



Newsletter

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PM hands over export trophies to 66 companies

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said steps are being taken to bring down the interest rate on lending to single digit in all banks as the high rates lead to loan defaults. Some banks are already lending at single-digit interest rates as per the government's directive, while some are yet to follow suit.

Investing with high-interest loans naturally creates loan defaulters, she said at the national export trophy award ceremony. The commerce ministry and the Export Promotion Bureau jointly organised the event at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka on 1 September 2019.

"We have taken appropriate measures so that investment becomes easier. We have taken a plan for industrialisation and are moving forward with it.

For attracting investment to the economic zones, the government is offering special incentives, including ensuring all sorts of services in the zones, she added.

Sheikh Hasina urged the business people to keep in mind the issues of waste management and preservation of nature at the time of setting up factories.

The prime minister handed over export trophies to 66 companies under 28 categories for their extraordinary export performance. For 2016-17, some 29 companies were selected for gold trophies, 21 for silver and 16 for bronze ones. Sheikh Hasina went on to urge the exporters to add new products to the country's export basket.



World Muslim Unity: PM for pivotal role of OIC

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stressed the need for a pivotal role of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in forging unity of the Muslim community and stopping fratricidal conflicts among them.



She said this when visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif paid a courtesy call on her at the Prime Minister's Office on 4 September.

Referring to the conflicts among the Muslims, Sheikh Hasina said, "The Muslims are shedding their blood because of their divisions and the third parties or countries are enjoying the benefits of it."

Sheikh Hasina opined that the conflicts among the Muslim countries could be resolved bilaterally or multilaterally.

Mentioning that religious harmony prevails in Bangladesh, she informed the Iranian minister that she had adopted two Shia girls, who were affected by the devastating Nimali fire.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who arrived in Dhaka on 3 September night to attend the two-day-long third IORA Blue Economy Ministerial Conference, conveyed the greetings of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to Sheikh Hasina.

Act against anti-govt propaganda

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the business community to act against anti-government propaganda as it ultimately affects them.



“Some people are relentlessly carrying out propaganda against us (the government). You (the businessmen) will have to address it as you’re being affected due to it,” she told them.

The Prime Minister said this when newly-elected members of the board of directors of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), led by its president,

Rubana Huq, met her at Prime Minister’s Office on 4 September.

Sheikh Hasina said the garment sector was playing a huge role in the development and export growth of the country. She emphasised diversification of products to boost exports.

The prime minister said, during her recent visit to London, she directed Bangladeshi envoys stationed in the European countries to explore markets for some specific products of Bangladesh.

Put more pressure on Myanmar, PM tells outgoing Japan envoy about Rohingya return

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged Japan to mount pressure on Myanmar to take 1.1 million Rohingyas back from Bangladesh.

“They have to take the Rohingyas back. These Rohingya people are a big burden for Bangladesh. How long will we host them?” she asked when outgoing Japanese Ambassador Hiroyasu Izumi met her at her Sangsad Bhaban office on 9 September.

The Japanese envoy mentioned that his country’s sympathy is always with Bangladesh. He highly appreciated that Bangladesh gave shelter to the refugees.



China to play active role in the repatriation of Rohingyas: Chinese envoy



Newly-appointed Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming has said China will play an active role in the repatriation of displaced Rohingyas from Bangladesh.

Jiming made the comment when he met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban office on 11 September.

“China will play a constructive and active role in the repatriation of Rohingyas,” the Chinese envoy said. Describing the China-Bangladesh relations as a strategic one, Li

Jiming said China was working on the Rohingya issue.

Awami League does not believe in vengeance: Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said had the AL believed in the politics of vengeance, there would have been no existence of the BNP in the country.

“Awami League doesn’t believe in the politics of vengeance. If we did so, there would have been no existence of the BNP,” she said.

She made the remarks while answering question of BNP lawmaker Rumeen Farhana in the Parliament on 11 September. Rumeen in her question said, “The Prime Minister’s instructions have become necessary for every case from murders of people to killing mosquitoes.”

Sheikh Hasina lambasted Rumeen for comparing the deaths of people with the killing of mosquitoes. She termed the question unexpected, unparliamentary and absurd.

