit to Japan, Bangladesh launched Indo-Pacific Outlook. Its foundation is Bangladesh’s aspiration to become a developed country through trade and commerce.

Dhaka also spoke of a free, open, inclusive and secure Indo-Pacific – a stance that has much commonality with that of Japan’s policy on the Indo-Pacific. PM Hasina shared the same with her counterpart in Tokyo.

Shahidul Haque said Bangladesh can have better relations with Japan’s other allies, including the US and India, by sharing the much similar vision on the Indo-Pacific region, which is a focus of the global powers.

Prof Lailufar Yasmin of DU international relations department said Bangladesh’s economic growth and location that connects South and Southeast Asia is very well recognised by the global powers now.

“We must best utilise it.”

newspapers that he [Zahangir] and his mother bought nomination forms. He sought Awami League’s nomination...if he has confidence in the Awami League leadership, he will accept the party’s decision and conduct his activities accordingly.”

Shahnoor Islam Rony, son of local BNP leader Nurul Islam Sarker, submitted his nomination paper as an independent yesterday. Locals said his candidacy will not be a major factor in the polls results as he is not locally well-known.

As many as 13 nomination forms were bought for the post of mayor and 12 of those were submitted.

Rooppur power

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for Bangladesh: risks of being classed as a defaulter of foreign loan.

Subsequently, the Economic Relations Division, the government wing responsible for handling foreign loans, has decided to open an escrow account with the Bangladesh Bank, officials informed the visiting staff mission of the International Monetary Fund yesterday.

Payments for Rooppur would be deposited in the escrow account, which is an account where funds are held in trust while two or more parties complete a transaction.

Along with NIKIMT, the US Treasury and State departments have imposed sanctions on four entities and one individual that are part of Rosatom.

“We are imposing these designations to constrain Rosatom, given that it uses energy exports, including in the nuclear sector, to exert political and economic pressure on its customers globally,” said the US state department when announcing the sanctions on April 12.

The sanctions come after documents showed that Rosatom has been supplying the Russian arms industry with components, technology and raw materials for missile fuel, aiding Moscow’s continuing onslaught on Ukraine, reported The Washington Post in January.

Russia through Rosatom dominates the global nuclear supply chain. Russia has the world’s largest uranium enrichment capabilities, accounting for almost half the global capacity.

Rosatom though dismissed any fears of the commissioning of the Rooppur nuclear power plant getting delayed beyond the scheduled 2025 for the sanctions.

“Sanctions against individual enterprises within the framework of Rosatom will not affect the implementation of the Rooppur nuclear power plant project in Bangladesh. Together with the government of Bangladesh, we continue to actively prepare for the key event: the delivery of fuel to unit 1 of the Rooppur NPP,” the firm told The Daily Star.