



# Newsletter

Press Wing, Prime Minister's Office

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## World must stand against atrocities on Rohingyas: Nobel laureates tell PM

Describing the atrocities carried out on Rohingyas in Rakhine as genocide, visiting three female Nobel laureates Tawakkol Karman of Yemen, Shirin Ebadi of Iran and Mairead Maguire of Northern Ireland said the perpetrators must be brought to justice.



They made the comments when the three met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban on 28 February. The Nobel laureates said it was a systematic policy of ethnic cleansing by the Myanmar government.

The Nobel laureates thanked Sheikh Hasina and the people of Bangladesh for standing beside the forcibly displaced Myanmar citizens. They called Hasina a “kind mother”.

The prime minister narrated how the exodus of Rohingyas into Bangladesh had started in 1977. She said Bangladesh has given shelter to 10,78,000 Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds.

Sheikh Hasina reiterated her call to the international community to put extra pressure on Myanmar to solve the crisis.

The three earlier visited Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazaar.

### **Bangladesh: A potential economic power in Asia, says ADB president**



Asian Development Bank President Takehiko Nakao has highly praised Bangladesh's tremendous socioeconomic success, saying that the country has immense potential to emerge as an economic power in Asia.

The ADB president's appreciation came when he paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Gonobhaban on 28 February.

ADB president mentioned that Bangladesh has immense potential to emerge as an economic power in Asia like China and India.

Mentioning that the ADB has been working with Bangladesh for its socioeconomic development since 1973, Takehiko Nakao said his organisation is ready to assist in power, transport and other sectors for boosting the country's economy further.

The prime minister said the aim of her government is to ensure development of the grassroots people and various welfare-oriented initiatives have been undertaken to this effect.

### **Green Garment Factories: Bangladesh leads the way**

Bangladesh has more green garment factories than any other country in the world. At least 67 garment factories have received the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certificate from the United States Green Building Council (USGBC).

After Bangladesh, Indonesia has 50 LEED certified garment factories, followed by India with five.

Another 280 garment factories in Bangladesh would get the LEED certification soon, said Gopalakrishnan, managing director of USGBC for Asia Pacific and Middle East Markets, at a programme in Dhaka recently.

Of the 67 running green garment factories in Bangladesh, 13 are rated platinum, the highest category in LEED certification. Gold, silver, and normal are the other certifications.

Bangladesh not only has the highest number of green garment factories, but also the highest number of the top scoring green garment factories, according to the USGBC. Seven out of 10 top scorers are in Bangladesh.



A LEED-certified factory building ensures 25-30 percent less water and energy consumption, and fewer industrial accidents, like fires, causing fewer casualties with special architectural design.

### **Awami League has nothing to do with it, PM says on Khaleda Zia being jailed**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said BNP chief Khaleda Zia is now behind bars for corruption and the Awami League has nothing to do with it.

"Khaleda Zia committed corruption...the court has announced its verdict and she is in jail in line with the judgment.... Awami League has nothing to do with it; we have nothing to do," she said.

The PM was addressing a public rally, organised by Khulna Awami League, at the Circuit House Maidan in the city on 2 March.



"And what were the BNP's activities? They had unleashed terrorism and militancy, killed people and burnt people alive," she said, alleging that the party had established a reign of terror in the country from 2001.

Sheikh Hasina, also the AL chief, said the government eliminated militancy with an iron hand after coming to power in 2009. "I will urge you all to remain alert so that militancy and terrorism cannot raise their ugly heads again."

She called upon all, including parents, teachers and imams, to keep vigil so that the country's youths never get any chance to get in touch with militancy, terrorism and drugs.

The PM urged all to vote for "boat", the electoral symbol of the AL, in the next general election for the continuation of the country's development.

Earlier, the premier opened 48 development projects and laid the foundation stones of 52 others.

Sheikh Hasina also inaugurated the 58th Convention of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IE,B) in Khalishpur of Khulna.

### **Zafar Iqbal's attackers are fanatics: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has termed the attackers of Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal fanatics and urged all to keep their children away from militancy, terrorism and drug abuse.

