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Anti-graft purge to check repeat of 1/11: PM tells press in NY

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has ruled out the possibility of any recurrence of 1/11 in the country, saying that the government is taking stern action against corruption in advance to avoid repeat of such an incident.



She was addressing a press conference at the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN in New York on 30 September.

She said some people were becoming owner of a huge wealth by taking the opportunity of distribution of money starting from preparation of projects to securing contracts.

Mentioning that she did politics for the people and she came to power after being elected by them, Sheikh Hasina said she always thinks about people's well-being.

The government had carried out drives against terrorists and militants to prevent anarchic situation in the country, the premier added.

Replying to a question, Sheikh Hasina said Myanmar created the Rohingya crisis and it would have to bear the responsibility.

About a Myanmar leader's comment at the 74th UN General Assembly that Bangladesh's demand for creating a safe zone in Myanmar for Rohingyas was "baseless", Sheikh Hasina said it is a matter of shame and dishonour as well as weakness for Myanmar that their citizens have taken shelter in another country as refugees.

Responding to another question, Sheikh Hasina said she handed over a letter to US President Donald Trump during the luncheon hosted by the UN secretary-general requesting him to sent back the absconding killers of the Father of the Nation from the USA.

'Termites' eating up development funds: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the government was trying to "catch and destroy termites" that eat up funds of development projects.

She was speaking at the inauguration of the official broadcasting of local private television channels on Bangabandhu Satellite-1 at a city hotel on 2 October.

Sheikh Hasina said funds were sometimes embezzled by corrupt people during undertaking and implementation of development projects.

She reiterated that the ongoing drive against militancy, terrorism, drugs and corruption would continue, and that action would be taken against people, irrespective of their political and family identities, involved in crimes.



Sheikh Hasina urged the leaders of the Association of Television Channel Owners (ATCO) to be alert about broadcasting of propaganda as it creates confusion among the people.

Sheikh Hasina also urged the television channels to broadcast programmes on successes earned by the government in the last 10 years to instill confidence among the people so that they could dream of a decent life.

Sheikh Hasina said the broadcasting of local private TV channels on Bangabandhu Satellite-1 has opened up a new dimension and the money spent by the channels for using foreign satellites would be saved now.

In May last year, Bangladesh had joined the elite satellite club as the 57th nation by launching its first geostationary communications and broadcasting satellite “Bangabandhu Satellite-1” into orbit from Kennedy Space Centre in the US.

HPM attends India WEF Economic Summit and holds official talks with Modi

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid a 4-day official visit to New Delhi on 3-6 October 2019 to attend the India WEF Economic Summit and hold talks with her counter part Narendra Modi. She arrived in New Delhi on 3 October. Apart from attending the Country Strategy Dialogue at the WEF India Economic Summit 2019 as chief guest, she also joined the closing plenary session of the two-day summit. Sheikh Hasina addressed a business dialogue with leading Indian businesspeople and investors on 4 October. Official talks between the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were held on 5 October. Sheikh Hasina made a courtesy call on President Ram Nath Kovind. Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore Heng Swee Keat and Indian National Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi and Dr Manmohan Singh called on Sheikh Hasina at her hotel.



World Economic Forum

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the global investors, particularly the Indian entrepreneurs, to invest in Bangladesh's potential non-conventional areas.

"It's time for global investors, particularly the Indian entrepreneurs, to invest in Bangladesh in areas like education, light-engineering, electronics, automotive industry, artificial intelligence -- beyond the conventional menu," she said while addressing the Country Strategy Dialogue on Bangladesh at the India Economic Summit 2019 of the World Economic Forum (WEF) as chief guest on 3 October.

Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh deserves the attention of global and Indian businesses as a seamless economic space between eastern and north-eastern India, south-east Asian countries and China.



She said Bangladesh is moving fast to a high-value, knowledge-intensive society, beyond apparel manufacturing. Bangladesh exported 12 industrial robots to Korea and four ships made in Bangladesh came to India last year, she added.

"Today, Bangladesh offers the most liberal investment regime in South Asia in terms of legal protection of foreign investment, generous fiscal incentives, concession on machinery import, unrestricted exit policy, full repatriation of dividend and capital on exit, for example."

Bangladesh is setting up 100 special economic zones, with one-stop service across the country. Twelve such zones were already functioning and two were reserved for Indian investors, the PM added.

She said over 30-million middle class people is indeed a huge market. "We have challenges like many other countries, but we know how to transform challenges into opportunities."

