



Newsletter

Press Wing, Prime Minister's Office

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Prime Minister inaugurates main construction work of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant

Bangladesh has stepped into the “world of nuclear energy” as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the main construction work of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant. This is the first such plant in the country. She formally launched the construction work by pouring concrete into the plant site at Iswardi's Rooppur on 30 November 2017.



Speaking on the occasion, Sheikh Hasina said, “This is a joyful day for us. Bangladesh enters the world of nuclear energy with the beginning of the construction work of the main structure. It's a pride and joy for us as a nation.”

Taking a swipe at the critics of the nuclear power plant project, she said those who raised questions “lacked self-confidence”. Sheikh Hasina said her government has put utmost importance on ensuring overall nuclear security during the construction of the plant.



The then Awami League government in 2009 had taken initiatives to meet the high demand for electricity. “We drew up short, mid and long-term plans to meet the demand. The total electricity production capacity has now risen to over 16,000 megawatt. About 83 percent people have come under electricity coverage,” she said.

“We'll get 1,200 megawatt electricity from the Rooppur power plant by 2023 and another 1,200 megawatt by the following year. Nearly 10 percent of the total produced electricity will come from the nuclear energy source by that time.”

Earlier in the day, Rosatom DG Likhachev met the prime minister at its Rooppur office. Likhachev congratulated Sheikh Hasina for

taking initiatives to build the nuclear power plant

The mega project is being implemented by state-run BAEC under the Science and Technology Ministry, with technical and technological support from Rosatom.

Pope calls for decisive actions from int'l community to end Rohingya crisis; Lauds Bangladesh's role in helping refugee

Pope Francis has called for decisive international action on the Rohingya refugee crisis. More than a million Rohingya Muslims have sought sanctuary in Bangladesh after fleeing violence in Myanmar.



"None of us can fail to be aware of the gravity of the situation, the immense toll of human suffering involved, and the precarious living conditions of so many of our brothers and sisters, a majority of whom are women and children, crowded in the refugee camps," he told Bangladeshi dignitaries and diplomats on 30 November 2017 in Dhaka.

He praised Bangladesh for taking in the mass exodus across the border into overcrowded makeshift camps since a fresh outbreak of violence in Rakhine state in late August.

At a private talk with the pontiff later in the evening met President Abdul Hamid. The President sought his help in sending back the displaced Rohingyas to their homeland and keeping up the pressure on Myanmar to resolve the protracted crisis.

Francis -- the first pope to visit Bangladesh in 31 years spent three days in Dhaka. He met some of the Rohingya refugees, whom he had described as his "brothers and sisters", and led a mass at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital.

Govt keen to develop CHT region: PM says marking 20th anniversary of CHT Peace Accord

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina says the government is giving more importance to the development of Chittagong Hill Tracts than the country's other areas as it was neglected for over 20 years.

She was addressing a programme through video conferencing from the Gono Bhaban on 2 December 2017 to celebrate 20 years of the signing of the CHT Peace Accord.

The Prime Minister said the government was implementing various projects in the CHT which were not included in the accord.

The people of the CHT were deprived of development due to the confrontational situation in the area. "That's why we are implementing special projects under every ministry to develop the area," she said.



After assuming office in 1996, the previous Awami League government had started hectic efforts to bring peace to the CHT, she told the programme.



She said the then AL government became successful in striking the accord on 2 December 1997.

“It is our responsibility to implement the accord as we have done it. We will, for sure, fully implement the accord, but we need cooperation from all. We want overall development of the area.”

Citing examples of some peace pacts, she said the rebels didn't surrender all their arms after signing of those treaties, but Bangladesh was an exception.

PM pays 3-day official visit to Cambodia



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid a three-day official visit to Cambodia on 3-5 December 2017 at the invitation of her counterpart Hun Sen.

During the visit, Bangladesh and Cambodia signed an agreement and nine MoUs to boost trade and investment relations, and step up cooperation in the fields of tourism, agriculture, civil aviation, ICT and technical education.

The two PMs witnessed the signing of the documents by ministers and high officials concerned at the Prime Minister's office. After the formal meeting and signing ceremony, both the Prime Minister addressed a joint press statement.

Sheikh Hasina in her statement sought support from Cambodia for a durable solution to the Rohingya crisis as it is a threat to regional peace and stability.

