



# Newsletter

Press Wing, Prime Minister's Office

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## **We don't want terrorist acts to occur again: Sheikh Hasina**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said people do not want recurrence of evil acts like arson attacks that BNP-Jamaat clique carried out in the past.

Addressing a public rally organised by Awami League in Chandpur Stadium on 1 April, Sheikh Hasina said, "We don't want such terrorist acts to occur again...these are absolutely terrorist acts...we want peace in the country."

She said Awami League wants development of the country, not the nightmare of killings anymore. "We want to make sure that the people of the country will live in a peaceful environment."



Sheikh Hasina, also the Awami League chief, said destruction is the character of BNP-Jamaat nexus. Referring to the embezzlement of money from Zia Orphanage Trust and punishment of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, the prime minister said it is the character of BNP to loot others' money. She also said BNP never believed in the independence of the country as they had awarded the killers of the Father of the Nation and handed over the national flag to war criminals.

The prime minister requested all including parents, teachers, imams, to remain careful about the involvement of youths in terrorism, militancy, and drugs.

## **UN Sec-Gen Guterres phones PM, praises Dhaka's humanitarian gesture**



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has invited UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to visit Bangladesh to see for himself the plight of Rohingyas who have taken shelter here amid persecution in Myanmar. She made the invitation when the UN chief phoned her on 6 April night.

During their conversation, Sheikh Hasina also sought UN cooperation in implementing the agreement signed between Bangladesh and Myanmar over the

Rohingya repatriation. The UN chief highly appreciated Bangladesh for its steps over the Rohingya issue.

The Prime Minister thanked Guterres for taking the Rohingya issue to the UN Security Council. She told the UN secretary general that her government has taken initiatives to relocate at least one lakh Rohingyas to Bhashan Char Island in the coming monsoon.

Over 7 lakh Rohingyas have fled persecution in their homeland in Rakhine State since August 25 last year and crossed over to Cox's Bazar.

### **PM attends concluding ceremony of “Gulf Shield-I” in Saudi Arabia**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has attended the concluding ceremony of the first month-long joint “Gulf Shield-I” military exercise at Al Jubail in the Eastern Province of Dammam in Saudi Arabia on April 16. Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud invited her to attend the drill.

The King welcomed the Prime Minister and other guests at the concluding ceremony. The leaders witnessed military parades of the various participating forces. Gulf Shield-I is organised by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Defense having participants from land, air and naval forces of 23 countries, including USA, UK, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Mauritania, Malaysia,



Pakistan, Chad, Djibouti, Niger, Comoros, Afghanistan, Oman, Guyana, Turkey, and Burkina Faso. An 8-member Bangladesh contingent joined the exercise.

### **PM attends 25<sup>th</sup> CHOGM in London**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended the 25<sup>th</sup> CHOGM in London on 18-20 April. She led a high-level delegation at the meeting of 53-member countries.

On April 16, Sheikh Hasina flew to London by a special flight of Saudi Arabia from Dammam where she attended the concluding ceremony of “Gulf Shield-I” military exercise. Sheikh Hasina joined a number of programmes organized by various organizations at the sidelines of the CHOGM.

The Prime Minister attended Commonwealth Women Forum as a keynote speaker on “Educate to Empower: Making equitable and quality primary education and secondary education a reality for girls across the Commonwealth” on April 17. She also joined a high-level programme of Overseas Development Institute (ODI), a prestigious think tank of the UK. She was the keynote speaker on "Development Progress of Bangladesh: Policy, Progress and Prospect" in the programme.

On April 18, the Bangladesh Prime Minister attended the Asian leaders' roundtable - 'Can Asia keep growing?' She also joined the Welcome Reception followed by a dinner hosted by British premier Theresa May.

On April 19, Sheikh Hasina attended the formal opening of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and official welcome ceremony hosted by the British PM.

The PM joined a reception hosted by Commonwealth Secretary General Patricia Scotland QC and a presentation and reception followed by a dinner of Queen Elizabeth II in honour of Heads of Government and spouse/partners at the Buckingham Palace.



