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New radar system at HSIA covers entire Bangladesh sky

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has entered a new era of airspace surveillance with the inauguration of a state-of-the-art radar system at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA).

This modernised Air Traffic Management Centre (ATMC) brings the entire national airspace under comprehensive, real-time surveillance, ensuring that every flight entering the country's airspace is tracked, thereby significantly enhancing flight safety and operational efficiency, said officials.

Civil Aviation Minister Afroza Khanam, State Minister M Rashiduzzaman Millat, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) Chairman Air Vice Marshal Md Mostafa Mahmood Siddiq, top officials of the ministry and CAAB yesterday inaugurated the ATMC.

French company Thales manufactured and installed the ATMC.

The planning phase of the project

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Bus operators have illegally set up counters on the Uttara-Abdullahpur flyover in the capital. This is effectively choking the high-speed corridor, as buses stop in the middle of the road to let passengers get on and off. The flyover was built to spare passengers from such congestion. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Bangladesh, EU eyeing FTA after partnership deal

Focus shifts to market access, investment protection

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and the European Union are eyeing a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and an Investment Protection Agreement (IPA) after the two sides finalised the Partnership Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in Brussels yesterday.

Bangladesh Foreign Ministry Secretary (East and West) Nazrul Islam and EU Deputy Managing Director (Asia and Pacific) Paola Pampaloni initialled the PCA, while Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir, and European Commission High Representative Kaja Kallas were present as witnesses.

In a meeting, the two sides welcomed the new PCA as a platform for a forward-looking partnership.

They also highlighted Bangladesh's post-LDC transition, the importance of preferential market access, and the launch of negotiations on an FTA and an IPA.

According to foreign ministry officials, initialling the PCA means the agreement now has a legal basis, with the draft finalised and agreed upon by both sides in January this year following five rounds of negotiation since 2024.

However, it will take a few months for the PCA to be

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Blue Origin's reusable rocket booster lands successfully

REUTERS

Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin said on Sunday that its New Glenn rocket booster had touched down after launch, marking its first landing of a reused booster and intensifying its rivalry with Elon Musk's SpaceX.

The rocket, which had a launch window of 6:45 a.m. to 12:19 p.m. ET on Sunday, lifted off at around 7:25 a.m. ET (1125 GMT) from Cape Canaveral, Florida, and the booster touchdown happened about 10 minutes later.



New Glenn carried AST SpaceMobile's ASTS.O BlueBird 7 satellite to low-Earth orbit in a flight that marks a pivotal step for the company.

The mission was key to demonstrating that New Glenn, a 29-story heavy-lift rocket, has a reliable booster reuse capability and can compete with the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

The rocket's booster, dubbed "Never Tell Me the Odds," previously flew on the NG-2 mission in November and was recovered, setting up this week's milestone attempt.

The booster's name is a nod to a Han Solo line in the film "Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back." Following a series of delays earlier this month, the mission comes amid a surge of activity in the space sector, including the successful NASA Artemis II lunar flyby that took humans further from Earth than any had traveled before.

Blue Origin had said in November that it would build a bigger, more powerful variant of its New Glenn rocket, called New Glenn 9x4.

STOPPING MOBS Home boss's pledge rings hollow

Rumeen tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brahmanbaria-2 MP Rumeen Farhana yesterday criticised Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed, saying mob attacks continue despite repeated assurances from him that such incidents would no longer be allowed in the country.

Speaking during a discussion in the parliament on a notice issued on section 71 of rules of procedure concerning urgent public importance, Rumeen said, "The home minister is present here. Not once, not twice, but several times he assured us that mob culture would no longer exist in Bangladesh."

"The minister assured all that the culture of impunity would end and people would get justice. Yet we have seen one mob attack after another continue across the country."

Rumeen said that while countries around the world nurture cultural practices such as dance, music, theatre and poetry, Bangladesh has instead witnessed a "culture of

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BNP walks back on its tobacco control promises

New govt weakens anti-tobacco laws, lifts ban on vape



Bangladesh already faces a significant tobacco burden, with more than 1,30,000 deaths a year related to tobacco use, and substantial economic and social costs, say WHO and Unicef

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The BNP government amended at least two laws in ways that could further promote the production and use of tobacco products despite pledging tobacco control in its election manifesto, said anti-tobacco campaigners.