Bangladesh Prime Minister proposed holding the first Joint Commission, to be headed by two foreign ministers, in Dhaka next year.

Bangladesh and Cambodia were also considering a proposal for opening resident diplomatic missions in each other's capital, Sheikh Hasina added.

She said the Bangalee and the Khmer nations share ancient cultural linkages, a Sanskrit and Pali inspired script, and a common new year in the month of April.

The Cambodian PM said they highly appreciate Bangladesh for sheltering forcibly displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar. Though Bangladesh has a population of over 160 million, it took the refugee issue on its shoulder. Hun Sen also hoped Bangladesh and Myanmar would work together smoothly for the safe return of the refugees to Myanmar.

The Cambodian PM supports the request from Bangladesh to be the sectoral dialogue partner of Asean and it would work to achieve the goal.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had an audience with Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni, and also called on Cambodian Senate President Say Chhum and National Assembly President Heng Samrin.

She also joined a business dialogue organised by the Cambodian Chamber and attended a dinner hosted by the Cambodian PM.



The Bangladesh PM also had talks with former Cambodian prime minister and President of Funcinpec, a Cambodian royal party, Norodom Ranariddh when he called on her at her in Phnom Penh.

PM attends reception

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said her government's stance and continued efforts to build the Padma Bridge with its own fund have changed the world's attitude towards Bangladesh and all now treat it with respect.

"They [the global community] now show due respect while talking about Bangladesh. We want to move ahead in the global arena with due honour as a victorious nation...", she said while addressing a dinner programme at Hotel Sofitel in the Cambodian capital. It was hosted in the PM's honour by Bangladesh Ambassador to Thailand Saida Muna Tasneem, concurrently accredited to Cambodia.

The PM also urged Bangladeshi businesses to look for suitable partners in Cambodia and move ahead with joint venture projects.

Turning to her visit to the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Sheikh Hasina said no other countries like Bangladesh and Cambodia have witnessed such large scale genocides.

She said her government is taking steps to preserve the historic sites and evidence of the 1971 Liberation War so that the future generation can properly learn the history of the war.

Bangabandhu's younger daughter Sheikh Rehana, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali, and Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon, among others, were present.

Road named after Bangabandhu

Bangladesh and Cambodia have decided to name "Baridhara Park Road" in Dhaka's diplomatic zone after Cambodia's late king Norodom Sihanouk and a road in Phnom Penh after Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

PM opens 4-day Digital World Exposition

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the four-day Digital World, the biggest ICT exposition in Bangladesh, at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka on 6 December 2017. The slogan for the exposition this year is "Ready for Tomorrow."

ICT Division in collaboration with Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) organized the exposition. Some 170 companies, including Google, Facebook, Motorola and Qualcomm, joined the exposition. About 400 exhibitors from home and abroad attended the event



Sophia charms PM, Dhaka audience

Sophia, the world's new sensation, has caught Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina by surprise as the humanoid robot readily gave the premier information about her.



Hasina met Sophia on 6 December 2017 at the inaugural ceremony of the four-day-long Digital World at BICC.

After Prime Minister's inaugural speech, the organisers announced that Sophia would be brought to the stage to meet the PM. Wearing yellow-white top and skirt, Sophia came on the stage. The PM asked her "Hello Sophia, how are you?"

"Hello honourable prime minister, I am feeling proud. This is very nice to meet you," Sophia replied.

Sheikh Hasina wanted to know how she knew her. Sophia said she had read much about the PM and Bangladesh.

"I know you are the daughter of the great leader, Father of The Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. You are also known as the Mother of Humanity in the world and you are implementing the Digital Bangladesh," Sophia said.

The robot also said it knew it very well that the name of the PM's granddaughter was also Sophia.

"Yes, the name of Joy's [prime minister's son and the ICT adviser] daughter is Sophia," a smiling Sheikh Hasina informed the audience.

The premier then asked the robot what she knew about her vision and Digital Bangladesh.

Sophia flawlessly communicated information to the PM about her vision and Digital Bangladesh.

Saudi citizen Sophia came to Dhaka on 5 December from Hong Kong to attend the mega ICT event.

