



Newsletter

Press Wing, Prime Minister's Office

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UNESCO recognises 7th March speech of Bangabandhu as world documentary heritage

The Unesco has recognised the historic the 7th March speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as a world documentary heritage. The speech has been included in the Memory of the World International Register, a list of world's important documentary heritage maintained by Unesco.



The Director General of Unesco, Irina Bokova, announced the decision on October 30 at the Unesco Headquarters in Paris.

Bangabandhu in his fiery speech on March 7, 1971 called on the freedom-loving Bangalees to wage a decisive struggle against the Pakistani oppressors. The speech set the tone for the Liberation War that would officially begin later that month on March the 26th.

“Ebarer Sangram Amader Muktir Sangram, Ebarer Sangram Swadhinatar Sangram [The struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation, the struggle this time is a struggle for independence],” Bangabandhu proclaimed in a thunderous voice at a mammoth rally at the then Racecourse Maidan

(now Suhrawardy Udyan) that day. The speech touched every Bangalee's heart across East Bengal, and mobilised the whole nation.

The Memory of the World International Register is a list of documents having global significance. The International Advisory Committee (IAC) is responsible for recommending whether or not a document qualifies for inclusion in the Memory of the World International Register.

The IAC during its meeting on October 24-27 recommended the March 7 speech for inscription on the Memory of the World International Register. With 78 new nominations, the Memory of the World Register now includes as many as 427 documents and collection from all continents.

While endorsing the latest recommendations, the Unesco director general stated, "It is my deep and firm conviction that the Memory of the World Programme should be guided in its work to preserve documentary heritage and memory for the benefit of present and future generations in the spirit of dialogue, international cooperation and mutual understanding, building peace in the minds of women and men."

Sheikh Hasina hails Unesco's decision

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has hailed the Unesco's recognition of Bangabandhu's historic March the 7th speech as a world documentary heritage.

In a statement the Prime Minister said, the recognition is a matter of great pride for the Bangalee nation and Bangla language. She termed the recognition as another milestone in the continuation of global acclamation.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a rally organized by Nagorik Committee to celebrate Unesco's recognition of the 7th March speech of Bangabandhu. Suhrawardy Udayan, Dhaka. 18 November 2017

Sheikh Hasina extended heartfelt thanks to the Unesco, its director general and all concerned on behalf of Bangladesh and the Bangalee nation for inclusion of Bangabandhu's 7th March speech in the Memory of the World International Register."

Dwelling briefly on the history of Bangladesh's emergence, the Prime Minister said, "All the movements and the victory in the 1970 polls culminated in a logical and decisive conclusion through achieving freedom".

According to various international political analysts, Bangabandhu's 7th March speech is one of the best political speeches of the world and it had motivated the Bangalee nation to clinch victory in 1971. She mentioned that the speech has made its place in the book, "We Shall Fight on the Beaches: The Speeches that Inspired History", written by writer and historian Jacob F Field.

None can erase the history, PM Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said Unesco's recognition of the March the 7th speech of the Father of the Nation was history's revenge on those who tried to erase the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his contributions to Bangladesh.

“Once, playing the 7th March speech was forbidden in the country. Those who were not born in the country were behind the attempt to erase the speech from history. The Unesco recognition has proved that none can erase the history. History takes its revenge and always upholds the truth,” she said addressing a rally at Suhrawardy Udyan on the 18th November. The rally was organized by Nagorik Committee, to celebrate Unesco's recognition of the 7th March speech.

Sheikh Hasina said, “The country's history was distorted after the assassination of Bangabandhu in 1975. It's unfortunate that citizens of Bangladesh killed the Father of the Nation.”

“My only request is to unite and remain alert so that no Pakistani ghosts can get the opportunity to distort the history anymore,” she said.

The Father of the Nation wanted to make Bangladesh poverty- and hunger-free. Insallah we will fulfil the dream of Bangabandhu by making Bangladesh a middle income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041 and this is the pledge from this civic rally.”