PM opens Community Bank

Community Bank Bangladesh began its journey with a view to reaching out the growth centres across the country. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opened the bank, owned by Bangladesh Police Welfare Trust, through a video conference from her official residence Gono Bhaban on 11 September. The bank commenced the business operation of its branch in Gulshan. Five more branches will be set up within a month and a half.

Along with Gono Bhaban, the inaugural session of the new lender took place at the Rajarbagh Police Line auditorium and the Gulshan branch in tandem.

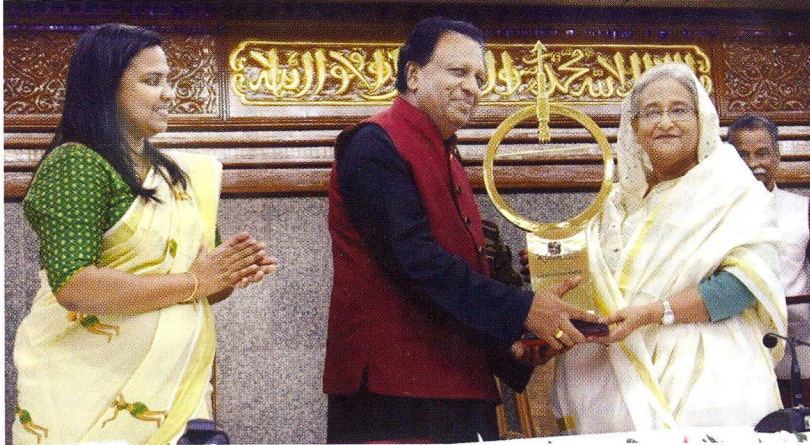
The bank will focus on setting up a good a number of digital banking booths in rural areas in order to providing banking services to clients, an official of the bank said.

The bank got its approval from the central bank in November last year to roll out the operations with a paid-up capital of Tk 400 crore.



PM receives Dr Kalam Smriti Award

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stressed the need for having an accommodative attitude towards relations among neighbouring countries for the sake of mutual development.



“It is very natural to have problems among neighbouring countries. If there is a supportive attitude towards the relations among them, it will be very easy to achieve prosperity in the countries,” she said while receiving the Dr Kalam Smriti International Excellence Award-2019.

TP Sreenivasan, chief adviser of the Dr Kalam Smriti International Advisory Council, handed over the award to Sheikh Hasina at a ceremony at the latter’s office on 16 September.

The award, constituted to disseminate the ideals and teachings of aerospace scientist and former Indian President APJ Abdul Kalam, was conferred upon Sheikh Hasina in recognition of her commitment to a close and mutually satisfying India-Bangladesh relations, welfare of her people, particularly women and children, and international peace and cooperation.

Special police unit to ensure metro rail security: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said a special police unit will be formed to put emphasis on ensuring the security of metro rail project.

The prime minister was speaking at a review meeting on the progress of the ongoing Mass Rapid Transit Project held at her official residence Gono Bhaban on 16 September.

At the meeting, the premier saw a power-point presentation on the progress of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line 6, MRT Line 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 being implemented by the government owned Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd in collaboration with Jica.



The Prime Minister also gave some specific directives and guidelines to the authorities concerned to accommodate those in the implementation process.

The meeting was informed that about 46 percent of the Uttara-Agargaon part and 24 percent of the Agargaon-Motijheel part of the MRT Line-6 have been completed so far.

Once done, they hoped, people in the capital city will have most modern and sophisticated metro rail system like other major cities around the world.

Biman to get three more aircrafts : PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said there is a plan to procure three more Dash planes for Biman. The country may also buy two more aircrafts from Boeing, she said while addressing the induction ceremony of the Rajhangsha -- Biman's fourth brand new Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner.



"The inclusion of Rajhangsha into the Biman's fleet is another milestone for the national flag carrier," she told the ceremony at the VVIP Tarmac of HSIA on 17 September.

After the inauguration, the PM boarded and inspected inside the aircraft and talked to its pilots and other crew members. She said that the government has a plan to expand the wings of Biman in the coming days.

She said that Biman would start its flight to Manchester as Bangladeshi people living there have been requesting her for a long time to start Biman's flight operation. She asked the officials of Biman to gain the trust of passengers by ensuring the standard services with honesty and sincerity.

