



## DHAKA AIRPORT PM to open part of third terminal on October 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate a portion of the third terminal of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital on October 7.

Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman, chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab), made the announcement at a press conference yesterday held at the under-construction terminal building.

According to Caab, 12 of a total of 26 boarding bridges will be operational in October.

The Caab chief, meanwhile, said the terminal will be fully functional by the end of 2024.

He also stated that around 82 percent of the third terminal's construction work has already been completed.

"Our target is to complete 90 percent of the work before the partial inauguration. We hope everything goes accordingly," he added.

Every day, 120-130 planes from over 33 airlines take off and land at Dhaka airport's Terminal 1 and Terminal 2; around 30,000 to 35,000 passengers pass through the two terminals. This way, the airport currently serves around 8 million passengers annually.

Once fully operational, the new terminal, covering an area of 542,000 square metres, will be capable of serving more than 12 million passengers annually.

The new terminal will feature a parking apron capable of accommodating 37 aircraft. It will also have 26 boarding bridges.

A multi-storey car parking with a capacity of accommodating 1,044 vehicles is also being constructed in the terminal.

The three-storey terminal building will have 115 check-in counters, 64 departure and 64 arrival immigration desks, 27 baggage scanning machines, 16 carousels, and 11 body scanners, among other facilities.

In December 2019, Hasina inaugurated the construction work of the Tk 21,398-crore project aimed at boosting Dhaka airport's passenger and cargo handling capacity.

**I have been living in Dhanmondi for the last few years but my admiration for this place began some 17 years ago when I started studying at a college in the area. Having spent so much of my life here, it is not just a residential area for me but a place where I can experience the convenience of urban facilities and the beauty of nature in a best-of-both-worlds package.**



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA



## The many facets of DHANMONDI

FEDA AL HOSSAIN

Talking about Dhanmondi, people will mention modern residential and commercial buildings, glitzy shopping malls, and a bustling food scene. However, Dhanmondi's biggest strength is how it still maintains a residential area identity.

If you have a keen eye, you will still spot some two-storied houses, something that will make you reminisce about the yesteryears of Dhaka. The changing landscape of traditional to contemporary architecture tells the story of the transformation in Dhaka, which can be witnessed when you take time and walk around the neighbourhoods of Dhanmondi.

If we consider the living

aspect, then one of the biggest advantages of Dhanmondi is the close proximity to so many top-notch educational institutions. Seeing school children going to their campus is one of the things Dhanmondi residents are very familiar with, as many leading schools are situated here. For parents who prefer living close to their children's school, Dhanmondi is the ideal place for many.

Of course, another feature that will be mentioned over and over again is the Dhanmondi Lake. Serving as an oasis in the heart of the city, this is a place many Dhakaaites go

to unwind, walk or run for a workout to keep fit or spend time with a loved one amid the greenery.

As Dhakaaites, we only have very few open spaces left and Dhanmondi Lake plays its part in welcoming everyone.

Aside from the living experience, Dhanmondi is also known for being a paradise for foodies. Whether you are craving kachchi biryani, pizza, sushi or fuchka, rest assured

you will find it in various restaurants in the area, and even under one roof in the numerous food courts.

As satisfying as the Dhanmondi experience can

be, like the rest of Dhaka, it also has its share of challenges and problems. The traffic congestion can get pretty bad during peak school and office hours, and an abundance of commercial entities just along the residential area is making the place busier than ever, taking away its serene effect. And last but not least, the relatively high cost of living here, as rent for residential apartments is significantly more expensive than in many areas of Dhaka.

Despite the drawbacks, Dhanmondi is the place that still has this great underlying charm. For me, it's where "Old Dhaka" reaches out and expands itself to its "new Dhaka" identity, which makes it a special place in the hearts of Dhaka dwellers.



## DMCH

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then was transferred to DMCH as her condition deteriorated.

She was declared dead around 5:30am, DMCH Director Brig Gen Md Nazmul Haque told The Daily Star.

She was buried at her ancestral graveyard in Narayanganj's Kanchan municipality.

The Directorate General of Health Services expressed deep condolences at the death.

According to the DGHS, with the deaths of Almina and 12 others yesterday, the number of dengue fatalities rose to 340, of which 194 are female and 146 are male.

Eleven of the deaths occurred in Dhaka city.

Meanwhile, 2,742 dengue patients were hospitalised across the country in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning, bringing the total number of cases to 72,225.

## BNP plans

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Meanwhile, a press release by the party's standing committee said, "Preparations are underway to ensure the programme's success."

Earlier on July 29, BNP held sit-in programmes at the capital's entry points. After those were marred amid violence unleashed by law enforcers and AL activists, the party took a step back.

Leaders believe their sit-in lacked coordination as those responsible to ensure it failed to perform their tasks, which highlighted the weakness within the party. They also said the programme was not executed as per the standing committee's plans.