Professor Emeritus Anisuzzaman, who chaired the rally, said Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the war of independence through the 7th March speech.

The rally was also addressed by eminent educationist Prof Rafiqul Islam, Daily Samakal Editor Golam Sarwar, eminent educationist Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal, Unesco Country Director Beatrice Kaldun and martyred intellectual Alim Chowdhury's wife Shamoli Nasrin Chowdhury.

Sheikh Hasina 30th most powerful woman on Forbes list

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been ranked 30th on this year's Forbes list of the World's 100 Most Powerful Women.

The magazine's another list of the World's 22 Most Powerful Women in Politics has put Hasina in the 9th place for her political achievements.

In stark contrast to Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar, the “lady of Dhaka” has promised aid to Rohingya refugees fleeing Myanmar, allotting 2,000 acres of land in Bangladesh for them, reported Forbes on November 1.

It said Hasina is “proud to bear the bulk of the cost” of the relocation of these refugees to her country. This includes issuing identification cards and providing childhood immunisations.



German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who topped the list of 100 Most Powerful Women last year, held the position after winning the election this year.

British Prime Minister Theresa May is on the 2nd position, while Melinda Gates, co-chair of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is the third most powerful woman in the world. Hillary Clinton, ranked 2nd last year, slid 63 places on this year's list after her defeat to Donald Trump in the US presidential election.

According to Forbes, this year's top women in politics are at the forefront of efforts to reshape and retain global alliances.

Rohingya crisis unprecedented

Providing humanitarian support to them a major challenge, PM tells JS

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said Bangladesh is faced with an unprecedented crisis over providing humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya refugees and sending them back home.



“The Rohingya crisis has taken a serious turn due to the recent military operation and violence in Rakhine State of Myanmar. The present situation is very much worse compared to anytime in the past,” she said in the parliament. She was responding to a question from treasury bench lawmaker Abdul Matin.

The prime minister, however, said she firmly believes that despite all odds, there would be a peaceful solution to the crisis with the assistance of international community.

She said more than 10 lakh of the Myanmarese nationals are now staying in Bangladesh; they include the four lakh who had entered the country earlier in various phases.

“And still Rohingyas are entering Bangladesh every day,” she told parliament with Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair.

The PM mentioned that Bangladesh has been making vigorous diplomatic efforts to have a special session of the UNHCR on Rohingya crisis and repatriate the refugees.

Dhaka is also maintaining bilateral communications with Naypyidaw, she said, adding, “Today's problem has its root in Myanmar and Myanmar has to find a solution.”

Referring to lingering of the Rohingya crisis for decades, the premier said it all began in 1978 when Ziaur Rahman came to power unconstitutionally.

Hasina said a vested quarter has been trying to engage the Rohingyas in acts of violence.

Sheikh Hasina urges Commonwealth countries to force Myanmar to stop persecution on its citizens Rohingyas and take them back from Bangladesh

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the Commonwealth countries to force Myanmar to stop persecution on its Rohingya citizens and take them back from Bangladesh at the earliest.

"I would like to request you all to discuss the Rohingya issue with utmost importance and exert pressure on the Myanmar government to stop persecution on its citizens and take them back at the earliest," Sheikh Hasina said while officially inaugurating the 63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) at the South Plaza on parliament premises on November 5.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing 63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference. South Plaza, Parliament Building. 5 November 2017

"Friendship to all, malice to none" is Bangladesh's policy in maintaining relations with foreign countries. Especially, we're eager to maintain good relations with our neighbours," she said.

Hasina, also the vice patron of the 63rd CPC, said Bangladesh resolved long-standing problems of Ganges water sharing and land boundary dispute with India through signing treaties. "Similarly, maritime boundary problem with India and Myanmar was also resolved amicably."