Nursing education to be elevated to global standards : PM

The 1st Graduation Ceremony of Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Memorial KPJ Specialised Hospital and Nursing College at Kashimpur in Gazipur was held on 17 September. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana were present at the convocation.

Speaking on the occasion, the PM said the nursing education and training in Bangladesh will be upgraded to international standard as the country needs a large number of trained nurses.

"Now we need huge nurses. Besides, specialised and trained nurses will also be needed as we set up various specialised (healthcare) institutes," Sheikh Hasina said adding the government has already created a scope for overseas trainings for nurses.

Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Memorial KPJ Specialised Hospital and Nursing College is a humanitarian initiative of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Trust. The trust built the specialised hospital and nursing college on its land.

President of the trust Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina along with her younger sister Sheikh Rehana, also vice president of the trust, and former Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato' Sri Mohd Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak inaugurated this hospital on 18 November 2013. Later, on 8 April 2015 Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the nursing college.



The prime minister distributed certificates among the graduates. A total of 79 students successfully completed their graduation from the nursing college.

Rohingya Refugees : Myanmar should take them back, PM tells UK delegations

Describing Rohingyas as a big burden for Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said Myanmar should take back its citizens. She said this when two delegations of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Population, Development and Reproductive Health and UK Conservative Friends of Bangladesh jointly called on her at the Gono Bhaban on 19 September.



The PM said Bangladesh sheltered the Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds as it had a similar experience during the Liberation War in 1971 when an estimated 10 million Bangladeshis took shelter in India as refugees.

“Now the Rohingyas have emerged as a big burden for us and the local people have to face immense suffering for them,” Sheikh Hasina said.

The delegations, led by UK APPG Chair Anne Main, handed over a report to the PM on their visit to Rohingya camps in Cox’s Bazar. They appreciated the PM for her humanitarian gesture in sheltering the forcibly displaced Rohingyas and said they would continue their support over the Rohingya issue.

PM in 74th UNGA Session

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended the 74th Session of the UNGA on 22-29 September 2019. She reached New York via Abu Dhabi on 22 September. Apart from addressing the General Debate of the 74th UNGA, the Prime Minister attended a host of side events and held at least 9 bilateral meetings with leaders of different countries and organizations during her stay in New York.

The Prime Minister Co-chaired the Multi-stakeholder Panel held in parallel to the High-level meeting on Universal Health Coverage on 23 September. In the afternoon, she addressed the plenary session of the High-level meeting on Universal Health Coverage. On the same day, she also attended Climate Action Summit on the theme ‘Climate Action Summit 2019: A Race We Can Win.

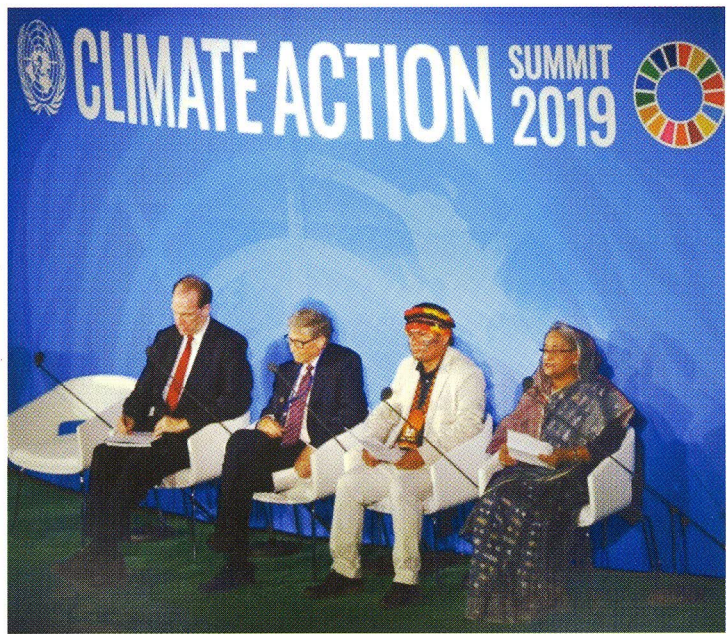
On 24 September, Sheikh Hasina spoke at a side event hosted by Global Commission on Adaptation.