Sophia is a robot with its body shape built to resemble the human body. Hong Kong-based Hanson Robotics Ltd made Sophia. The company says its humanlike robots have remarkable expressiveness, liveliness, and interactivity.

PM rules out snap polls; rejects Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel capital

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has ruled out the possibility of any special initiative on her part to ensure BNP's participation in the next general election.

"I'm not going to pour butter in an improper saucepan . . . the election will not wait for the absentees," she was addressing a press conference at the Gono Bhaban on 7 December 2017.

The BNP will have to decide for itself if it would run in the election, she said. "But I don't think the BNP will repeat the mistake of 2014."

Sheikh Hasina made the remarks responding to questions by journalists on the issue, when she reminded everyone of the "utter misconduct and humiliation" she faced from BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia ahead of the 2014 elections as she tried to reach out to her, only to get a cold shoulder.

The press conference was held to brief the media about the outcome of her Cambodia visit, but issues related to the election, Rohingya crisis, corruption charges against the BNP chief and her family dominated the event.

Talking about US President Donald Trump's decision to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital, the Bangladesh Prime Minister said the unilateral declaration will create anarchy around the world.

Replying to a question, she dismissed the possibility of an early election, saying "the country is not in any crisis for which it should go for snap polls".

Asked to comment on a recent remark by Khaleda about granting pardon if the BNP returned to power, Hasina said she found the comment rather ambiguous.

"I'm not quite clear whether the BNP chairperson was showing mercy or if she was seeking it for her attempt to kill me by launching the 2004 grenade attack. "What offence have I committed that I need her pardon?" she said.

Rather the BNP chairperson should offer an apology for the killing of former finance minister Shah MS Kibria, Ahasanullah Master, the grenade attack of August 21, 2004, and the killings of several thousand Awami League leaders and workers after assuming office as PM in 2001, she added.

Hasina also accused the BNP of all attempts on her life saying, "every incident took place following their instigations and threats".



Fulfill climate deal promise, PM tells developed nations

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon the developed nations to deliver on their commitments to ensure climate justice and meet the historical responsibility to protect the world.

She was addressing the One Planet Summit at the La Seine Musicale in Seguin Island in Paris on 12 December 2017.



French President Emmanuel Macron, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called the summit of the international leaders and committed citizens from around the world to address the ecological emergencies of the planet.

The main focus of the summit is to determine how those involved in public and private finance can support and accelerate common efforts to fight climate change.

Sheikh Hasina said she believes that collective commitments and actions

for “resilience and adaptation” would contribute to peace, stability and prosperity across societies.

The Bangladesh government would initiate programmes to increase the country's tree coverage from 22 percent to 24 percent in the next five years, she added.

About the influx of Rohingyas to Bangladesh, the premier said the country was facing a huge challenge due to the entry of over one million forcibly displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar.

She told global leaders that Bangladesh sheltered Rohingyas on 1,783 hectares of forest land in Cox's Bazar on humanitarian grounds.

“This crisis has severely affected the forest and environment in that area. In this situation, climate adaptation has become a major challenge.”

Hasina said Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change although it is not responsible for it. “With our limited resources, we're addressing the consequences of climate change by mitigation and adaptation. This has been mainstreamed in our sustainable development strategy aimed at becoming a middle-income country by 2021.”

Despite being a developing country, Bangladesh spends over one percent of its GDP on combating climate change, the PM pointed out. The premier reaffirmed her pledge to implement the Paris Agreement.

Sheikh Hasina meets Macron

French President Emmanuel Macron has assured Bangladesh of his country's humanitarian support and playing a role in the UN and other international forums to find a permanent solution to the Rohingya crisis.

He gave the assurance during a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Elysee Palace in Paris.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque said Macron wanted to know about the present status of the Rohingya crisis, what Bangladesh was doing and what it expected from France.

Sheikh Hasina said over one million forcibly displaced Rohingyas were living in Bangladesh which was a big burden on the country. It was also causing problems to the country's environment.



“We inked the bilateral agreement, but we want the international community to continue their support [to Bangladesh] and keep up the pressure [on Myanmar] in this regard, or else the agreement would not be implemented.”

Macron called upon Sheikh Hasina to identify the priority sectors for French investment. The PM in this regard mentioned energy, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals and ICT sectors, and special economic zones.

Earlier, the French president received the Bangladesh PM at the Elysee Palace where she was given a guard of honour.