Shun misperception to boost regional cooperation: Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the South Asian countries should eliminate "misperceptions and false apprehensions" to strengthen regional cooperation and development.



She was addressing the closing plenary session of the two-day India Economic Summit of the World Economic Forum in New Delhi on 4 October.

Sheikh Hasina suggested that four principles should be followed in the next decades, with much emphasis on managing geo-political realities through friendship and collaboration.

Talking about the first principle, she said, “We must strive to secure peace, stability and harmony, for every individual across our societies. We must move beyond the majority-minority mindset.”

Placing the second principle, she said, “We must ensure that inequality across societies do not widen in times of faster growth. Creation of wealth should be inclusive and must trickle down to the bottom millions. The less developed communities or countries should not lag behind. We must deliver to the aspirations and demands of our youths. We need to hold hands of ‘others’ across South Asia through our knowledge, experience, expertise, investments.”

About the third principle, she said mutual trust and mutual respect between all communities and countries is the key. “We need to get over misperceptions and false apprehensions.”

Sheikh Hasina mentioned that Bangladesh resolved sharing of the Ganges river water with India in 1996. “We amicably delimited our maritime boundary with India and Myanmar. Bangladesh and India are now developing trans-boundary river navigation. We are buying electricity from India through inter-country grid connections.”

Describing the fourth principle, the premier said, “We must manage our geo-political realities through friendship and collaboration. Let us appreciate and balance regional political realities for the interest of our peoples. We cannot trade off long-term interests for short-term gains.”

Replying to a query from the moderator, Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh was attaching priority to establish connectivity among the South Asia, South East Asia and others to promote trade and commerce in the region.

Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore Heng Swee Keat, Managing Director of Sequoia Capital India Shailendra Singh, Executive Vice Chairperson of Apollo Hospital Enterprise Shobana Karmineni, Chairwoman of Booking.com Gillian Tans were panelists at the event.

India-Bangladesh Business Forum

Speaking at the India-Bangladesh Business Forum at a hotel in New Delhi, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the Indian businessmen to step up investment in Bangladesh’s special economic zones and high-tech parks.

“A number of high-tech parks are also ready for technology and innovative enterprises. Bangladesh has offered three Special Economic Zones for Indian investors at Mongla, Bheramara and Mirsarai. Substantial investment from Indian investors in these three Indian Economic Zones in Bangladesh would help broaden our exportable base.”



Speaking about Bangladesh’s possibility of becoming an economic hub of the region, Sheikh Hasina said the country’s strategic location provides tremendous potential for being the economic hub of the region. “With India to the west, China to the north and South-East Asia to the east, Bangladesh is in the middle of a combined market of 4 billion people.”

On the rising trend of trade and investment between the two countries, the premier said the volume of bilateral trade has steadily grown over the past years. However, the balance of trade was still largely in India's favour.

Indian Industry and Railway Minister Piyush Goyal and Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi also spoke on the occasion.

Official talks



The official bilateral talks between Bangladesh and India were held at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi on 5 October. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counter Narendra Modi led their respective sides in the talks. Dhaka and Delhi signed 7 bilateral instruments. These are:

- a. Memorandum Of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of the Republic of India on Cooperation in Youth Matters
- b. The Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between Bangladesh and India
- c. The SoP of agreement on the use of Chattogram and Mongla ports for movement of Goods to and from India
- d. MoU between the Government of Bangladesh and the Government of India for providing Coastal Surveillance System (CSS)
- e. MoU for Establishment of Permanent office of EXIM Bank of India
- f. Memorandum of Understanding Between the Ministry of Water Resources, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of the Republic of India on withdrawal of 1.82 cusec of water from Feni River by India
- g. Memorandum of Understanding between the University of Hyderabad, Telangana, India and the University of Dhaka, Dhaka

The two leaders witnessed the signing and exchange of the documents. Earlier, the two leaders held a conversation just before the meeting. Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi also jointly inaugurated three bilateral development projects.

These are:

- (a) Export of bulk LPG to Tripura from Bangladesh
- (b) Opening of Bibekananda Bhaban Student Hostel at Ramkrishna Mission in Dhaka
- (c) Bangladesh-India Professional Skill Development Institute at Diploma Engineers' Institution in Khulna

In the talks, issues of bilateral trade, anti-dumping/anti-circumvention, NRC, terrorism and border killings, defence cooperation came up for discussion.