Party sources said their top leadership has been in discussion with senior members in this regard over Skype.

About the lack of participation in the July 29 sit-in, Fakhrul at the press conference said, "It was because police and Awami League activists attacked and foiled our programme."

## High time to start gas exploration

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Energy Security Day today with the theme "Energy savings: the oath of smart Bangladesh".

The government has been observing the day since 2010 to mark Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's decision on August 9, 1975 to purchase five gas fields from a multinational oil drilling company, Shell Oil Company, by paying some 4.5 million pounds (about Tk 17-18 crore then).

Those five fields — Bakhrabad, Titas, Rashidpur, Kailashtila and Habiganj — account for 82 percent of the country's total gas reserves. The other 18 percent of gas reserves were discovered in the past 50 years.

"In the last 15 years, much more emphasis was laid on LNG imports, leaving aside the development of the local gas sector," said Maqbul E-Elahi Chowdhury, a former member of Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission, at a webinar yesterday while presenting the keynote paper.

The current gas crisis is a result of the government's excessive interest in import-dependent fuel supply policy, he said at a webinar titled "Philosophy of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on Energy Security, Achievement and Implementation Status".

"We could not take proper initiative to explore the local onshore and offshore gas in our country. It was Bangabandhu's philosophy to develop the local gas sector," he said at the webinar organised by the Bangladesh Energy Society.

Among the 29 gas fields, 21 are operational and produce about 2,150 million cubic feet of gas a day (mmcf). Since 2016, production has been declining. The highest production then was 2,666 mmcf.

LNG import was initiated in late 2018.

Due to the pandemic and Ukraine war, the government needed to spend

an additional \$8 billion on imports, said Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, the prime minister's energy advisor.

"The gas supply will increase in 2026 as we are working on increasing local production under a crash programme," said Md Khairuzzaman Majumder, senior secretary of the energy division, at a recent programme.

At the same time, the government has signed two contracts to import more LNG from Qatar and Oman.

With the lack of gas supply, the industries and power plants are facing acute crises to operate smoothly. Around 60 gas-fired power plants need around 2,174 million cubic feet of gas per day but have been getting only 1,100-1,200 mmcf, shows data from Petrobangla.

At least 20 gas-fired power plants were shut yesterday due to a gas crunch. Only three out of seven fertiliser factories are getting gas, shows data.

Chevron took huge initiatives to increase production of the Bibiyana gas field and kept the production stable from the onset, said M Tamim, dean of Buet's chemical and materials engineering faculty, in yesterday's webinar.

"But the local gas companies failed to raise the production, especially in the Titas gas field, even though its reserve is the same as Bibiyana," he added.

Bangladesh has a lot of hydrocarbon potential, said Badrul Imam, honorary professor at the University of Dhaka's geology department.

Even though the gas reserves are drying up, the country still has two-thirds of its areas unexplored.

"Besides, we don't know what is the situation of our offshore reservoirs."

The government should focus on rigorous gas exploration.

"If we don't explore the alternatives in time, national energy security

will be under threat. LNG imports should not be the dominant source of gas supply; rather it should be a supplement to local gas," he added.

## PM likely to roll it out August 17

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ceilings in the Probash scheme, which is for non-resident Bangladeshis. The instalments can be paid in dollars.

The Progoti scheme is for private sector employees and will be similar to the provident fund. Employees will pay a certain percentage of their basic salaries towards the scheme and their employers would be putting in the same amount.

The Surokha scheme was designed for those in the informal sector. There will be different instalment ceilings. The instalment amount will not be dependent on basic salaries.

Samata scheme is for the poor, with the government bearing half the instalment amount.

The schemes will be operated through apps. For smoother operations, over 100 tech experts will be recruited by the authority.

The government has already formed a two-member National Pension Authority to execute the pension scheme formulated to provide pension services for the common people.

Kabirul Ezzani Khan, an additional secretary of the finance division, has been made the executive chairman of the body, and Golam Mostofa, another additional secretary of the division, is the executive member.

In January, the government enacted the Universal Pension Management Act-2023.

Under the proposed scheme, a beneficiary can enjoy pension benefits subject to the payment of a subscription fee up to the age of 60 if the person enrolls between 18 and 50 years of age.

## Suspended ASI indicted in narcotics case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against three people, including a suspended assistant sub-inspector of police, in a case filed over the possession of 100 yaba pills.

The accused are Mahbub Alam, suspended ASI of Pallabi Police Station, and his informants, Mohammad Rubel and Sohel Rana.

Mahbub Alam and the two others, now on bail, pleaded not guilty and demanded justice after Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Tahmina Haque read out the charges to them. Prior to that, the magistrate rejected their requests to be exonerated of the case's charges.

The magistrate set December 26 for the start of the trial in the case.