She also attended another high-level side-event on the situation of Rohingya Minority in Myanmar, organised by the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh and the OIC Secretariat. In the evening, the Prime Minister attended as key speaker at a commemorative meeting on Leadership Matters - Relevance of Mahatma Gandhi in the Contemporary World. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several other world leaders spoke.

On 25 September, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina co-moderated ‘Leader’s dialogue 4 on Localizing the SDGs at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development’. She attended an interactive Dialogue of Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in the afternoon. On 26 September, she spoke at a Luncheon Roundtable Meeting organized by the US Chamber of Commerce.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressed the UNGA General Debate Session on 27 September. Besides, she attended a High-level Side-Event on “Sustainable Universal Health Coverage: Comprehensive Primary care inclusive of mental health and disabilities” organised by the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh on the day.

The Prime Minister held bilateral meetings with Queen Maxima of Netherlands, Prime Minister of Thailand Mr Prayut Chan-ocha, Chairman of Exxon Mobil LNG Market Development Mr Alex V Volkov, President of Global Hope Coalition Irina Bokova, International Crimes Tribunal Chief Prosecutor Ms Fatou Bensouda, Chairman of Milinda and Gates Foundation Bill Gates, UNCHR High Commissioner Filippo Grandi, Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and UN Secretary General António Guterres.



The world community honoured Sheikh Hasina with two awards this time. These are: ‘Vaccine Hero’ given by Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization -GAVI, and ‘Champion of the Skill Development for the Youth’ by Unicef. Sheikh Hasina also attended a reception hosted by President Trump and a luncheon by the UN Secretary General. She attended a reception organised by the expatriate Bangladeshis in USA. The Prime Minister was interviewed by the Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal and the Voice of America (Bangla Service) during her stay in New York.

Address to the 74th Session of the UNGA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressed the 74th Session of the UNGA on 27 September. Full text of the address.

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Mr. President,

I would like to congratulate you on your election as the President of the 74th Session of the General Assembly. I take this opportunity to appreciate Ms. Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garcés for her strong leadership over the past year. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres for his dynamic leadership.

Mr. President,

As I stand here in this august podium, I recall the architect of Bangladesh, our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In 1974, before this august assembly, he said, and I quote – “In a world that is marked by strife and human misery, the United Nations remains the focus of Man's hope for the future. Despite many difficulties and obstacles placed in its way, the United Nations, during more than a quarter century of its existence, has significantly contributed towards human progress in the political, economic, social and cultural fields.” Quote ends. In fact, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman envisaged a leading role by the UN in pursuing development, peace and justice.

In Bangladesh, we are now preparing to celebrate the Birth Centenary of this great leader beginning in March 2020. Reflecting on his vision and aspirations, we wish to bring this celebration to the United Nations in the next year.

Mr. President,

Your call for "*Galvanizing Multilateral Efforts for Poverty Eradication, Quality Education, Climate Action and Inclusion*" could not have been more relevant. As the world's principal multilateral body, the General Assembly is best positioned to steer the actions that would promote international cooperation in achieving development, peace and security. The emphasis given to the specific SDGs, such as, poverty eradication, quality education, climate action and inclusion are critically important for our civilization.

Our commitment and shared aspirations to realize SDGs are reflected in the election manifesto of Awami League, which earned us the confidence of the people for the 3rd consecutive term in office. Our 21-point political commitment is dedicated to the wellbeing of people.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh has often been cited as a 'development miracle'. Despite turbulence in the rule-based international order, and apprehensions of gradual economic slowdown, Bangladesh continued to prosper over last 10 years. According to the Spectator Index 2019, Bangladesh recorded the highest economic growth among a list of 26 countries in the last 10 years, with 188% expansion of gross domestic product (GDP) at the current prices. Our GDP has grown from \$102 billion in 2009 to \$302 billion this year.



