

**PRESS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
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News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government has taken necessary measures for ensuring people's smooth journey during Eid-ul-Fitr as it issued a 29-point directive to make the travel safe and comfortable in the highways. In reply to lawmakers' queries in parliament, she hoped that peoples' journey to their home during Eid would be better than in the past due to the government's various measures. On the development of the railways, the PM said 53 projects, involving Tk 97,623.47 crore, are being implemented in the railway sector that would play a significant role in improving the rail communications along with changing the country's socioeconomic condition. PM also said a process is underway for procuring 700 passenger coaches and 100 metre-gauge locomotives. In reply to another query, the premier said the government has taken a project to introduce electronic passport (e-passport). She also informed the house that National Service Programme would be extended in 64 upazilas in fiscal 2017-2018. A total of 1,14,660 youths were given training under the National Service Programme and out of them 1,11,625 youths were given services in different government offices, she added.

President Md. Abdul Hamid has urged the authorities concerned to ensure transparency and accountability in spending public money. The President said this when a delegation led by Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh Masud Ahmed submitted the Annual Audit Reports to him at Bangabhaban yesterday.

Bangladesh's labour market in Qatar will not be affected as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and other countries snapped diplomatic relations with the Gulf country, Expatriates' Welfare Minister Nurul Islam said. He was speaking at a consultation on 'Challenges of Women Migrant Workers of Bangladesh and Addressing the Role of Intermediaries' in Dhaka yesterday.

Bangladeshis living in Qatar have been requested to consult with Bangladesh embassy in Doha for necessary advice before taking any decision individually. The contact phone number in Bangladesh Embassy in Doha, Qatar is +97444671927.

The newly appointed representative of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Dhaka has termed Bangladesh a 'hope for the region' referring to its success and achievements in food and agriculture. Susan Lorraine Lautze expressed her deep satisfaction over the FAO's partnership with the government and also hoped that the success of Bangladesh can be a model for other countries of the world. She was presenting her credential to Foreign Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali yesterday.

Japan has assured Bangladesh that they are ready to assist it in all possible ways to fight terrorism. Japanese State Minister for Foreign Affairs Nobou Kishi conveyed his country's position when his Bangladesh counterpart M Shahriar Alam met him in Tokyo. State Minister Alam informed his Japanese counterpart about various measures taken by Bangladesh government to combat terrorism. He also requested Kishi to consider the withdrawal of travel alert. Shahriar Alam attended meetings with Japanese high officials on the third day of his visit to Tokyo. Meanwhile, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) President Shinichi Kitaoka has responded positively to Bangladesh's idea of funding regional infrastructure projects that will establish connectivity among potential countries in the region and expand the market. Shahriar Alam shared the idea with the JICA president yesterday.

Road, Transport Minister Obaidul Quader has said a Teesta water treaty would be signed during the current tenure of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi. Quader came up with the remarks while talking to reporters after a meeting with Indian High Commissioner Harsh Vardhan Shringla at the Shetu Bhaban in Dhaka yesterday.

The United Kingdom will vote for a new Parliament and government today. The voters will elect the 650 members who comprise the House of Commons. Fourteen candidates of Bangladeshi origin are contesting in the polls, however, Bangabandhu's granddaughter Tulip Rizwana Siddiq and also Rushanara Ali and Rupa Huq grabbed most public attention.

The key index of Dhaka Stock Exchange, DSEX, declined by 10.77 points, or 0.19 per cent, to stand at 5,489.87 points on Wednesday.

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