In September last year, footage from a private TV channel showed ASI Mahbub, in plainclothes, stopping one Khalil near Cantonment Railway Station.

Mahbub took a packet of yaba pills from Rubel and put it in Khalil's pocket. He then claimed to have caught Khalil with yaba pills.

Khalil was sent to jail on September 7, and later in the month, he was cleared of charges after police found him innocent during the investigation.

## Six BNP men held for torching bus on July 29

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have arrested six leaders and activists of BNP and its affiliated organisations for vandalising and torching a bus in Ashulia during BNP's sit-in programme at Dhaka's entry points on July 29.

The arrestees are Jubo Dal's Dhaka district unit Joint Secretary Shahidul Islam, and Assistant Organising Secretary Suruzzaman, amid Dhamrai municipality unit Chhatra Dal activist Apurba Chandra Das, BNP activist Moniul Islam, and Jubo Dal activists Md Sujon and Rajib Hossain.

Md Asaduzzaman, Dhaka district's superintendent of police (SP), said they were arrested from different parts of Dhaka.

"The arrestees have admitted to torching the bus," he told reporters at a press briefing at his office yesterday.

Video footage of the bus burning incident, which was circulated in the media, showed that three of the three arrestees including Shahidul and Suruz were present nearby when a group of people vandalised the bus on July 29.

## 'Illegally lifted' sand crushes two children

UNB, Pabna

Two children were crushed to death when a sand pile collapsed on them at Jhaudia village in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila on Monday night.

Himel Rana, 9, was son of Md Ashrafal Islam, and Jihad Hossain, 10, was son of Asan Ali.

According to witnesses, a huge pile of sand, illegally lifted from the Padma river, was stored precariously in the village's Blockpara area.

Himel and Jihad were playing near the sand pile around 7:00pm, when suddenly, the sand pile collapsed on them, leaving them seriously injured.

Locals rescued them and took them to Ishwardi Upazila Health Complex, where doctors on duty declared them dead on arrival.

Hasan Basir, officer-in-charge (OC-Investigation) of Ishwardi Police Station, said the incident was being investigated.

## PORTUGAL WILDFIRE

## More than 1,000 evacuated

REUTERS, Odemira

Hundreds of firefighters scrambled yesterday to put out a blaze raging in southern Portugal that has scorched thousands of hectares of land and forced the evacuation of around 1,400 people.

The wildfire, currently being tackled by over 850 firefighters and six water-bombing planes, started on Saturday in the municipality of Odemira, in the Alentejo region, but has since spread south towards the

Algarve, one of Portugal's top tourist destinations.

High temperatures and strong winds have complicated efforts to fight the flames, which have destroyed around 6,700 hectares of land. Jose Ribeiro, commander of the emergency and civil protection authority, said weather conditions were expected to remain a challenge.

Shortly before sunset on Monday, the sky in Odemira turned dark as a huge smoke cloud filled the air.

## Flood, rain keep wreaking havoc

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The situation in the already-flooded town worsened yesterday as 10.55 inches of rain fell in 24 hours until 6:00pm, said Meteorologist Emdadul Haque.

In Lama upazila, the health complex, the grain silo, and most of the buildings got flooded, said Deputy Commissioner Shah Mujahid Uddin, adding that officials were sending dry food to the people in distress.

In Chattogram, three lakh residents of Chandanaish, Satkania and Lohagara upazilas have been left without electricity since yesterday morning.

Floods have stranded 36,500 families in the district, said Deputy Commissioner Abul Bashar Mohammad Fakhruzzaman.

Zafar Ali Hero, a resident of Dohazari municipality in Chandanaish, said people in his neighbourhood were in a crisis of drinking water and they had way to cook food. "We have been eating dry food since Monday night," he said.

Ilias Chowdhury, of Amilaish in Satkania upazila, said the hand pumps had gone under water and there were no shops selling bottled water.

"We desperately need drinking water," he told The Daily Star on

Monday night.

Hundreds of acres of farmland and countless fisheries have been inundated and ruined in Chandanaish, Satkania, and Lohagara upazilas, locals and officials said.

In Rangamati, torrential rains over the last five days submerged large parts of the town and Bilaichari, Bahgaichari, and Barkal upazilas. About 1,200 of 5,000 families at risk of landslides have been evacuated, officials said.

In Ramu upazila of Cox's Bazar, two-year-old Samia drowned in her front yard yesterday morning while 55-year-old Kabir Ahmed died of snake bite in his flooded house in Pekua upazila.

In Chattogram, a man drowned yesterday and two others went missing after falling into floodwater.

Educational institutions in Chattogram, Bandarban, Khagrachhari, and Cox's Bazar will be closed today and tomorrow.

A statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations yesterday said the army was working to assist people amid the floods and landslides in Chattogram and Bandarban.

[Our correspondents from Cox's Bazar, Bandarban, Chattogram and Rangamati contributed to the report.]