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**News Brief**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said Bangladesh will be able to ensure safe drinking water for its entire population by 2030. She also said all old canals in Dhaka will be re-excavated for preserving surface water and water management apart from excavating new one. Addressing the inaugural session of Dhaka Water Conference yesterday, the PM said Bangladesh ensured access to safe water for 87 percent of its population by 2015 and that her administration was working for full coverage by 2030. In the Dhaka Water Conference, the Delta Coalition members have decided to introduce some programmes to stop ongoing migration and displacement of coastal people. They have also agreed to actively address the situation emanating from the permanent loss of cultivable land and human habitats owing to coastal soil erosion, sea level rise and coastal flooding, land subsidence due to over extraction of underground water. The policymakers of the platform came up with 20 decisions as mentioned in the "Delta Coalition Dhaka Declaration". Meanwhile, the heads of delegations participating in the Dhaka Water Conference called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday. During the meeting, the PM said Bangladesh is well-prepared to face natural calamities as the people of this country always live with these problems. Putting high importance on the water management issue, the Prime Minister requested the delegations to find out a way to stop river erosion that has been causing problems in Bangladesh.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has recently ordered the Power Division to allow more contractors in a single job in order to improve the work standard as well as break the single monopoly in the sector. The instruction came up last week when the Power Division placed a summons to the Prime Minister's Office (MPO) seeking permission for purchase of 300,000 single phase electronic meters.

The country's entire garment sector will be mapped digitally in a move to ensure transparency and transformation of the industry. Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed launched the project titled "Digital RMG Factory Mapping in Bangladesh (DRFM-B)" at an event held on Saturday at the headquarters of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association in Dhaka.

Bangladesh registered the highest growth in apparel exports in 2016 among top eight clothing exporters of the world. The growth rate was 6.07 percent in 2016 and the share of Bangladeshi apparel in the world export market also increased to 6.36 percent in 2016 from 5.9 percent in 2015 and 5.1 percent in 2014. The World Trade Statistical Review 2017, released by the World Trade Organisation on Friday, unveiled this information.

Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have signed a deal to raise skilled managerial manpower, now largely met by foreigners in the country's private sector, leaving many locals jobless. Under the memorandum of understanding (MoU) the UNDP will support the businesses in developing leadership and management skills by hiring international expertise, setting up a centre of excellence for strategic management and imparting skill training. UNDP Country Director Sudipto Mukerjee and BEF President Salahuddin Kasem Khan signed the MoU at the BEF office in Dhaka yesterday.

Country's natural gas supply is set to increase by around 1,000 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) from next year with LNG import for a blended usage of the two. Prime Minister's energy adviser Dr Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury came up with the message at a function in Dhaka yesterday, as the government prepares for the import of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from 2018.

The World Bank has approved a loan of \$570 million for two projects in Bangladesh to improve health, nutrition, and population services and strengthen the country's public procurement system. The projects are expected to help further progress towards better health outcomes and optimal use of public resources through an effective public procurement and monitoring system.

The key index of Dhaka Stock Exchange closed at 5,815 points on Thursday.

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