We continue to embark on a pragmatic programme for the rapid economic and social development. Poverty eradication, sustainable growth, protection of the environment and human-resources development are some of the key features of our development strategy. Over the past 10 years, we have been adopting progressive and timely policies and actions that have resulted in impressive development. Our exports grew 3 times from 2005-06 to reach US\$ 37 billion in 2017-18. Per capita income grew 3.5 times. Our GDP growth has now reached 8.13%. Between 2005-06 and 2018-19, our investment rose from 26% to 31.5% of GDP; private sector investment grew five times to US\$ 70.8 billion; foreign exchange reserve grew 9 times to US\$ 33 billion.

Mr. President,

Poverty and inequality are two major obstacles for development. Bangladesh has achieved one of the fastest poverty reduction rates in the world with poverty rate dropping from 41.5% in 2006 to 21.4% in 2018, extreme poverty from 24% to 11.3%. Extensive rural development, embedded in the concept of 'My Village My Town' and home-grown and pro-poor village projects like 'Ashrayan', 'Amar Bari Amar Khamar', have contributed to our inclusive development. Bangladesh has been ranked 34th in World Economic Forum's Inclusive Development Index leaving other South Asian countries way behind.

Mr. President,

A key development strategy in Bangladesh has been addressing inequality through social security, decent work and financial inclusion. Current safety net system gives special consideration for the vulnerable groups. Support comes in the form of cash, food, asset, wage-employment, training, savings and community support. These programmes are expanding, now covering nearly a quarter of the population and accounting for 2.58% of our GDP.

Having achieved the milestones of gender parity and cent percent enrollment, we are now focusing on enhancing the quality of education with emphasis on e-learning, and qualified teachers. Our school drop-out rate has gone down from 50% to 18%. In 2010, we started the free book distribution programme for all students up to Grade 10. Till date 2.96 billion textbooks have been distributed free of cost out of which about 352.20 million books were distributed in 2019 alone. 2.3 million students in primary and higher studies were awarded scholarships. 12.3 million mothers are receiving stipends through mobile phone.



Mr. President,

We have created an extensive network of 18,000 community clinics and Union Health Centers to bring the entire population under health coverage. These centers provide 30 different types of medicine free of cost and free primary health services to the rural people, 80% of whom are women and children. Maternal, infant and child mortalities, malnutrition, stunting, low weight, all are continuously reducing because of these actions.

We have put special emphasis for inclusion of persons with autism, disabilities and special needs in our development journey. Currently, 1.645 million people with such disabilities and needs are receiving allowances from the government.

Mr. President,

We are investing in human capital to create an inclusive society through equal access to technology. Country-wide 5800 digital centers are taking 600 e-public services to people's doorsteps. Number of internet users has crossed 90 million, tele-density has crossed 93%. Bangabandhu Satellite-1, which we launched last year has eased the expansion of broadcast-based services in remote areas and improved communications for development.

'Blue Economy' is our new frontier of opportunities. We have developed a policy and a Plan of Action to tap our marine resources in the Bay of Bengal. We are contributing to UN's norm-setting exercises on protecting marine biological diversity in the areas within and beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ).

Mr. President

We are building our first ever nuclear power plant in Rooppur leveraging on the principle of peaceful use of nuclear energy. 93% of our population has already been brought under electricity coverage. Bangladesh is now the second largest user of solar home system in the world.

Bangladesh's commitment to peaceful use of nuclear energy is fortified by its consistent position against nuclear armament. We have recently ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. President,

The global disposition for climate action generated by the just concluded Climate Action Summit would translate into real impetus for implementation of Paris Agreement in the broader context of 2030 Agenda. As a partner country in the Coalition on 'climate resilience and adaptation', we advocated for addressing the special challenges and vulnerabilities of countries like ours and have adopted transformative and innovative climate resilient technology and crops for reducing disaster risks.

Our long-term plan for adaptation and resilience is anchored in our Delta Plan 2100, a comprehensive and long-term techno-economic plan for the Bangladesh Delta. The Plan focuses on food security, water safety, climate change, environment sustainability, disaster management and sustained economic growth. Following the recent Dhaka Meeting of the Global Commission on Adaptation, we are working on setting up a 'Global Centre for Adaptation' in Dhaka.

Mr. President,

As the second largest troops and police contributing country Bangladesh continues to respond to the appeal for participation of troops for peacekeeping operations under the UN. We support Secretary-General's initiatives to make UN peace operations 'fit for future'. Responding to his call for implementation of the Action for Peacekeeping Agenda, we have joined as one of the 'champion' countries. We have also been playing an important role in the evolution of the conceptual framework of "sustaining peace".