PM receives ‘Tagore Peace Award 2018’

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received ‘Tagore Peace Award 2018’ in New Delhi in recognition of her contribution to maintaining regional peace and prosperity.

The Asiatic Society, Kolkata conferred the award on the prime minister at a function at a hotel in New Delhi. President of the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, Prof Isha Mahammad handed over the award to Sheikh Hasina. Its General Secretary Satyabrata Chakrabarti delivered the welcome address at the function. In the past, noted world leader Nelson Mandela and eminent economist Amarta Sen, among others, received the award. After receiving the award, Sheikh Hasina dedicated it to the people of Bangladesh.



Hasina ji my inspiration: Priyanka

Indian National Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi has said Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was a great inspiration for her for the way Hasina overcame personal loss and fought for what she believed in.

The two shared a hug before the Prime Minister’s meeting with Congress President Sonia Gandhi and former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at a hotel in New Delhi on 6 October.

“An overdue hug from Sheikh Hasina Ji whom I have been waiting to meet again for a long time,” tweeted Priyanka Gandhi Vadra after the meeting.



The Congress leader also posted a photo of her and Sheikh Hasina embracing, with former prime minister Manmohan Singh standing beside them.

“Her [Sheikh Hasina] strength in overcoming deep personal loss and hardship, and fighting for what she believed in with bravery and perseverance is, and always will be a great inspiration for me,” tweeted Priyanka, granddaughter of Indira Gandhi, the former prime minister of India who helped Bangladesh in the Liberation War in 1971. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members were killed on 15 August 1975.

Festivals are for all: PM visits Puja Mandap

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited Ramkrishna Mission in the city on 7 October on the occasion of Durga Puja, the largest festival of the Hindu community. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said people of Bangladesh have learnt to move forward upholding its non-communal spirit, and it is a big achievement for the country.

Responding to the call of Father of the Nation, people irrespective of their religions fought shoulder to shoulder and liberated the country sacrificing their blood, she said.

“So, we always wanted that the people from all religions to perform rituals of their respective religions independently with dignity in this independent Bangladesh. And we’ve been able to create such an environment,” said the PM.

The government wants to contain social diseases like terrorism, militancy, drugs and corruption so that those cannot destroy families, the society and the country.



PM’s press conference on UNGA and India visits

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressed a press conference on 9 October on the outcome of her participation in the 74th UNGA and official visit to India. Apart from the visits’ outcome, current socio-political issues were raised for Prime Minister’s opinion.

Replying to a question, the Prime Minister said directives would be given to conduct searches at all educational institutions and dormitories to arrest the rowdy elements to stop the recurrence of incidents like the murder of Buet student Abrar Fahad. It is unacceptable that students would indulge in hooliganism while staying at dormitories run with public money.

She ruled out the call for banning student politics. The PM, however, said if the Buet authorities want to do so, they can. The PM also questioned the justification of the student movement when the government is taking action against the offenders.

Referring to her India visit, Sheikh Hasina said Awami League government always protects the country’s interest. She pointed out that the volume of water India would get from the Feni river is insignificant and meant only for drinking.

Sheikh Hasina said her government has already discussed with India the water-sharing of the Monu, Mohuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla and Dudhkumar rivers, and steps are being taken in this regard.

Taking a swipe at BNP leaders for criticising the Feni river deal, she said Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia during their visits to India could not strike any deal on the water-sharing of the Ganges river.

Turning to the deal for exporting LPG to India, the PM said she can never ever compromise the country’s interest and everyone should know that.

PM inaugurates two water treatment plants

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged city dwellers to exercise austerity while using water since a significant amount of money is spent on water treatment.



She made the call while digitally inaugurating two water plants and laying the foundation stone of another project of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority at a city hotel on October 10.

Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the Padma (Jashaldia) Water Treatment Plant (Phase-1) and the Well Field Construction Project (Phase-1) in Savar’s Tetuljhora-Bhakurta area.

Dhaka will receive a total of 600 million litres of water a day from the two plants - 450 million from the Jashaldia plant and 150 million from the Savar plant.

The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the construction of the Gandharbpur Water Treatment Plant at Rupganj under the Dhaka Environmentally Sustainable Water Supply Project.

Release metro rail shares for public ownership: PM

The prime minister has directed the authorities concerned to release shares of the metro rail company in the stock market to ensure public ownership.

She issued the directive at the Ecneec meeting while approving proposals for two more metro rail projects in Dhaka with an estimated cost of Tk 93,800 crore.

