

**PRESS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT  
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**News brief**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves Dhaka for Jakarta today on a three-day official visit to Indonesia to attend the Leaders' Summit in Commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) of 21 coastal states bordering Indian Ocean. The Prime Minister will also hold bilateral talks with Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Sri-Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday told Parliament that Bangladesh has not yet given any country the permission to carry goods through the country under transit facility. The Minister said goods from India are being carried under trans-shipment facility of the existing Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT) between Bangladesh and India. Bangladesh also received duty for letting India get the facility.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday said rivers in and around the capital Dhaka and the Karnaphuli River in the port city of Chittagong will be made pollution-free by mapping out a coordinated master plan and its immediate implementation. The Minister, who is the chairman of a high-powered committee for preventing river pollution and improving navigability, said this while presiding over the committee's second meeting at the Local Engineering Government Department in the capital city.

Information Minister Hasanul Haque Inu yesterday said equal rights to women everywhere in society could expedite the attainment of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) within 2030. The Minister said this while speaking as the chief guest at a discussion held at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka. The Information Minister said ensuring conducive work environment for women, appropriate policy formulations, opening up a complain desk on women harassment at every workplace, facilitating day care centers for working mothers are some solutions to improve the condition of women in short terms.

Deputy Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Advocate Md Fazle Rabbi Miah said Child Marriage Restraint Law has been passed to free the country from social menace of early marriage. He told a session on children marriage at the South Asian Parliamentary Platform Meeting in Katmandu, Nepal on 3 March.

State Minister for Post and Telecommunications Tarana Halim yesterday told Parliament that the government has earned Tk 24,596.41 crore as revenue from the country's six mobile phone companies from January 1, 2000 to June 30, 2016. She said about 12.83 crore people of the country are now active mobile phone users, which is 80 percent of the total population.

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroj Chumki yesterday said Bangladesh has become a model for women empowerment. She said this at a human chain held in front of the Jatiya Press Club.

Saima Wazed Hossain, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's daughter and Chairperson of Shuchona Foundation said Bangladesh can take pride in national awareness and planning as well as international advocacy that it has invested in tackling the problem of neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs). She was speaking at the auditorium of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum yesterday where BPATC and Shuchona Foundation signed a MoU under which the civil service trainees will receive training on NDDs and mental health.

NBR Chairman Md Nojibor Rahman said country's small and medium entrepreneurs will have more scope to flourish their businesses under the new Value Added Tax (VAT) law as all businesses with annual turnover up to Tk 30 lakh shall be completely exempted from paying VAT.

Nuclear techniques have helped Bangladesh to evolve new varieties of rice and increase the cereal production three-fold in the last few decades, according to a latest report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The report said today there is a secure and steady supply of rice in Bangladesh and the country is shifting from being an importer to an exporter of rice.

DSEX, the prime index of the DSE, settled yesterday at 5573.08 points.

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