



UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY PM leaves for New York today

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will leave Dhaka for New York this morning to attend the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 78).

A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the PM and her entourage members is scheduled to depart Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 9:45am, said officials.

The flight is scheduled to touch down at the JFK International Airport at 10:50pm (New York time) on September 17 after a four-hour stopover at the Heathrow Airport in London.

Bangladesh Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN Muhammad Abdul Muhith and Bangladesh Ambassador to the US Muhammad Imran will receive the PM at the airport.

During her stay in New York from September 17-22, Hasina will attend the first day of the high-level general debate session of the UNGA 78 on September 19. She will address the General Assembly on September 22.

The PM has also been invited to join a dinner hosted by US President Joe Biden on September 19.

On the sidelines of the UNGA session, she will attend a number of high-level side events, including those on Rohingya and climate change, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), universal health, and finance.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen on Thursday said the PM in her address at the General Debate will highlight Bangladesh's inclusive economic progress, success in the health sector and issues like global peace, security, safe migration, Rohingya crisis and climate justice.

The world leaders will gather in New York to attend the UNGA 78.

Hasina is expected to deliver a keynote speech at a high-level conference titled "Thought for Food -- Collaborating for Food Supply Chain Innovation to Accelerate the SDGs" at Rockefeller Centre in New York on September 18.

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PHOTO: REUTERS

An aerial view of destroyed houses after a powerful storm and heavy rainfall hit Libya, in Derna, Libya September 16, 2023.

Poland, Hungary, Slovakia keep bans on Ukraine grains

Russia denies losing front-line village to Kyiv forces

REUTERS, Brussels

Poland, Slovakia and Hungary will impose their own restrictions on Ukrainian grain imports, the governments said on Friday, after the European Commission decided not to extend a ban affecting Ukraine's five EU neighbours.

Restrictions imposed by the European Union in May allowed Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia to ban domestic sales of Ukrainian wheat, maize, rapeseed and sunflower seeds, while permitting transit of such cargoes for export elsewhere.

Meanwhile, Russia yesterday denied a Ukrainian claim to have recaptured the devastated eastern village of Andriivka, a stepping stone on the way to the town of Bakhmut.

"The enemy did not abandon plans to capture the city of Artyomovsk [Bakhmut] of the Donetsk People's Republic and continued to conduct assault operations ... unsuccessfully trying to oust Russian troops from the population centres of Klishchiivka and Andriivka," the Russian defence ministry said in its daily briefing.

Reuters was unable to verify the battlefield reports.

On Ukrainian grain, Polish PM Mateusz Morawiecki said "We will extend this ban despite their disagreement, despite the European Commission's disagreement,". "We will do it because it is in the interest of the Polish farmer."

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— Polish PM Mateusz Morawiecki

Polish development minister Waldemar Buda said in a post on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, that he had signed the Polish ban regulation, which would run for an indefinite period of time from midnight.

Hungary imposed a national import ban on 24 Ukrainian agricultural products, including grains, vegetables, several meat products and honey, according to a government decree published on Friday.

Slovakia's agriculture minister followed

suit announcing its own grain ban. All three bans only apply to domestic imports and do not affect transit to onward markets.

EU Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis said on Friday countries should refrain from unilateral measures against imports of Ukrainian grain. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said it would respond in a "civilised fashion" if EU members break the rules.

The EU created alternative land routes, so-called Solidarity Lanes, for Ukraine to use to export its grains and oilseeds after Russia, which invaded in 2022, backed out of a UN-brokered Black Sea grain deal in July that allowed safe passage for the cargo ships.

The EU Commission said existing measures would expire as originally planned on Friday after Ukraine agreed to introduce any legal measures (including, for example, an export licensing system) within 30 days to avoid grain surges.

"It has concluded that thanks to the work of the Coordination Platform and to the temporary measures introduced on 2 May 2023, the market distortions in the 5 Member States bordering Ukraine have disappeared," the European Commission said in a statement.

Road crash claims journo's life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A local journalist was killed as a stone-laden truck hit his bike in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila yesterday night.

The victim, Yunus Ali, 44, was the president of Lalmonirhat Reporters' Unity. He was working for a news portal named "Grambanglar News".

Quoting locals, police said the accident took place on Lalmonirhat Burimari highway in Palli Bidyut area around 8:30pm. Yunus died on the spot.

He was returning to Hatibandha after covering the biannual conference of Lalmonirhat Jatiya Party held in the district town.

JP Chairman GM Quader was the chief guest of the event.

Filing of a case in this connection was underway, said Mozammel Haque, officer-in-charge of Aditmari Police Station.

