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From: PIO, PID, Dhaka
Fax: 9540553/9540026
E-mail: piddhaka@gmail.com
Web: www.pressinform.gov.bd

News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, international pressure on Myanmar would continue for a permanent solution to the protracted Rohingya crisis as the issue was widely discussed in the 76th United Nations General Assembly-UNGA session. The Premier said this in a written statement while briefing newsmen from Ganabhaban yesterday about the outcome of Bangladesh's participation in the 76th UNGA session. The Premier paid an official visit to New York in USA during September 19-24 to attend the 76th UNGA. During her stay in New York, the Premier joined 10 meetings including main session of the 76th UNGA and eight bilateral talks. The PM said, the main focus of the UNGA session was universal accessibility and availability of COVID vaccines. Besides, issues like climate change, women's empowerment, equality and inclusion, racism, sustainable development goals, disarmament of nuclear weapons etc have also come up in the discussion, the Premier added. On September 20, the PM was conferred with "SDG Progress Award" by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network-SDSN for Bangladesh's highest success in attaining SDGs during 2015-2020. Besides, on September 22, a high level meeting on the Rohingya issue was held on the sideline of the UNGA where Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina suggested a five-point international course of action to resolve the crisis. The Prime Minister said, on September 24, 2021 she addressed the general debate of UNGA in Bangla, following the footprint of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. She said, the special attraction of this visit was setting up a "Permanent Bench" and planting a centenary tree sapling at the UN Headquarters. The Prime Minister later went to Washington DC from New York on September 25. She also inaugurated "Bangladesh House" in Maryland of the USA that carries the memory of Bangabandhu.

During the press briefing, responding to a query, the Prime Minister said, measures should be taken for formation of a commission to hold trials of the killings of the military officers and soldiers during military dictator Ziaur Rahman's rule, as a demand has been raised about the matter. Replying to another question, the Premier said, the President would form a search committee and the Election Commission would be constituted through the committee. The PM further said, BNP has been raising questions over elections as it knows they cannot win the elections.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a message congratulated newly appointed Japanese Premier Fumio Kishida. The PM hoped that the existing cordial ties between the two countries will be further strengthened in the days to come.

The Cabinet in a meeting yesterday gave final approval to the Local Government (Pourousova) (Amendment) Act, 2021 in a bid to strictly follow the system of holding election in every five years. Chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, virtually joining from Ganabhaban, the meeting also gave approval of the draft of Essential Services Act, 2021 integrating Essential Services Maintenance Act, 1952 and The Essential Services (Second Ordinance), 1958. The Cabinet also approved Chittagong Division Development Board Ordinance, 1976 (repeal) Act, 2021 which will abolish the existing law as per the directives of the court that said all laws enacted during the military regimes will be scrapped. The Cabinet also gave approval to ratify the article 29 of the forceful labor related ILO convention 1930.

The Cabinet also discussed about the offers from some African countries including South Sudan to take lease agricultural land and produce agricultural products. The Prime Minister asked Foreign Ministry, Agriculture Ministry and Commerce Ministry to look after the matter quickly and explore the opportunity, Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam said this after the meeting. The Premier also asked to find out more markets for country's agricultural products. The Prime Minister also asked the Health Ministry to explore the technical side in providing vaccines to the people less than 18 years. Media reported, the Cabinet Secretary at the briefing further said, the government has decided to reopen all the universities across the country in the current month.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader urged AL grass root leaders not to misuse power, instructing them to send the names of competent and acceptable aspirants for the upcoming union parishad elections to the party. While virtually speaking at a memorial meeting on late lawmaker Hasibur Rahman Swapan, held at Shahjadpur in Sirajganj yesterday, the Minister further said, the politics of revenge started after killing of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975. Ziaur Rahman was the mastermind behind the Bangabandhu killing, while his son Tarique Rahman was the mastermind of the August 21 grenade attack, he added. Mentioning that the BNP has destroyed the working relations among political leaders, the Minister said, BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia celebrated her fake birthday to hurt the sentiments of the AL leaders and workers. "How can we maintain social relations in the politics of revenge?" he questioned.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud said that the government has been working to implement ad-free (clean feed) foreign TV channels broadcasting for the interest of the country, its people and the media industry as well. The Minister made the remarks at a meeting with leaders of Association of Television Channel Owners-ATCO, at his ministry yesterday. During the meeting, the ATCO leaders greeted the Minister for taking steps to implement the decision. The Minister said, the space of Bangladesh remains open. The government of the country did not shutdown any channel and also did not ask to stop any channel, he added. But, they must obey the country's law, he added. The Minister slammed the cable operators which have stopped the operation of 24 ad-free foreign channels and said, they will be charged with violating rules. Secretary of the ministry Md. Mokbul Hossain was present in the meeting.

