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FROM: PIO, PID, DHAKA
Fax: 9540553/9540026
E-mail: piddhaka@gmail.com
piddhaka@yahoo.com
Web: www.pressinform.portal.gov.bd

News Brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the August 15 massacre was aimed at killing independence and the ideology with which Bangladesh was born. "The 15th August massacre was not for only murdering a family, it was an effort to kill the victory of independence and the ideology with which Bangladesh was liberated in 1971 ... those who couldn't accept Bangladesh's victory brutally assassinated Bangabandhu," she said. The PM was addressing a voluntary blood donation programme and discussion marking the National Mourning Day commemorating the martyrdom of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi-32 in Dhaka yesterday. Describing the August 15 killing as the blackest chapter for the country, the Prime Minister said there is no doubt that Ziaur Rahman was equally involved with killer Moshtak in the murder of Bangabandhu.

The government will carve a navigation route from Mongla to Paksey on the Padma for the transportation of heavy-duty equipment for the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant under a Tk 9.56-billion project. This is one of the eight projects the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) endorsed in its meeting yesterday. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting held at the Planning Commission office in Dhaka. The eight projects' aggregate cost is Tk 31.72 billion. The ECNEC also approved 'Bangladesh regional connectivity project-1' involving Tk 6.93 billion for ensuring security of Bangladesh's largest land-port at Benapole, and development of Shaola, Bhomra and Ramgarh land-ports. Meanwhile, Benapole land port will be kept open round the clock for seven days a week starting from yesterday in a bid to expedite trade activities with the friendly neighbouring country.

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed has laid emphasis on attaining efficiency in digital trade to keep up the country's progress in the competitive world trade. "We have no scope to lag behind when the world trade is moving up adopting digital system," said the Minister while addressing a workshop at CIRDAP in Dhaka yesterday. He hoped that paperless trade will not only reduce labour, time and expenditure but also ensure accountability and transparency.

Bangladesh has laid emphasis on the universally accepted Two State Solutions in resolving the longstanding Palestinian crisis. As one of the eight members of the OIC Executive Committee, Bangladesh also called upon the Muslim Ummah for presenting in a united voice in various international fora, including the UN Security Council and UNESCO, for protecting the people of Palestine as well as its holy places. State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam at the meeting of the OIC Executive Committee in Istanbul yesterday conveyed Bangladesh's position. Meanwhile, Secretary General of OIC Dr Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimeen will arrive in Dhaka today on a four-day official visit.

The government has signed an agreement with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to further strengthen and expand the cooperation between Bangladesh and the UN agency. With the signing of the agreement, Bangladesh becomes the first member state of IOM under the UN System to sign a full-fledged cooperation agreement granting IOM privileges and immunities similar to those granted to UN specialised agencies. Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque and Chief of Staff from the Office of the Director General of IOM Ovais Sarmad signed the agreement in Dhaka on July 28.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) yesterday approved a proposal of Power Division for purchasing of 1,788MW of electricity from nine private sponsors for durations between five and fifteen years under 10 unsolicited deals.

The monthly remittance inflows increased by almost 11 percent to \$1.12 billion in the first month of the current fiscal year 2017-18 compared with the same month of the last FY 2016-17.

The Department of Livestock Services has estimated a loss of over Tk 3.60 crore due to the onslaught of the ongoing flood in the 10 north-eastern districts of the country.

The key index of Dhaka Stock Exchange closed yesterday at 5,876.26 points.

Kamrun Nahar
Principal Information Officer
Ph-02- 9546091