But the Prime Minister regretted that the inhuman persecution inflicted on the Rohingyas in Myanmar's Rakhine State and their forceful expulsion from their homeland has created instability in the region and beyond.

She said over 622,000 Myanmar nationals fled to Bangladesh to escape persecution. After 1978, another 500,000 Rohingyas entered Bangladesh at different times. "We've given temporary shelter to this huge number of people on humanitarian grounds."

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the Jatiya Sangsad are jointly organising the conference with the theme: "Continuing to enhance the high standards of performance of parliamentarians".

Sheikh Hasina said the main aim of the government is to build a hunger-and poverty-free Bangladesh through strengthening the foundation of democratic rule in the country. "Aiming to fulfill the goal, we've framed Vision 2021 and now are implementing the same devising specific plans."

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh has been in a journey through the roads of peace, democracy, development and prosperity. "We've already been elevated to a lower middle-income country. We expect that Bangladesh will emerge as a country of middle income on the golden jubilee of our Independence in 2021 and as a developed one by 2041."

She also called for forging unity in facing the militancy problem across the world. Talking about the climate change and its impact, she said Bangladesh is the worst victim of the climate change. CPA President and Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Secretary-General Akbar Khan, CPA treasurer Vicki Dunn, and Commonwealth youth representative Aiman Sadique spoke on the occasion.

Lawmakers from Commonwealth countries call upon international community to take urgent action to resolve Rohingya crisis

Lawmakers from Commonwealth countries have called upon the international community to take urgent action to resolve the Rohingya crisis. The call was made at the 63rd general assembly of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Dhaka.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with parliamentarians of Commonwealth countries. South Plaza, Parliament Building. 5 November 2017

In a statement, the CPA condemned the atrocities, ethnic cleansing, displacement and all gross violations of human rights in the Rakhine State of Myanmar. It asked the Myanmar government to stop violence and ethnic cleansing in Rakhine immediately and unconditionally.

Talking to journalists at her office at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, CPA Chairperson Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, also Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, said no resolution on the issue could be adopted due to the CPA's constitutional limitations.

At the session, the CPA chairperson and its Secretary General Akbar Khan had assured them that the demand would be considered seriously.

In the statement, the CPA urged Myanmar to ensure the sustainable return of all forcibly displaced Rohingyas, who have taken shelter in Bangladesh and other countries, to their homes in Myanmar within the shortest possible time.

The lawmakers from Commonwealth countries lauded the Bangladesh government, particularly Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, for opening the borders to the forcibly displaced Rohingyas and helping around one million distressed Rohingyas with shelter, food, sanitation, water and medical support.

NEW CPA CHAIRPERSON

Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, deputy speaker of the national assembly of Cameroon, was elected chairperson for the next three years.

Two other candidates for the position were -- Shirley M Osborne MLA, speaker of the Montserrat Legislative Assembly; and Niki Rattle, speaker of the Cook Islands Parliament.

CPA member countries elect a new chairperson at the general assembly every three years.

Responsibility lies with Myanmar, US official says on Rohingya return

The US wants Myanmar to repatriate hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas in their own villages following their exodus from violence-wracked Rakhine State towards Bangladesh, a senior State Department official said in Dhaka on November 4.

Simon Henshaw, acting US assistant secretary of state, who visited refugee camps in southeast Bangladesh, said Myanmar should also punish those who committed atrocities in Rakhine.

"Responsibility for repatriation of Rohingya people lies with the government of Myanmar ... safe and secure repatriation is the best possible way to resolve the crisis," the US official said at a press conference in the city.



Henshaw's visit comes as the US lawmakers have proposed sanctions against Myanmar's military in some of the strongest efforts yet by Washington to pressure the Southeast Asian nation to end abusive treatment of the Rohingya minority.

Talking about his visit to refugee camps, Henshaw said the situation is shocking and appalling and it is hard not to cry hearing the stories of sexual abuses, murders and other atrocities.