The ban on the production and use of e-cigarettes was lifted, while the provision that barred tobacco cultivation on triple-crop or other high-yielding agricultural land was lifted.

These legal changes are fully contradictory to the BNP's election manifestos, said Hossain Zillur Rahman, a former adviser to

a caretaker government.

"The party has spoken of protecting the younger generation and strengthening tobacco control. But weakening tobacco control laws will first and foremost harm young people, particularly new smokers," he told The Daily Star on April 19.

Ziauddin Hyder, an adviser to BNP Chairperson Tarique Rahman, however, does not think the steps contradict their manifesto.

"BNP is committed to control or prevent the misuse of tobacco products," said Hyder, a member of a government cell formed to implement the BNP manifesto.

Amid growing demands from anti-tobacco campaigners, the interim government in January last year banned the import of e-cigarettes, or electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), to protect public health.

Later on December 23, an ordinance was approved expanding the definition of tobacco products in the Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act and introducing several new provisions to regulate their use.

Section 6 (Ga) of the ordinance says no person shall produce, import, export, store, advertise,

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NIRCH deputy director stabbed in Mohakhali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals stabbed a deputy director of the National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital (NICRH) in Dhaka's Mohakhali area yesterday afternoon.

The injured was identified as Ahmed Hossain, 50. The incident occurred around 3:30pm near the old campus of BRAC University.

Confirming the matter, Deputy Commissioner of Gulshan Division M Tanvir Ahmed told The Daily Star that police visited the spot after the attack.

Efforts are underway to identify and arrest those involved, he said.

Police said Ahmed was returning home from the hospital when two to three assailants attacked him, stabbing him in his right hand and back before fleeing the scene.

NICRH Director Mostafa Aziz Sumon said Ahmed initially received treatment at the cancer hospital but was later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as he sustained multiple injuries.

The motive behind the attack is still unclear, with

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'I thought I would die there'

Habiganj expat recounts 20 days under missile fire in Iran

MINTU DESHWARA

For 20 days, Babul Mia lived under the constant threat of missile strikes near Tehran, cut off from his family in Bangladesh and unsure if he would survive.



The expatriate worker from Paniumda village in Nabiganj upazila of Habiganj said he spent nearly three weeks in fear as explosions shook the area around his workplace in Hasanabad, where he worked at a steel factory.

"Planes flew like flocks of birds. Missiles came time and again," Babul told this correspondent, describing nights without sleep and days marked by uncertainty.

At one point, he decided to leave the factory and make an attempt towards the Bangladesh embassy, despite ongoing missile strikes.

"I thought it was better to try than die waiting," he said. Babul returned Bangladesh on March 21 via Azerbaijan with the help of the Bangladesh mission.

He left for Oman in July 2019 but later entered Iran without valid documents and found work at a factory near Tehran. Around 80 Bangladeshi workers lived in cramped quarters, with eight to nine men sharing a single room.

He said the situation escalated on February 28 this year

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Bangladesh players celebrate a Sri Lanka dismissal during the first WODI of a three-match series at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium yesterday. Bowling first, the Tigresses restricted the visitors to 205 for nine in 50 overs, thanks to a three-wicket haul from Ritu Moni. Then Sharmin Akter Supta led the charge with the bat with a 127-ball 86 as the hosts chased down the target with three wickets in hand to register their first victory against the islanders in the format.

PHOTO: BCB

Pope decries exploitation by the rich

REUTERS, Saurimo

Pope Leo lamented during an event in Angola yesterday that many people in the world were being "exploited by authoritarians and defrauded by the rich", the latest example of a forceful new speaking style he has adopted on his four-nation Africa tour.

The first US pope, who has drawn the ire of President Donald Trump with his more outspoken comments, told worshippers at a Mass in Saurimo, near the Democratic Republic of Congo border, that violence and oppression went against the Christian message.

"Every form of oppression, violence, exploitation and dishonesty negates the resurrection of Christ," said the pontiff, referring to the core belief of Christianity that Jesus rose from the dead after being crucified.