On April 20, the Prime Minister attended three retreat sessions and the closing executive session of the summit. On April 21, she attended a reception for participating Commonwealth Heads of Government and the Queen's Birthday Party Concert organised by the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS).

### **PM for empowerment of women to create a peaceful society**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stressed the need for building a future where world peace and women empowerment would remain the cornerstone to create a peaceful society free from poverty and discrimination.



She was delivering her keynote speech at a discussion on “Educate to empower: Making equitable and quality primary and secondary education a reality for girls across the Commonwealth”. The Commonwealth Women's Forum organised the programme in London's Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre on 17 April.

Sheikh Hasina said education for all would remain Bangladesh's prime objective towards achieving the overarching policy visions of inclusive development with the guiding norm of sustainable development goals.

The Bangladesh government attaches importance to girls' education which helps eliminate various social hurdles and it has also enhanced the living standards of the rural women, she said.

She elaborated steps, including distribution of free textbooks, providing stipends to students, development of training infrastructures for teachers, women's participation in income-generating activities and creating opportunities for them in the job market.

## **Rohingya Crisis: Dhaka wants sustainable solution: PM**

Bangladesh wants a peaceful, sustainable and an early solution to the Rohingya crisis as the country was now bearing the entire brunt of the recent exodus of persecuted Myanmar nationals.

The prime minister made the remark while delivering her speech at an event titled “Bangladesh's Development Story: Policies, Progresses and Prospects” at Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in London as the keynote speaker on 17 April.

She said although Bangladesh had achieved successes in various sectors, this did not mean that there were no further challenges. "We face the challenge of climate change although we're the least polluter," she said, adding that the rise in sea level would induce displacement of millions in the country.

"It's a shared responsibility of the global community to protect our planet, our biodiversity and our climate," the prime minister said, adding that Bangladesh was in the process of developing “Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100” to mitigate and manage the climate change impacts.

About terrorism and militancy, the prime minister said Bangladesh was following a “zero-tolerance” policy for the menace.

### **British Queen Opens CHOGM**

Queen Elizabeth II, the head of the Commonwealth, opened the Commonwealth summit on 19 April expressing optimism that the 53-member organisation would secure a safer, more prosperous and sustainable world for the future generation.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joined the meeting as the Queen welcomed the heads of governments of the Commonwealth nations to Buckingham Palace.

“Commonwealth is growing stronger year by year... I believe we will secure a safer and more prosperous and sustainable world for the future generation,” the Queen said while declaring open the meet with its theme being “Towards a Common Future”.



### **PM urges to reform C'wealth goals**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called for a comprehensive reform to the Commonwealth to achieve the desired goals and meet constantly evolving needs and expectations of the member states.

She made the call at the first executive session of the 25th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) at Lancaster House in London. She also called for reorientation and reorganisation of the roles and functions of various Commonwealth bodies.

Sheikh Hasina stressed the need for revitalisation of the Commonwealth Secretariat through a comprehensive reform to achieve the goals identified in this CHOGM.

She noted with appreciation the Strategic Plan 2020-21 of the Commonwealth Secretariat in line with the objectives of the Charter and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Noting that the role of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) is sensitive while dealing with delicate country situations, she said it should have comprehensive understanding of the situations it is dealing with in the spirit of Commonwealth consensus.

### **Make Trade Regime More Inclusive**

Participating an executive session titled “A More Prosperous Future”, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon the Commonwealth members to work for making multilateral trade regime more inclusive and sustainable one.



She said early operationalisation of the Commonwealth Trade Financing Facility, launched at CHOGM 2015 in Malta, is critical. Bangladesh has always called for the promotion of a rule-based, transparent, inclusive and fair multilateral trade regime, she added.

She thanked the Commonwealth Secretariat for preparing the draft of the revised Guidelines for Conduct of Election Observation in member countries.

### **Make Blue Charter Workable**

Addressing a session at the CHOGM at Lancaster House, the Bangladesh PM said countries in various regional groups need to collaborate beyond their regions for capacity-building, technology sharing, and research to harness blue economy avenues.

The programme was titled “A More Sustainable Future (Adoption of Commonwealth Blue Charter)”.

Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh fully endorses adoption of the Commonwealth Blue Charter. “Bangladesh, as a littoral country of the Bay of Bengal and member of Bimstec, Saarc and IORA, has relentlessly been promoting a blue economy for sustainable management of our oceans, seas and marine resources.”

She cautioned over threats of cyber-attacks and spread of terrorism through the internet, saying that addressing the issues on the basis of “zero-tolerance” policy is important for the future generations.

### **C'wealth leaders call for sustainable return of Rohingyas**

Commonwealth member countries have called for a halt to all violence, restoration of normality and accountability of the perpetrators for gross violations of human rights in Myanmar's Rakhine State through an independent investigation.



The heads of governments of the commonwealth states made the call in a joint communiqué unanimously adopted on the concluding day of the 25th CHOGM summit in London on 20 April.

The member states called for sustainable return of all displaced Rohingyas sheltered in Bangladesh to their rightful homes in

Myanmar under UNHCR oversight.

Besides, Commonwealth leaders called for creation of necessary conditions for their sustainable return in safety, security and dignity.

Praising Bangladesh's role over the Rohingya issue, the leaders expressed full solidarity with the government and the people of Bangladesh affected by the influx of Rohingyas.

The statement said the leaders of the 53-country platform commended Bangladesh and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for providing shelter to the distressed humanity facing an existential threat.

The heads of governments also stressed actions to address the root causes of the current crisis, including through immediate implementation of the Kofi Annan Commission recommendations.

### **Implement C'wealth Declarations**



Placing a three-point recommendation, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called for early implementation of the Commonwealth Declarations on its comprehensive reform, connectivity and cyber governance.

She urged the Commonwealth Secretariat to frame an appropriate action plan and work out programmes in consultation with the member states to this end.

The PM made the call during the retreat session on the second day of the 25th CHOGM summit in London.

About the Commonwealth reform, Hasina said, “The organisation in its present form, structure and orientations is inadequate and can only partially meet expectations of the peoples.”

She called for formation of an eminent persons' group to make recommendations on necessary reforms, creation of a Development Fund and a Platform to achieve SDGs; and enhancing Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's role in protecting and promoting political values.

While attending the Retreat Agenda on the Global Context, the PM said trade, investment and connectivity are the key to a more prosperous future.

She said trade connectivity through a rules-based, transparent, inclusive and fair multilateral trade regime is crucial.

She also mentioned that Bangladesh has been working for the implementation of Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) sub-regional connectivity project.

## **Hasina meets Modi, holds 'productive' meeting**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has had a “productive” meeting with her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi discussing various issues of bilateral interest on the sidelines of Commonwealth Summit in London.

Among others present in the Hasina-Modi meeting were Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali and Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Keshav Gokhale.

"On the sidelines of the CHOGM, the two premiers held the meeting at Lancaster House in London on 19 April and discussed issues related to bilateral interests. Rohingya and Teesta issues came up for discussion. Briefing reporters, Bangladesh Foreign Secretary said India had changed its position on Rohingya issue, which is "much closer to us". "India is helping with rehabilitation of the Rohingyas," he said.



## **Tarique to be brought back by any means, says PM in London**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has expressed her firm resolve to take back BNP acting chairperson Tarique Zia from London by any means and bring him under the ambit of law.

"We'll bring him back to the country by any means, Inshallah, and put him on trial," she said while speaking at a reception accorded to her on 21 April in London marking Bangladesh's becoming eligible for graduating to a developing country from a least developed one.

Sheikh Hasina said she has already talked to the British government in this connection.

Turning to the recent attack on Bangladesh High Commission in London where the attackers vandalised the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, she said how dare they do it!

"This is our high commission; we got the high commission as Bangladesh attained the Independence. These culprits insulted the pictures of the Father of the Nation storming into the High Commission ... let me ask, where did they get so much courage from?"

Coming down heavily on the officials who were in the high commission at that time for their reluctance when the culprits were vandalising it, Sheikh Hasina asked, "Why couldn't they take any step to do something against the vandalism? This is my big question."