Myanmar needs to engage with UN, Bangladesh

The UN Security Council has called upon Myanmar and Bangladesh to invite the UN refugee agency and other relevant international organisations to participate fully in a joint working group to allow voluntary return of all the Rohingya refugees to their homes in Myanmar.

In a statement, the UNSC urged the Myanmar government to end the excessive military force and inter-communal violence that had devastated the Rohingya community in Rakhine State.

It also called for implementing the agreed upon mechanisms to assist return of those who have fled Rakhine and to ensure access for humanitarian aid.

“The Security Council remains determined to continue to closely follow the situation in Myanmar and requests the Secretary-General to brief the Security Council on developments on the situation in Rakhine after 30 days from the adoption of this statement,” said the statement.

China to facilitate talks between Bangladesh and Myanmar to resolve Rohingya crisis, Chinese FM



The visiting Chinese foreign minister has expressed his country's willingness to facilitate talks between Bangladesh and Myanmar to resolve the Rohingya crisis.

Wang Yi made the offer as he met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gonobhaban. "China is willing to facilitate a dialogue between Myanmar and Bangladesh to resolve the Rohingya crisis. This is a big challenge for Bangladesh... this is Myanmar's internal problem, but this is affecting Bangladesh," Ihsanul Karim, Press Secretary to the Prime Minister quoted Wang Yi as saying.

During the meeting, Hasina urged the Chinese foreign minister to mount pressure on Myanmar to take back the Rohingyas.

She said Bangladesh has given shelter to over a million Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds. "Myanmar will have to take back their nationals

ensuring their safety, security and dignity for a durable solution to the crisis," she said.

Recalling Hasina's visits to China in 2010 and 2014 as well as the visit of the Chinese president to Bangladesh in October 2016, Wang Yi said he is now touring Bangladesh to see the progress of the Strategic Partner Cooperation that the two countries agreed upon during the Chinese president's visit to Bangladesh.

On Bangladesh-China economic cooperation, Wang Yi said his country's concessional loan now has crossed five billion dollars. "China wants to help Bangladesh more under the South-South cooperation," he said.

The Chinese minister also said his country does not want the activities of BCIM (Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar) economic corridor to slow down because of the Rohingya issue.

Sheikh Hasina, Narendra Modi inaugurate new train service, two railway bridges

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said Bangladesh wanted to cooperate with India and other neighbouring countries for creating a “peace area” in South Asia where everyone would live together as good neighbours and pursue constructive policies for the benefit of all.

She was addressing a programme at the Gono Bhaban marking the inauguration of the end-to-end immigration and customs of Maitree Express, flagging off Bandhan Express (Khulna-Kolkata) and launching of train communication on the newly-built 2nd Bhairab and 2nd Titas railway bridges.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee joined the programme through videoconference.

Sheikh Hasina said there has been an excellent relationship between Bangladesh and India and continuation of such ties is very much essential.

With the inauguration of these services, a new door of relationship has been opened up between the two countries, she said, adding that the relationship would be further strengthened in future.