Briefing newsmen Planning Minister Abdul Mannan said state-run Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd is implementing the projects.

As per the metro rail plan, the government would build five lines -- an elevated, an underground, and three elevated and underground -- in the capital and its adjacent areas by 2030, to ease traffic congestion and reduce pollution.

The PM also asked the authority to implement the projects without harming Hatirjheel's beauty.

Life before livelihood, PM asks all to come forward to ensure road safety

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said ensuring road safety is not the responsibility of the government or drivers alone; all will have to come forward to ensure it.

“Ensuring safe roads is not the responsibility of the government or the drivers only; it is the responsibility of all citizens. Everyone should perform their duty,” she said.



The premier said this while addressing a programme marking National Road Safety Day 2019 at Krishibid Institution, organised by Road Transport and Highways Division on 22 October.

The prime minister asked all -- especially educated people -- to obey traffic rules. “Our footpaths are always occupied... these have to be freed [from illegal occupants],” she said.

On illegal and indiscriminate car parking on roads, Sheikh Hasina said many shopping malls, while taking approval from the authorities concerned, show car-parking spaces in their designs, but later sell those spaces to shops.

The PM asked traffic officials to be strict about illegal car parking on roads and impose fine if any rules are broken.

Abrar Killing: PM for quick disposal of case

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said she has directed the law minister to look for a way to dispose of the Abrar Fahad murder case quickly. She said this to Abrar's family members when they met her at the Gono Bhaban on 23 October.

Abrar's father Barkat Ullah and mother Rokeya Khatun also expressed their gratitude to the administration, police, and the country's people for their all-out support and cooperation.

Sheikh Hasina said after the incident, they did not see who belonged to which party. "I don't want to see who belongs to which party. To me, killers are just killers, criminals are criminals."

She said she does not have words to console the bereaved family. "Look at me, I have lost everything in just one night. I can feel the pain of losing close relatives."

The PM said the killers are not human beings. "How could they kill a person with whom they were sitting and studying [every day]?"



2,730 more schools get MPO benefits

The government has brought 2,730 new educational institutions from across the country under the monthly pay order (MPO) scheme.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina revealed the names of the new institutions at Gono Bhaban on 23 October. The new list includes 1,651 schools and colleges, 557 madrasas, and 522 technical and vocational institutions. The decision will take retrospective effect from July this year.

The last time 1,624 institutions were brought under the MPO scheme in 2010, and up till now more than 4.5 lakh teachers and employees of 26,340 educational institutions were enjoying MPO benefits. Under this scheme, non-government teachers get their basic pay as well as some monthly allowances from the public fund.

According to the new list, 439 are junior secondary schools (Class VI-VIII), 995 secondary schools (VI-X), 68 higher secondary schools, 93 colleges (XI-XII), and 56 degree colleges (XIII-XV).

Among the madrasas are 357 Dakhil, 128 Alim, 42 Fazil and 29 Kamil-level institutions.

The technical and vocational institutions include 62 agricultural, 48 vocational (independent), 129 vocational (affiliated), 175 BM (independent) and 108 BM (affiliated) ones.

Addressing the function, the prime minister asked the newly-enlisted institutions to follow all the conditions of MPO policy to continue enjoy the benefits. "The conditions will have to be maintained. If any institution fails to comply, it will be excluded from the MPO scheme."

PM for enhancing air connectivity

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the government is working to enhance Bangladesh's air connectivity with the rest of the world.

The prime minister said this while addressing the closing ceremony of the three-daylong 6th International Flight Safety Seminar 2019 jointly organised by Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) and Civil

Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) at a city hotel on 23 October with the theme “Team Effort Can Ensure Team Safety”.

Sheikh Hasina said the declaration of civil aviation in Bangladesh as Category-1 is just a matter of time under the International Safety Assessment Program by the US Federal Aviation Authority.

She said Bangladesh’s geographical position can play the role of a bridge between the east and the west.

“This can bring economic benefits... International passengers can travel to their destinations in a short time. With that in mind, we’re developing our airports,” she said.

Sheikh Hasina said a project is underway to turn Cox’s Bazar Airport into an international one through extending its runway up to 12,000 feet. The construction work of Khan Jahan Ali Airport in Bagerhat is also underway, she said.

The PM said the government is modernising Saidpur Airport for international flights as well. Construction of a third terminal at Hazrat Shah Jalal International Airport is also in progress.