"Those who are committing these crimes are fanatics ... we earlier decided not to allow terrorism and militancy in the country, we're conducting drives against drug abuse as well," she said.

Sheikh Hasina said this while distributing Bangabandhu Fellowship, National Science and Technology Fellowship and research donations among students and researchers for 2017-2018 session at a function at Osmani Memorial Auditorium on March 4.

"Yesterday [on 3 March], an unwanted incident took place at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology campus where Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal came under [knife] attack. I asked the air force to bring him to Dhaka and admit him to the CMH for better treatment. His condition is stable [now]," she said.

A youth, aged around 24-25, swooped on Prof Iqbal, a faculty member of Computer Science and Engineering department at the university during a programme.



The PM said the country's children must be kept away from drugs, terrorism and militancy. Turning to science and technology, the premier said these are ever changing and her government has attached utmost importance to education, research and scientific and technological studies.

### **Help solve Rohingya crisis: PM tells Vietnamese president**

Bangladesh has sought Vietnam's support for a peaceful solution to the Rohingya crisis as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina held official talks with visiting Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang.

"We have discussed the Rohingya crisis that threatens peace and stability of our region. I sought Vietnam's support for a peaceful solution to the problem," she said.

The two countries issued a joint press statement after the meeting at the Prime Minister's Office on 5 March.

Sheikh Hasina said President Quang expressed his support for a viable and long-term solution to the problem. The two countries agreed on holding the second Foreign Office Consultation and the second meeting of the Joint Committee on Trade this year to boost bilateral cooperation initiatives, the PM added.

The Vietnamese president said he and the Bangladesh prime minister held "open and sincere" talks on the bilateral relations as well as on regional and international issues.

On politics and diplomacy, President Quang said the two countries agreed to increase exchanges of delegations at higher levels as well as hold bilateral meetings and contacts on the sidelines of multilateral conferences.

The two countries agreed to encourage and widen business activities, study and tap into each other's potentials, added the president.

He said they stressed the need for using technologies in production, cultivation and preservation to increase value of exports of both the countries and protect them from trade barriers when exported to third countries.

Bangladesh signed Vietnam signed three MoUs on cooperation in the field of fisheries and livestock, machinery manufacturing and cultural exchange programme.



### **Vietnamese leather goods maker to invest \$100m in Bangladesh**

Vietnam's leading leather goods manufacturer TBS plans to invest \$100 million in Bangladesh. Saiful Islam, president of Leather goods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB) said the company wants a 1.30 lakh to 1.50 lakh square metre space to set up a factory either in Dhaka or Chittagong to produce leather footwear and footwear components for overseas markets.



Diep Thanh Kiet, vice chairman of Vietnam Leather, Footwear and Handbag Association, and Islam signed an agreement in this regard in the office of LFMEAB in Dhaka.

### **Remain united so that anti-liberation forces cannot come to power: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the people to remain cautious so that anti-liberation forces, war criminals, killers and looters of orphans' money cannot come to power again.

Addressing a mammoth rally at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan on 7<sup>th</sup> March, Sheikh Hasina also called upon all to work together to combat militancy, terrorism, and drug abuse.

Awami League organised the rally to commemorate Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's historic March 7 speech.

This year, the day is being observed with much fanfare as the speech has been included in the Memory of the World International Register, a list of the world's important documentary heritage maintained by the UNESCO.

"We liberated this Bangladesh at the cost of blood. God willing, we will build this Bangladesh as dreamt by the Father of the Nation," said the PM, also daughter of Bangabandhu.

Hasina, also the AL president, said if the BNP-Jamaat alliance came to power, the country will be forced towards a path of destruction.

### **MARCH 7 OBSERVED**

The nation observed March 7, a memorable day in the history of Bangalees' long arduous freedom struggle, in a befitting manner.

On this day in 1971, Bangabandhu, the undisputed leader of Bangalees, delivered his epoch-making speech of independence before a mammoth rally at Race Course ground, now Suhrawardy Udyan.

The PM paid rich tributes to Bangabandhu by placing wreaths at his portrait in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi. Different cultural and social organisations organised various programmes.