Hasina urges French to invest in Bangladesh

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged French businesspeople to invest in Bangladesh saying the country offers friendly foreign investment and trade regimes.

"My message to you is simple -- France needs to invest to sustain its growth, while Bangladesh needs investment to expedite its growth. You need competitive sourcing options while we look for diversifying our export destinations."

“This offers a perfect combination for a win-win partnership for both of our countries," she said.

Bangladesh to be among fastest growing LDCs in 2018: UN

Bangladesh is projected to be among the fastest growing least developed countries in 2018 with the expected GDP growth of 7.1 percent, supported by vigorous domestic demand, according to a new report of the United Nations.

The UN's World Economic Situation and Prospects 2018 Report launched on 14 December 2017 said: "The Bangladesh economy is set to continue expanding at a rapid pace, underpinned by strong domestic demand, especially large infrastructure projects and new initiatives in the energy sector."

In Bangladesh, the growth of gross domestic product is expected to remain above 7.1 percent in 2018 and 7.2 percent in 2019, according to the UN's flagship publication on expected trends in the global economy.

Bhutan, one of the four LDCs from South Asia, is also expected to grow by 7.1 percent in 2018 by taking benefits from infrastructure investments.

Nation celebrates Victory Day; pledges to root out extremism



The nation has celebrated the 47th Victory Day paying rich tributes to the Liberation War martyrs with a call for unity to build a country free from militancy, extremism and communalism.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid homage to the gallant martyrs who made supreme

sacrifices to liberate the country from the Pakistani occupation force in 1971.

Dressed in red and green, colours of the national flag, people from all walks of life poured on to the streets to join different programmes to celebrate the day.

On this day in 1971, the Pakistan Army surrendered to the allied forces of Bangladesh and India in the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan after nine months of war during which three million people were killed, two lakh women were raped and around 10 million people took refuge in India.

The day's events began with a 31-gun salute at the National Parade Square at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Later in the day, the president as the chief guest took salute at an attractive Victory Day Parade at the National Parade Square. Different contingents of Bangladesh Army, Navy, Air Force, Border Guard Bangladesh, law enforcement agencies and various ministries participated in the parade.

The prime minister witnessed the attractive parade, spectacular fly-past, aerobatic display and armoury acquisitions of different regiments and contingents of the armed forces.

At the Gono Bhaban, the PM released the memorial postal stamp of Tk 10 and its first day cover, issued by Bangladesh Postal Department marking the Victory Day. She also released a Tk 5 data card and a souvenir.



Turkey to help Rohingyas in Bangladesh



Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim has expressed his country's intention to further improve the existing strong trade and economic relations with Bangladesh, and assured Bangladesh of its continuing support to Rohingyas living in Bangladesh.

"We've discussed what we can do to improve our economic and trade relations," he said, terming Bangladesh a dynamic nation with nearly 7 percent GDP growth over the past few years.

After a bilateral meeting with his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina, the Turkish PM highly appreciated Sheikh Hasina's diplomacy over the Rohingya issue and Bangladesh's support to the displaced people.

Prime Minister Hasina said "We've reiterated our commitment to work closely and support each other on bilateral and international issues of mutual concern, including the issue of forcibly displaced Rohingya people from Myanmar."

The two premiers talked about consolidating cooperation in key areas such as trade and investment, defence, education, tourism and connectivity.

The Bangladesh PM requested her Turkish counterpart to withdraw 17 percent and 19 percent additional duty imposed on Bangladeshi RMG and ceramic products.

The Turkish premier urged the international community to enhance their support for Rohingyas in Bangladesh and find a political solution to the crisis, looking at it as a humanitarian crisis instead of seeing it as an issue of Bangladesh.

Two MoUs signed

Bangladesh and Turkey signed two bilateral documents to enhance cooperation in the areas of small and medium enterprises and maintain the standards of products.



The documents are Memorandum of Understanding between the Small and Medium Enterprise Foundation of Bangladesh and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organisation of Turkey, and the other MoU between Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution and Turkish Standards Institution.

The instruments cover areas such as small and medium enterprises, industrial production, standardisation, capacity building, knowledge sharing and skill development.

The signing ceremony was held after official talks between Sheikh Hasina and her Turkish counterpart at the PMO.