Cattle trader shot dead by 'BSF'

UNB, Chuadanga

A Bangladeshi cattle trader was shot dead allegedly by Indian Border Security Force along Chuadanga's Jibannagar border early yesterday.

The victim, Mizanur Rahman, 50, was from Jhenaidah's Shaikupa upazila.

He used to live in his father-in-law's house in Benipur village of Jibannagar.

Family sources said his body has been kept at Krishnanagar Mahakuma Hospital morgue in India.

Ishabul Islam Milton, chairman of Shimanto Union Parishad, said Mizanur was trading Indian cattle for some time.

On Friday night, Mizanur and his associates illegally went to Nonaganj border of Krishnananj Police Station in India's West Bengal.

BSF troops opened fire on them while they were returning, leaving Mizanur dead on the spot. However, others managed to return safely.

SM Jabid Hasan, OC of Jibannagar Police Station, said Mizanur's wife verbally informed them about her husband going missing.

Quoting Lt Col Masud Parvez Rana, director of 58 Maheshpur Battalion, the OC said BGB wrote to BSF for a flag meeting.

Two minor siblings drown in pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Two siblings drowned in a pond in Chameswary Mohenpara village of Thakurgaon Sadar upazila yesterday.

The victims were seven-year-old Sampad Barman, son of Doyal Chandra Barman, and his four-year-old sister Maharani.

Quoting locals, Sohel Rana, officer-in-charge of Ruheza Police Station, told The Daily Star over the phone that the children were playing near their home in the morning, but later they went missing.

Villagers started searching for them in the pond and found their bodies, the OC added.

Dhaka airport

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CAAB Chief Engineer Abdul Malek said the ILS – that help guide planes land on a runway – cannot be used on both runways simultaneously as they may interfere with each other. But a visual approach can be done.

Mafidur said the planned new runway's advantage is when one plane lands, another will be able to prepare for take off without delay.

Besides, if one runway is closed due to an emergency, the other will be available, explains the CAAB chairman.

The CAAB is also working to make optimum utilisation of the resources to handle the additional number of planes and passengers.

"When Dubai airport started operation, it handled 50 million flyers a year with a single runway. It was possible through efficient management. We handle only 8 million. If we can develop infrastructure and management, we will be able to serve many more passengers with the current runway.

"We have built two high-speed taxiways. We are setting up a highly sophisticated air traffic management system so that planes can go to the apron very quickly after landing and reduce the time the next plane has to wait to use the runway," says the CAAB chief, adding that the number of boarding bridges will also be increased.

With the third terminal, the annual passenger handling capacity of the HSI will reach 20 million.

Currently, 33 airlines operate 150 flights from the airport each day.

Aviation expert ATM Nazrul Islam says, "The airport should have had space for two independent runways. Not leaving the space was a big mistake."

NEW RUNWAY

Currently, the taxiway and the runway are separated by about 549 metres. The new runway will be between the runway and the taxiway. The two runways will be separated by about 359 metres, according to documents obtained by this paper.

The existing runway will also be extended to 3,692 metres – 400 metres to the south and 92 metres to the north.

The 2nd runway will be 3,292 metres long.

Cash-strapped Islami Bank lends to AnonTex

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Regardless, fresh loan facility to a known errant borrower of the banking sector raises questions about the lending discipline at Islami, which is mired in a liquidity crisis.

"This is simply a lack of due diligence by the bank," said Mohammed Nurul Amin, former chairman of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh, a platform of bank MDs and CEOs.

When a bank is not maintaining due diligence while approving loans, it is safe to say that the corporate governance is very poor, he said.

"A bank cannot lend to a defaulted business group in any way. When it happens, it is a bad signal," said Amin, who previously served as the MD and CEO of Meghna Bank and NCC Bank.

What is more concerning is that the episode took place when Islami Bank already had a central bank-appointed observer since December last year following allegations of violation of banking rules in the

disbursement of large volumes of loans.

Md Sarwar Hossain, the central bank's current observer at Islami, declined to comment on the issue of loan approval to AnonTex.

So acute is the liquidity crisis that the bank, which is the country's largest private lender, failed to maintain the minimum levels of cash and liquidity for the most part in the first half of the year.

Subsequently, it was slapped with a fine of Tk 162 crore by the Bangladesh Bank. The strapped bank failed to pay. It has been given until September to furnish the sum.

Not only that, it has been taking liquidity support from the BB in the last several months. On December 29, the last working day of 2022, it took Tk 8,000 crore from the central bank under a special arrangement to meet its immediate liquidity needs.

Md Mezbaul Haque, the BB spokesman, could not be reached for comment.

12 foreign airlines want to serve HSI

FROM PAGE 1

Four Bangladeshi airlines and 28 foreign ones operate flights to and from Dhaka.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to soft-launch the third terminal on October 7, CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman said.