### **26 Bangladeshis among 49 killed in US-Bangla plane crash**

At least 51 people were killed when an US-Bangla flight from Dhaka crashed in Kathmandu's Tribhuvan International Airport on 12 March 2018. The dead include 28 Bangladeshis, 21 Nepalese, one Chinese and a Maldivian.

The US-Bangla Airlines flight BS 211, a 76-seater Bombardier Dash 8 Q-400, slammed on an empty field, caught fire, and came to a rest on a football pitch. It left a trail of twisted metal and scattered luggage, officials said.

It was flying with 67 passengers, two pilots and two cabin crew members. The cause of the crash could not be immediately known.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep shock and sorrow at the loss of lives. She cut short her Singapore trip and returned home on 13 March. From Singapore the Prime Minister talked to her Nepalese counterpart. She ordered her administration to provide all support for treatment of the injured and bringing back the bodies.



### **Rohingya Crisis: PM seeks Singapore's assistance**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sought Singapore's help to resolve the Rohingya crisis as it is a big problem and burden on Bangladesh.

She sought the assistance during her meetings with Singapore President Halimah Yacob and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the Istana, the office of the president of Singapore, on 12 March.



As Singapore and Myanmar are the chair and member of the Asean respectively, the country can make the Myanmar government understand that the region's stability and development depend on the repatriation of Rohingyas, Sheikh Hasina told the Singaporean leaders.

Mentioning that Bangladesh has already signed an agreement with Myanmar on the repatriation of Rohingyas, the PM said the implementation of the agreement was being delayed for many reasons.

She said Bangladesh continues to shelter more than one million Rohingyas. Of them, some seven lakh have recently taken shelter in Bangladesh fleeing persecution in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

The Singaporean president praised Sheikh Hasina for her leadership, particularly in women's emancipation and gender issue.

At both the meetings, Sheikh Hasina said seafarers were facing problems for movement in Singapore and urged the Singapore government to solve those. The Singaporean president and its premier said they would consider the matter.

The Singaporean prime minister expressed interest in investing in Bangladesh's special economic zones. The Bangladesh PM sought Singapore's assistance in developing a deep seaport and make it operational.

Bangladesh also sought Singapore's support in favour of its initiative to be "Sectoral Dialogue Partner" of Asean.

#### **TWO MOUs SIGNED**

Bangladesh and Singapore have signed two memorandums of understanding (MoUs) for collaboration in Public Private Partnership (PPP) and air services.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Singaporean counterpart Lee Hsien Loong witnessed the signing ceremony held after their official talks.

#### **'Be our development partner', Hasina tells investors in Singapore**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has invited the business community of Singapore to be Bangladesh's partners in its journey towards economic development as the country was now transforming.

"Bangladesh has a huge young, energetic and easily trainable workforce with competitive wages. It offers opportunities for duty and quota-free access to the markets of the EU, Australia, Canada, India, Japan and New Zealand," she said.



The prime minister was speaking at the opening of Bangladesh-Singapore Business Forum 2018, which was jointly organised by International Enterprise (IE) Singapore, Singapore Business Federation and Bangladesh Business Chamber of Singapore (BDCham) at Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore.

Sheikh Hasina announced to provide Singaporean businessmen an additional 500 acres of land in any designated space, especially in the Mirsarai economic zone at Chittagong.

Talking about the economy's rapid growth, she said Bangladesh's economy posted a GDP growth rate of 7.28 percent last year while the foreign currency reserve jumped to over \$33 billion in 2017 from a mere \$3.5 billion in 2005.

#### **Moving Out of LDC Category: Bangladesh well on track**

In a major leap forward, Bangladesh has become eligible to graduate to a developing country from a least developed one as it has met all the three criteria for the first time for getting out of the LDC bloc.

The Committee for Development Policy (CDP), a United Nations panel, made an announcement on the country's eligibility at a meeting at the UN headquarters in New York.

The CDP officially communicated this to the mission at a simple ceremony on 17 March 2018. Two other countries -- Myanmar and Laos -- have also become eligible to leave the LDC bloc.

The three criteria are Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, Human Assets Index (HAI) and Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI).

The CDP will review Bangladesh's progress in 2021, and the country's official graduation from the LDC category will take place after a three-year transition period.