We continue to promote the idea of 'Culture of Peace', which has now transcended time and become a dominant theme at the UN. Early this month in this Hall, we have celebrated the 20th anniversary of the declaration on 'Culture of Peace'.

Our stern actions against extremism, terrorism, drug trafficking and corruption has restored peace in the society and among people. We shall continue our actions.

Mr. President,

Bangladesh promotes safe, orderly and regular migration. After successful adoption of Global Compact on Migration, Bangladesh has spearheaded the development of implementation modalities for the Compact. At the national level, we are mainstreaming migration into national development strategies.

Irregular migration and human trafficking are global menaces rooted in complex nets of syndicates and criminal networks. To prevent and suppress human trafficking nationally and also to foster international cooperation in tackling human trafficking we have recently acceded to the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Mr. President,

The value of UN's role in maintaining international peace and security is enormous. During the 1971 war of liberation, 3 million innocent people were killed in a genocide orchestrated by the Pakistan Occupation forces and their local collaborators. Two hundred thousand women were violated.

Our painful experiences have emboldened us to continue to speak for the oppressed people. We stand firm in our support for our Palestinian brothers and sisters till their just and rightful struggle comes to a fruition.



Mr. President,

It is indeed unfortunate that I have to again raise this issue in this august body as the Rohingya crisis remains unresolved. We continue to host 1.1 million Rohingya who were forced to leave Myanmar due to atrocities committed against them. The crisis is now lingering into the third year; yet not a single Rohingya could return to Myanmar due to absence of safety and security, freedom of movement and overall conducive environment in Rakhine State of Myanmar.

I would request the international community to understand the un-tenability of the situation. The crisis is now going beyond the camps. Despite our all efforts to contain it, the crisis is now becoming a regional threat. Moreover, increasing congestion and environmental degradation is challenging health and security in the area.

Mr. President,

We are bearing the burden of a crisis which is Myanmar's own making. It is an issue solely between Myanmar and its own people, the Rohingyas. They themselves have to resolve it. Voluntary return of the Rohingyas to their homes in the Rakhine state in safety, security and dignity is the only solution to the crisis. We will continue our engagement with Myanmar to make repatriation of the Rohingyas happen.

I have earlier in the 72nd UN General Assembly put forth a 5-point proposal to resolve the crisis which included full implementation of recommendations of Kofi Annan Commission, and establishment of civilian monitored safe zone in the Rakhine State. Today, I would like to reiterate some of the proposals:

1. Myanmar must manifest clear political will supported by concrete actions for sustainable return and reintegration of Rohingyas to Myanmar.
2. Myanmar must build trust among the Rohingyas by discarding discriminatory laws and practices and allowing "go and see" visit to the Northern Rakhine by the Rohingya representatives.
3. Myanmar must guarantee security and safety of the Rohingyas by deploying civilian monitors from international community in the Rakhine state.
4. International community must ensure that the root causes of Rohingya problem area addressed and the violation of human rights and other atrocity crimes committed against the Rohingyas are accounted for.

Mr. President,

We appreciate the reform initiatives of the Secretary General, particularly the UN Development System. With the new generation UN Country Team and reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system, we have high expectation that they would deliver better in line with national priorities and with greater accountability to the host country. We will continue to lend our



support to the bold and constructive actions of the Secretary-General to make this prime organization 'fit-for-purpose' and strengthen people's trust in it.

In expression of our support to the reforms and to ensure effective functionality of new Resident Coordinator system, we are making a financial contribution to the Special Purpose Trust Fund.

Mr. President,

For us multilateralism remains as the strongest panacea for resolving the global problems and create global goods. UN is the symbol of hope for peace, stability and prosperity, as envisioned by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the 1974 UN General Assembly.

Bangladesh will continue to support United Nations as a strong multilateral body, which would be fully equipped to deal with the tasks and responsibilities assigned to it under the Charter. With the 75th anniversary of the UN coming up next year, let us call for collective actions to build a stronger UN for our civilization to deal with emerging challenges for the next century.

I thank you.

Khoda Hafez.
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live-forever.

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