She urged the expatriate Bangladeshis living in the UK to give a befitting reply to this heinous ransacking in the Bangladesh High Commission.

Branding Ziaur Rahman, Khaleda Zia and Tarique Rahman as killers, Hasina said the country has to be saved from these killers. She also mentioned that Tarique is continuing his terrorist acts living in London like what he did in Bangladesh.

### Hasina makes Time's list of 100 most influential people

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been included on the list of Time Magazine's 100 world's most influential people for 2018.

The list published by the New York-based weekly contains the names of US President Donald Trump, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, North Korean President Kim Jong-un, South Korean President Moon Jae-in, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman, India cricket captain Virat Kohli and Indian actress Deepika Padukone.

In the article on the Bangladesh PM, Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director of Human Rights Watch, said, "I first met Sheikh Hasina in the 1990s, when she was fiercely campaigning to end military rule in Bangladesh.



Our last meeting was in 2008, when she was campaigning against another military regime. The following year she became prime minister after a landslide election victory."

Bearing the legacy of her father, who led Bangladesh's Liberation War, Hasina has

never been afraid of a fight. So when several hundred thousand ethnic Rohingya refugees started streaming into Bangladesh last August to escape atrocities by the Myanmar army, she accepted the humanitarian challenge. An impoverished country, Bangladesh had not welcomed massive influxes of refugees in the past, but she could hardly turn back the traumatised victims of ethnic cleansing, Meenakshi wrote.

In 2017, Sheikh Hasina ranked 30th on the list of Forbes' 100 most powerful women in the world. In the magazine's another list of the "World's 22 Most Powerful Women in Politics", Hasina had reserved the 9th rank with her political achievements.

## PM replies to letter from 2nd grader Sejuti

A second grader wrote to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and received a response and a photo of the premier.



Syeda Raunaq Jahan Sejuti, of Sonargaon upazila in Narayanganj, wrote to Hasina on March 25 about how similar looking her recently deceased grandmother was to Hasina.

Sejuti, daughter of Syed Rafiqul Islam, an assistant teacher at AGGS Smrity School,

wrote how Hasina reminded her of her grandmother and went on to invite the premier over to her house.

Hasina wrote back with affectionate words on April 12.

"Take my affection. I hope, you, your father, mother and friends are well. I read your letter several times. I pray for the departed soul of your grandmother so that Almighty Allah would send her to heaven."

Hasina requested the girl to study attentively and to go to school regularly. "Please remain loyal to your parents at all times. Serve the nation when you grow up. I send a photograph of mine. Many many doa and love to you," she wrote in her letter to Sejuti.

## Sheikh Hasina receives 'Global Women's Leadership Award'

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been honoured with the prestigious 'Global Women's Leadership Award' from Global Summit of Women based in the USA.

President Irene Natividad of the organization handed over the accolade to the PM at a Gala Dinner of the Global Summit of Women 2018 in the Australian city of Sydney. More than one thousand women luminaries from across the world joined the function held at the International Convention Center in Sydney on 27 April. They gave a standing ovation to the Bangladesh PM.

A video documentary on the political life of Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh's economic progress and different steps taken by her government for women empowerment was screened earlier.

Sheikh Hasina has been chosen for the award for her leadership in women's education and entrepreneurship in Bangladesh and the Asia-Pacific region.

Receiving the award the Prime Minister called for mobilising a new global alliance to promote women's rights and empowerment.

"We have to forge a new alliance to support the women and uphold their rights. Together, we must act on our shared culture, tradition and values to benefit millions of women in need," she said.

Sheikh Hasina dedicated the award to the women who have shown their might in changing their lots across the world. She urged all to work together to reach out to marginal and vulnerable women who were still less fed, not schooled, under-paid and violated.

Stressing the need for creating equal opportunities for women in all sectors, the PM said no woman and girl should be left behind.

Sheikh Hasina recalled Bangladeshi women's sacrifices in liberating the country during the Liberation War. Women in Bangladesh, she said, played significant roles in every nationalist movement.

She shared her experiences in realising people's rights, particularly women's empowerment, in Bangladesh. She said she and her sister were barred from returning home following Bangabandhu's assassination along with his 18 family members in 1975.