### **Let's give our kids healthy, peaceful life: Sheikh Hasina**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has reiterated her call to teachers, guardians and religious clerics to motivate children against all evil forces, including militants, terrorists and drug traffickers.

"We have to take steps to give our children a healthy life and ensure their peaceful stay with their parents so that they do not go astray," she said.

The PM was addressing a children's rally and cultural programme on the Bangabandhu Mausoleum Complex premises in Gopalganj on 17 March 2018.

The women and children affairs ministry and the Gopalganj district administration jointly organised the event marking the 98th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the National Children's Day.



The PM said Bangladesh would go ahead with the ideals of the Father of the Nation who dreamt about a hunger- and poverty-free country and the children of today would make Bangabandhu's dream a reality.

She urged the children to read Bangabandhu's Asamapta Athmajiboni (Unfinished Memoirs) and Karagarer Rojnamcha (Diary in Jail) to learn about the struggle of his life.

She unveiled the cover of a children's book titled "Amader Chhotto Russel Sona". Bangladesh Shishu Academy published the book authored by the PM.

### **Khaleda and her sons embezzled orphans money: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has come down hard on BNP chief Khaleda Zia and her two sons for "misappropriating orphans' money".

"The Holy Quran clearly states that never grab the wealth of orphans; never loot the assets of orphans; let the orphans have their rights. But they defied all the directives. Money came for the orphans, but not a taka went to the orphanage. They embezzled all the money," she said.



She was addressing a public rally at Patiya Model High School ground in Chittagong on March 21. Chittagong South AL organised the rally at the venue where Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had delivered speeches in 1969, 1970 and 1973 while Jawaharlal Nehru in 1943. The Zia Orphanage Trust graft case was not lodged by the Awami League government, but by the former caretaker government, the PM pointed out.

### **It is people's achievement: PM on Bangladesh's graduation from LDC**

Giving credit to people for meeting the eligibility criteria for Bangladesh's graduation to a developing country, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the people can achieve anything.

"It is an achievement of the people of Bangladesh. I think the country's people are the main source of all power. They can achieve anything," she said.

The PM was addressing a reception accorded to her at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) for the government's achievement of meeting the eligibility criteria for the country's graduation from the LDC group on 22 March.



Sheikh Hasina said it was an achievement of those people who worked together and contributed to the country's development. She stressed the need for maintaining the pace of development.

She urged all to work for the country so that people can live with their heads held high. "We want to live as a proud nation.... We liberated our country through a struggle and we have proved that we can stand on our own feet."

The PM said had the people not stood by her and brought the Awami League to power, it would not have been possible for her and the government to work for the country and make this remarkable achievement.

Bangladesh's eligibility to graduate to a developing country has opened up the door of its potential to emerge as a developed and prosperous nation, she added.



Sheikh Hasina said her government showed the way while others, including the government officials, private organisations and the business community, made the impossible possible.

She expressed gratitude to the development partners and foreign friends for providing and continuing support to the government's development efforts.

UN Under-Secretary General Fekitamoeloa Katoa also spoke at the programme, chaired by Finance Minister AMA Muhith. A written statement of UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner was read out.

The finance minister handed over the UN's certificate of recognition to the PM. The PM unveiled a commemorative stamp and a commemorative note on the occasion.

The UN secretary general and the chiefs of the World Bank, ADB, USAID and Jica delivered speeches of appreciation through video messages.

### **Take country forward with Liberation War spirit: PM urges people**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged all to work together in a planned way so that the country's march ahead with the Liberation War spirit never stops.

"I want Bangladesh to move forward with the Liberation War spirit and this journey must not be stopped as we want to make the country a middle-income one by 2021 and developed one by 2041," she said.

The PM was speaking at the distribution ceremony of Independence Award-2018, the highest civilian honour of the country. She handed over the awards to the recipients at a function organised by the Cabinet Division at Osmani Memorial Auditorium on 25 March.

This year, 18 distinguished personalities received the award in recognition of their outstanding contributions to their respective fields.