The Asian Development Bank-ADB launched Country Partnership Strategy-CPS for Bangladesh for the 2021-2025 period under which the lending agency would enhance its support up to US\$12 billion to Bangladesh during this timeframe. Finance Minister A H M Mustafa Kamal and ADB Country Director Manmohan Parkash launched the CPS at a city hotel yesterday. Meanwhile, ADB and the government of Bangladesh yesterday signed an agreement for US\$400 million in loan for constructing the Dhaka-Sylhet highway. The assistance is the first tranche of a \$1.78 billion multi-tranche financing facility approved by ADB on August 27, 2021. ADB and the government of Bangladesh also signed an agreement for \$250 million in policy-based loan to support Bangladesh's economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. The assistance is under the first subprogram of the programmatic \$500 million Sustainable Economic Recovery Program.

Bangladesh Embassy in Bhutan organized a business event titled 'Bangladesh Bhutan Business Dialogue' in association with the Dzongkhag Business Development Committee, which is the representative of the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, at Bumthang area, in Bhutan on Friday as a part of the mission's celebration of the Birth Centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh's independence. Bangladesh Ambassador to Bhutan A K M Shahidul Karim presided over the dialogue.

The BGMEA has sought Germany's support for the continuation of duty and quota-free access for Bangladeshi goods to the EU for a period of 12 years, following the country's graduation from LDC status in 2026, to ensure a smooth transition out of the LDC status. BGMEA President Faruque Hassan made the request during a meeting with the newly appointed Ambassador of Germany Achim Troster yesterday. Faruque Hassan also requested the Envoy to promote the RMG industry positively to his government, buyers and other relevant stakeholders.

The BGMEA has requested the Consul General of Bangladesh in Hong Kong to extend more support and services to buyers, especially in obtaining a visa to visit Bangladesh for meeting their apparel suppliers. Israt Ara, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Consul General designate to Hong Kong paid a courtesy visit to BGMEA President Faruque Hassan in Dhaka yesterday.

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry-DCCI underscored the need for signing free trade agreement-FTA with Algeria to boost bilateral trade between the two friendly nations, as the DCCI President Rizwan Rahman met Algerian Ambassador to Bangladesh Rabah Larbi at DCCI in the city yesterday. During the meeting, Rizwan Rahman requested Algeria to hire more skilled manpower and professionals from Bangladesh. He invited Algerian investors to register to Bangladesh Trade and Investment Summit to be jointly organized by Ministry of Commerce and DCCI for B2B matchmaking.

Bangladesh's overall exports in the first quarter of the current 2021-22 fiscal year saw an 11.37 per cent growth to US\$11.02 billion, also surpassing the target by 5.65 per cent, Export Promotion Bureau data showed. The country fetched \$9.89 billion in exports during the July-September period of the 2020-21 fiscal year.

The National Girl Child Day-2021 is being observed today with the theme "We are girl children- we would be enriched with technology, build digital Bangladesh". President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate messages greeted the girl children on the occasion.

The country yesterday recorded 18 fatalities from COVID-19, taking the total death toll to 27,591. With 794 fresh cases, the number of infections surged to 15,58,758. The positivity rate stood at 3.19 per cent, as 24,928 samples were tested during the time. At the same time, the recovery count rose to 15,19,588, DGHS disclosed this information in a press release yesterday. Besides, 192 dengue patients got hospitalized in the last 24 hours till last morning, the DGHS informed.


Md. Shahinoor Miah

Principal Information Officer (Acting)
Phone- 9546091