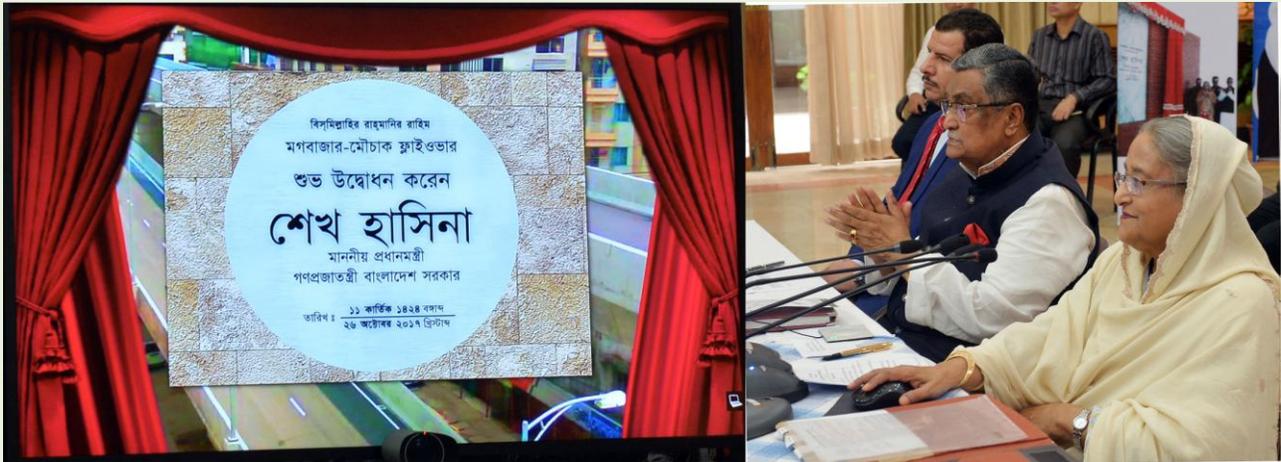
The Indian PM said the launch of the first passenger train service between Kolkata and Khulna and three other key connectivity projects marked yet another step towards revival of the physical connectivity that had existed between the two neighbours before 1965.

“Whenever we talk of connectivity, I am always reminded of the vision to revive the pre-1965 connectivity. I am happy we are taking relentless strides in that direction,” Modi said.

He said India takes pride in being a “reliable partner” in Bangladesh's development. The 2nd Bhairab and 2nd Titas railway bridges would help strengthen the rail network of the latter, he added.

Earlier, Modi began his speech breaking into Bangla. “Aaj ei shubho uplokkhe dui deshbashider amar abhinandan janai. Aaj amader moitree, bandhon aro sudriro holo.”

Mouchack-Moghbazar Flyover opens to public fully



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally opened remaining half of the 8.7km Mouchak-Moghbazar flyover for traffic movement in the capital on 26 October. The inaugurated portion is the four-km Malibagh-Razarbagh-Shantinagar section.

The flyover would help ease traffic movement particularly at three railway level crossings and eight road intersections, she said, calling upon all to comply with the traffic rules.

Myanmar must take Rohingyas back, Sushma Swaraj

India says Myanmar must take back its nationals who have fled their homes to escape violence and taken refuge in Bangladesh.

"Myanmar must take back their nationals... this is a big burden for Bangladesh. How long will Bangladesh bear it? There should be a permanent solution to this crisis," visiting Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj was quoted as saying at a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban on 23rd October.

Swaraj came to Dhaka to attend a meeting of India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Commission (JCC). She also urged the international community to contribute to the social and economic development of the Rakhine State. The Indian minister lauded Bangladesh's stance and also the PM for showing humanitarian attitude to the forcibly displaced people of Myanmar.



At the meeting, Swaraj presented Hasina with memorabilia of the 1971 Liberation War to be displayed at the Liberation War Museum.

Record GDP growth

Bangladesh achieved a record economic growth of 7.28 percent in the last fiscal year. The gross domestic product rose by 0.17 percentage points in fiscal 2016-17 from 7.11 percent in the previous fiscal year.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics data the country attained the feat riding on the faster growth of the service sector. In the final count, the GDP growth increased by 4 basis points from the BBS' provisional estimate of 7.24 percent.



Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal unveiled the data of the state-run statistical agency at a press conference at the National Economic Council auditorium on 16 November.

Bangladesh secured more than 7 percent GDP growth for the last two consecutive years. “Only three countries, including Bangladesh, achieved such a feat,” he said.

The BBS data shows that the agriculture sector grew 2.97 percent in the last fiscal year, lower than the provisional estimate of 3.4 percent. The growth was 2.79 percent in FY 2015-16.