Sheikh Hasina said it was a dream of the Father of the Nation to fulfill the basic rights of people. "To me, remaining in power means discharging my responsibilities to the people, building the country with the great Liberation War spirit, and making it a poverty- and hunger-free one as dreamt by the Father of the Nation."

Congratulating the award recipients, the premier said the Independence Award would inspire the new generation and take the country forward with new enthusiasm.

### **Rohingya Issue: Trump praises Hasina's leadership**

US President Donald Trump has lauded the "personal leadership" of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in addressing the plight of the Rohingyas who fled to Bangladesh from Rakhine State in Myanmar.

"Your personal leadership has been critical to addressing the plight of the Rohingya who fled to safety



in your country. I thank you for all you have done to assist these men, women and children in need," Trump wrote to Hasina in a message on the occasion of Bangladesh's Independence Day.

The US president also wrote to President Md Abdul Hamid and extended his best wishes to him and all Bangladeshis on Independence Day.

President Trump in his messages positively highlighted the US-Bangladesh relations and said the close cooperation between the two countries helps sustain the security and prosperity of both the countries.

## Independence Day celebrated

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina led the nation in singing the national anthem at a rally of children and juveniles at Bangabandhu National Stadium in the capital.

Earlier, she hoisted the national flag before a huge audience comprised of cabinet members, students of different educational institutions and their parents. She inaugurated the rally by releasing balloons and pigeons.



The PM distributed prizes among the winners of nationwide school competitions held between January 20 and March 15 on correctly singing the national anthem.

Under an initiative of the Prime Minister's Office and supervision of the Cabinet Division, the competitions were held at every educational institution across the country. Around 63 lakh students of primary, secondary, higher secondary and madrasa levels took part in the competitions.

People from all walks of life poured onto the streets to join different programmes to celebrate the day and pay tributes to the martyrs of the 1971 Liberation War.

The anthem was also sung at the foreign missions of Bangladesh at 8 am of their local time.

This year's celebration had another dimension. The country recently became eligible to graduate to a developing country from a least developed one.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid tributes to the Liberation War martyrs by placing wreaths at the altar of the National Memorial memorial early in the morning.

After returning from the National Memorial, the prime minister paid homage to Father of the National Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing a wreath at his portrait in front of the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi in the capital.

She also released a commemorative postage stamp, a first-day cover and a data card marking the Independence and National Day. She also greeted all freedom fighters of the country on the day. President Abdul Hamid hosted a reception at the Bangabhaban.

## PM tells children to enhance country's dignity

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged children and juveniles to nourish the spirit of patriotism and pride of a victorious nation to consolidate the country's dignity in the future world.

"You have to always keep it in mind that you are the descendants of a victorious nation... So you have to love the country deeply to take it forward from where we left off," she said.

The prime minister was addressing the Independence and National Day 2018 rally of children and juveniles at Bangabandhu National Stadium in the capital.

Wishing a bright and prosperous future for children, the prime minister said, "We want children to build themselves as... leaders of the future as they would steer the country at different levels in the coming days."

Sheikh Hasina reiterated her call to parents and guardians as well as teachers and religious leaders to remain careful in keeping the children out of the influences of militancy, terrorism and drug addiction.

"Children must pursue their studies attentively to build themselves as worthy citizens and each and every parent and guardian must ensure this," she said.

She also urged the children to obey the directives of their parents, guardians and teachers.

### Don't let anti-liberation forces come to power: PM urges people

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon all to remain alert so that the anti-liberation forces can never come to power.

"The country's independence was earned at the cost of blood of tens of thousands of people. Those who want to



foil our independence should never come to power," she told a discussion in the city's Krishibid Institution auditorium.

The Awami League organised the programme marking the 48th Independence and National Day.

Sheikh Hasina said the country shouldn't be of militants, anti-liberation forces and war criminals. It should be built based on the ideals of freedom fighters.

She criticised Khaleda Zia's family members, saying they indulged in corruption and laundering money after assuming office. "Laundering money by them was proved in courts in Canada and Singapore."

The premier said the government has a plan to launch Bangabandhu-II and Bangabandhu-III satellites into the orbit in future. "We are launching a satellite now. The longevity of Bangabandhu-I satellite will be 15 years."

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