PM attends 18th NAM Summit in Baku

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, on 24-27 October 2019 to attend the 18th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). She addressed the plenary session of the summit on the opening day on 25 October. On the sidelines of the summit, she held bilateral talks with Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Nepalese Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev.

Voluntary return of Rohingyas to Myanmar only solution: PM tells NAM leaders

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said voluntary return of the Rohingyas to their homes in safety, security and dignity was the only solution to the crisis.

The crisis not only destabilises Bangladesh but also territories beyond the country, she said at the plenary session of the 18th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Baku.

“We’re currently hosting over 1.1 million Rohingyas. It has the potential to destabilise our country and beyond. We’re constrained to seek support of the international community in resolving the crisis,” said Sheikh Hasina. The session titled “Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of contemporary world” was held at Baku Congress Centre.

About impacts of the climate change, the PM said although Bangladesh has little responsibility for global warming, but it is suffering heavily from its devastating impacts.

“The international response to climate change, particularly that of developed countries, must, therefore, fully respect the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change,” she said.

Sheikh Hasina pointed out that Bangladesh’s successes in poverty reduction, primary healthcare, women’s empowerment, gender equality and gender parity in education have been widely acclaimed by the international community.

She said Bangladesh is a strong believer in the goals of NAM, noting that the NAM principles have in many ways defined the foreign policy of Bangladesh.

In 1973, recognising the importance of NAM, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman decided to join the organisation in its Algiers' Summit.

During meetings with Sheikh Hasina at Baku Congress Centre, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad assured her of help in resolving the Rohingya crisis.



While meeting with her Nepalese counterpart KP Sharma Oli, the Bangladesh Prime Minister urged him to finalise the Preferential Trade Agreement between the two countries.

Meanwhile, Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki said Palestine has decided to name a road in Hebron after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He made the announcement when call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Baku Congress Centre.

Dhaka, Baku ink cultural deal

Bangladesh has signed an agreement with Azerbaijan to boost cultural ties between the two countries.

The deal was signed after a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev at the Presidential Palace in Baku. Bangladesh State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid and Azerbaijan Cultural and Tourism Minister Abulfas Garayev inked the deal on behalf of their respective sides. Sheikh Hasina and Ilham Aliyev witnessed the deal-signing ceremony.

During the bilateral meeting, Bangladesh and Azerbaijan agreed to strengthen their relations in future.

Money for Leather: PM assures incentives for 5 years

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said financial incentives in the leather sector would continue for at least the next five years to achieve the target of export earnings from the leather goods and footwear industry.

She was addressing the Bangladesh Leather Footwear and Leather Goods International Sourcing Show at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre on 29 October.

Leathergoods and Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association of Bangladesh together with the commerce ministry organised the third edition of the show.



The PM said as part of export diversification, the leather and leather goods sector has been defined as a priority sector in Bangladesh's economy and national industrial development strategy. "For this, various initiatives have been taken to develop the leather and leather footwear industries."

Barely a decade ago, most of the country's export earnings in this sector came mainly from exports of leather as a raw material, she mentioned.

Sheikh Hasina said footwear and leather goods factories have expanded during the last 10 years of successive Awami League governments as they provided incentives and laid out business-friendly policies.

She assured the businessmen of extending all-out cooperation to them in producing diversified products and exporting those to new markets across the world.

Over 300 exhibitors from nearly 20 countries, including India, China and Pakistan, will exhibit their products at the event, to be held from October 31-November 2 at the International Convention City, Bashundhara.

PM addresses Post-NAM press meet

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said her government launched a massive anti-graft campaign ignoring the backgrounds of the suspects.

Speaking at a press conference at the Gono Bhaban, she brushed off the BNP's suspicions that the drive was an "eyewash".

The press conference was organised to brief the media about her recent visit to Azerbaijan where she joined the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The Prime Minister said actions were underway against the corrupts linked to her own party, Awami League. The drive would continue and actions would be taken against several BNP leaders on charges of committing crimes, including corruption, arson attack, murder and money laundering, she added.

Regarding the ICC's possible ban on Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, the PM said the BCB would remain beside Shakib and extend all possible cooperation to him.



Responding to a question about the soaring onion prices, the PM said the crisis was temporary and there was nothing to be worried about.

Sheikh Hasina said efforts were underway to bring back the rest of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Speaking about the NAM, the premier said the forum is not a "dead horse" and it is still active. She said Bangladesh still has the ability to hold the summit of the 120-nation grouping.

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