The civil aviation ministry recently has initiated the signing of bilateral agreements with Mauritius, South Africa, the Czech Republic, Spain, Latvia, Cyprus, Guyana, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Kenya, Brunei, Seychelles, Lebanon, Turkmenistan, Algeria, and Switzerland.

The ministry has also upgraded agreements with Canada, Qatar, Libya, Azerbaijan, Germany, Malaysia, Iraq, Australia, Luxembourg,

Uzbekistan, Morocco, China, Indonesia, and Cambodia.

The CAAB chairman said the foreign airlines seeking to operate flights from Dhaka will be given permission in phases once the third terminal is fully opened.

The annual passenger handling capacity of the airport will reach two crore when the terminal is done.

HSIA can currently handle 80 lakh passengers a year. But the number of passengers is expected to reach 1.4 crore by 2025 and over 2.4 crore by 2035, according to experts.

On a typical day, around 30,000 passengers use the airport and around 130 flights are operated. More than one crore

Road march

FROM PAGE 1

The BNP secretary general stressed the need for an independent and impartial EC to ensure the voting rights of the people.

He urged the people not to return home until their demand is met.

Talking about the treatment of ailing BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, Fakhrul said, "I visited Khaleda Zia Friday night. Her health is not well. She needs urgent treatment abroad."

He said though AL leaders have been going abroad for treatment time and again, the government is not allowing Khaleda to travel abroad for advanced treatment.

The BNP leader expressed concern over harassing party acting chairperson Tarique Rahman by bringing false allegations against him.

The 80km road march, led by Fakhrul, ended in Dinajpur truck terminal area after the road march reached there around 5:00pm.

On the way to Dinajpur, the convoy of the three organisations stopped in Saidpur bus terminal area where Fakhrul briefly addressed a rally.

Hundreds of people from the northern districts attended the road march.

Lee weakens to post-tropical cyclone, nears Atlantic coast

REUTERS, Shelburne

The Lee storm system weakened into a post-tropical cyclone as it closed in on New England and Atlantic Canada yesterday, producing hurricane-force winds that knocked out power to more than 100,000 people.

The US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said in its latest advisory that Lee would make landfall on Saturday and was about 185 miles (365 km) south-southwest of Halifax Nova Scotia, with maximum sustained winds of 80 mph (130 km/h).

Strong winds, coastal flooding and heavy rains were already occurring in parts of New England and Atlantic Canada, it added.

In the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, more than 100,000 people were without power early on Saturday

after high winds brought down trees. In neighboring New Brunswick, 36,000 people had no electricity.

"Crews have been able to restore power to some customers ... however, conditions are getting worse. In many cases, especially when winds are above 80 km/h, it isn't safe for our crews," said Matt Drover of the Nova Scotia electric utility.

Winds have reached over 100 km/h in parts of the west and over 90 km/h in downtown Halifax, the largest city in the province, he said in a statement. Halifax airport was closed to all flights.

Earlier, the Canadian Hurricane Center projected Lee would make landfall in Nova Scotia some time after 3:00 pm ADT (1800 GMT) or later in New Brunswick with winds below hurricane force.

India's 8th or 7th for Sri Lanka?

FROM PAGE 1

The six-run defeat, where India rested five of their key players against a Bangladesh team who themselves had rested a number of their regular starters, will provide food for thought to the team management regarding their bench strength. Apart from Shubman Gill, who scored a blazing century, Indian batting struggled against Bangladesh's pace and spin.

The injury to all-rounder Axar Patel would definitely add to their worries as the men in blue look to win the continental title for the first time since 2018 and get a boost for next month's World Cup.

Talking about injuries, no other team has been so beset by injuries to key players like Sri Lanka. The defending champions started the tournament without their four frontline bowlers, including the talismanic Hasaranga de Silva. Now on the eve of the final, they have lost their premier spinner in Maheesh Theekshana, but cricket followers

would know that the Lankans are at their best in the face of adversity.

Not many people would have bet for Sri Lanka getting into the final, but as has often happened in the past, the islanders seem to have punched above their weight this time too, winning the key moments in crunch situations.

This being the sixth match in nine days, the pitch might be on the slower side and offering turn to the spinners. However, overhead conditions might have a bigger say on the proceedings than the surface, with rain predicted for both Sunday and the reserve day, Monday, the second reserve day of the tournament after the one for the Super Four encounter between India and Pakistan.

While many would have liked to see India and Pakistan playing in the final of the Asia Cup for the first time, the India versus Sri Lanka contest should throw in an exciting contest too, especially given Sri Lanka's track record in this year's competition.