Take Rohingyas back, give them citizenship: UN member states



UN member-states on 16 November urged Myanmar authorities to end a military campaign against the Rohingya in a resolution adopted despite opposition from China, Russia and some regional neighbours.

The General Assembly's human rights committee overwhelmingly endorsed the measure presented by Muslim countries by a vote of 135 to 10, with 26 countries abstaining.

UN member-states said they were "highly alarmed" by the violence and "further alarmed by the disproportionate use of force by the Myanmar forces" against the Rohingya.

The resolution drafted by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) called on the government to allow access for aid workers, ensure the return of all refugees and grant full citizenship rights to the Rohingyas.

It requested UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to appoint a special envoy to Myanmar.

Aside from Russia and China, Cambodia, the Philippines, Laos and Vietnam voted against the measure as did Syria, Zimbabwe and Belarus, along with Myanmar. The non-binding measure now goes to the full assembly for debate next month.

Gender Gap Index: Bangladesh stays top in S Asia

Bangladesh has topped the South Asian countries in gender equality for the third consecutive year, ranking 47th among 144 nations.

GENDER GAP INDEX		
Country	Position (2017)	Position (2016)
Bangladesh	47	72
Maldives	106	115
India	108	87
Sri Lanka	109	100
Nepal	111	110
Bhutan	124	121
Pakistan	143	143

It has also moved 25 notches up in the Global Gender Gap Report 2017 published by the World Economic Forum (WEF) on November 2.

The country was at the 72nd position among the same number of countries in last year's index. It was ranked 64th among 145 nations in 2015.

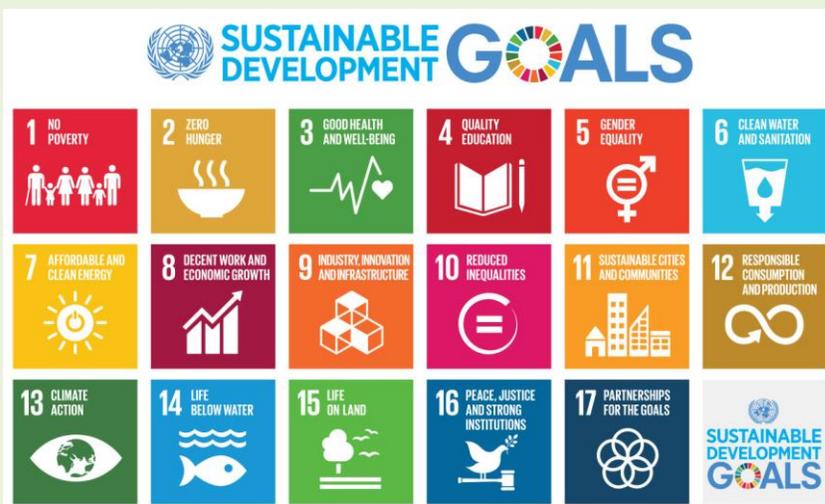
Bangladesh, which according to the report has made progress across all dimensions of the economic opportunity and participation, secures the third spot among the lower-middle income countries. The country has ranked seventh in the political empowerment index, shows the report by the Geneva-based WEF.

Bangladesh needs \$928b extra to implement SDGs

Bangladesh requires \$928.48 billion additionally from 2017 to 2030 to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. This amount would be needed after current costs related to the SDGs are borne by the public and private sectors and external sources. The \$928.48 billion is 19.75 percent of the accumulated gross domestic product under the Seventh Five-Year Plan, according to the report titled “SDGs Financing Strategy: Bangladesh Perspective”.

The annual average cost of the SDGs will be \$66.32 billion at constant prices for the period, said the report prepared and published by the General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission.

The report, along with two other books, Bangladesh Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2017 on SDGs and A Training Handbook on Implementation of the 7th Five-Year Plan, was recently launched at a programme jointly organised by the GED and the UNDP Bangladesh at the conference room of the National Economic Council.



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