

**Inauguration of Immigration and Customs of Maitree Express and  
Flagging of Bandhan Express  
Through video conferencing**

Remarks by

**HE Sheikh Hasina**  
Hon'ble Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ganobhaban, Thursday, Kartik 1424, 09 November 2017

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**Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim**

His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India,  
External Affairs Minister Her Excellency Shrimati Sushma Swaraj,  
Chief Minister of West Bengal Her Excellency Mamata Banerjee,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

**Assalamu Alaikum and a very good morning to you all.**

Also a belated happy Diwali to Modijee, Sushamajee, Momtajee and the people of India.

Today is yet another happy occasion in Bangladesh-India relations. On this important day, I am extremely happy to join your Excellency to formally launch the end-to-end immigration and customs of Dhaka-Kolkata Maitree Express and flagging of Khulna-Kolkata Bandhan Express service.

This is the fulfilment of a long cherished dream. These initiatives along with a new International Passenger Terminal at Chitpur, Kolkata will facilitate comfortable journey between Dhaka-Kolkata and Khulna-Kolkata.

I wish all the success of the Maitree Express and Bandhan Express services.

I am also confident that these services would give a boost to cultural exchanges and tourism between our two peoples. I hope this fine display of mutuality of our relationship will further strengthen our bilateral relations.

**Excellency,**

Our two countries are having wonderful cooperation in railways sector. Since 2009, it has been strengthened further. Our two countries are also working to re-open our pre-1965 rail links for cargo transport between Bangladesh and India.

I understand some of these are already functioning and the necessary works for the rest are in progress. I thank the government of India for supporting the railways projects through Line of Credit (LOC) funds.

I am happy that two railway bridges at Bhairab and Titas are also being inaugurated today which will contribute to faster connectivity between Dhaka and Chittagong.

**Excellency,**

Connectivity is one of the main pillars of our cooperation. Our two countries are not only connected through rail, road, inland water and air, but we are connected through internet bandwidth, coastal routes, power grid etc.

These new modes of connectivity are adding diverse dimensions to our overall connectivity architecture. I am happy to note that we have recently extended our connectivity to space.

We want to cooperate with India and other countries in the immediate neighbourhood for creating an area of peace in South Asia where we can live side by side as good neighbours and pursue constructive policies for the benefit of our people.

In this regard, the vision of our Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who conceived the idea of regional cooperation in 1972 remains our constant guide. I am sure these connectivity initiatives will further consolidate this vision.

**Excellency,**

Bangladesh-India relations are in fact setting new high standards of bilateral cooperation in the region and beyond. I am sure we would be having many more similar, happy occasions in the days ahead for the greater benefit of our peoples. I look forward to working with your Excellency in our joint endeavour to that end.

Thank you all.

Khoda Hafez.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu

May Bangladesh Live Forever

Long live Bangladesh-India Friendship....