Hasina said Bangladesh has emerged as a “role model of women empowerment”. In this regard, she pointed out that the World Economic Forum last year ranked Bangladesh 47th among 144 countries and first in South Asia for women empowerment.

The Forum also ranked Bangladesh 7th among 155 countries for political empowerment of women, she added.

### **Keep up pressure on Myanmar**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stressed the need for keeping up pressure on Myanmar from different levels for resolving the Rohingya crisis.

The Rohingyas must be helped also, she said during a meeting with Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop at Intercontinental Sydney Hotel here.

The Australian foreign minister said her country has always been for a solution to the Rohingya issue.

Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh signed an agreement with Myanmar and there had been exchange of official visits between the two countries. “But they are yet to take action to implement the agreement. Julie highly appreciated Bangladesh and the PM's stance on hosting about 1.1 million Rohingyas.

### **Australia to help resolve Rohingya crisis: Turnbull tells Hasina**

Australian Prime Minister Malcom Turnbull has assured his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina of continuing support to Bangladesh for resolving the Rohingya crisis. He gave the assurance at a meeting with Hasina at his Sydney residence.



Turnbull said his country would continue to put pressure on Myanmar for taking back Rohingyas. Sheikh Hasina informed Turnbull about her government's steps taken for sheltering Rohingyas and its future plans in this regard.

The two leaders discussed issues of bilateral trade and investment and agreed to find viable means to boost cooperation. Turnbull

accepted Sheikh Hasina's invitation to visit Bangladesh at a mutually convenient time.

## Support Sought for Economic Progress

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sought cooperation from Australia on human resources as Bangladesh was going to the next stage of development through graduation from the group of Least Developed Country.

While visiting Western Sydney University, the premier also sought Australia's cooperation in developing an inclusive and people-centric blue economy.

She sought technical assistance for developing Bangladesh's marine aquaculture and exchanging teachers on oceanography. She called upon Bangladeshi students at the university to take advantage of the best knowledge that the institution could offer.

Sheikh Hasina said she was deeply touched at the establishment of a bust of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the Sydney university campus. "The bust is rightly located in front of the Institute of Ocean Governance to recognise Bangabandhu's vision and pioneering role on maritime boundary demarcation through an act of parliament in 1974."



She mentioned that Bangladesh has been enjoying warm relations with Australia since it recognised the country on January 31, 1972. Amongst the world leaders who championed our cause for liberation is Edward Gough Whitlam. Whitlam played a leading role in building a bipartisan consensus about Bangladesh as the leader of the opposition in the Australian federal parliament in 1971," she said.

“Edward Whitlam visited Bangladesh on January 19, 1975. It was the first and last visit [to date] by a prime minister of Australia to Bangladesh.”

She also recalled with gratitude the contribution of Australian national William AS Ouderland during the Liberation War for which he was given gallantry award “Bir Protik” and awarded with “Friends of Bangladesh War of Liberation”.

The premier said Australia has been a favourite destination for higher studies for Bangladeshi students and some 200 students are now studying in Western Sydney University.

The PM paid homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman placing a wreath at the Bust of Bangabandhu on the University campus. The bust was unveiled by Law Minister Anisul Huq in February last year.

## Work on 2021-2041 Development Plan Underway

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said her government has started the work to formulate a 2021-2041 development plan to make Bangladesh a developed and prosperous country by 2041.



The PM was addressing a civic reception in Sydney on April 28. The Australian chapter of Awami League organised the event titled “Civic Reception of Sheikh Hasina” at Sofitel Sydney Wentworth hotel.

Hasina said her government always formulates long-term plans for the country, but the BNP government used to take plans on “ad hoc basis”.

She urged Bangladeshi expatriates to uphold the country's image abroad. “Wherever you stay you must have the special attention so that Bangladesh is regarded with dignity.” The PM also asked them to remain alert so that anti-liberation forces cannot come to power anymore.

Mentioning that the government is now setting up 100 special economic zones in the country, she said her government created a huge investment scope for expatriates.

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