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**News Brief**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has put emphasis on increasing connectivity and cooperation among the Asian nations for the interest of the people of this region. The PM expressed the views when Norodom Ranariddh, former PM and President of Funcinpec, a Cambodian royal party, paid a courtesy call on at her hotel, Phnom Penh yesterday. The two leaders discussed the issues of boosting regional connectivity and the people-to-people contact among the Asian countries. The Bangladesh PM said, Bangladesh could work as a bridge between the East and West. That's why Bangladesh government has taken an initiative to build a new international airport near Dhaka, she added. She said, the Cox's Bazar Airport will be turned into an international airport to increase connectivity between Bangladesh and Southeast Asian nations. Norodom Ranariddh expressed gratitude to the PM for naming a road in Dhaka after the name of former Cambodian King late Norodom Sihanouk. The Bangladesh PM thanked the Cambodian government and the people for naming a road in Phnom Penh after the name of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned home yesterday concluding her three-day official visit to Cambodia at the invitation of her Cambodian counterpart Hun Sen.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, Bangladesh and Cambodia have developed a strong and mutually beneficial partnership and now is working together to foster greater regional cooperation for development, peace and stability in the region. She wrote about this in an article published in the mass circulated Khmer Times on December 4. Headlined 'Fostering a friendship: Bangladesh and Cambodia', the article pointed out Bangladesh and Cambodia's people endured nearly identical experience and atrocities while earning their self-determination.

A four-day mega ICT event 'Digital World-2017' is set to kick off today at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre to showcase technology-based innovations and achievements aiming to unlock economic potential of IT sector. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the event. President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages on the eve of the event.

The United Nations Human Rights Council yesterday adopted a resolution on the Rohingyas, condemning the atrocities committed against them by the Myanmar security forces and demanded that perpetrators be brought to justice in Geneva yesterday. Brought by Bangladesh, it was passed by 33 votes. Nine countries, including India, refrained from voting while three others - China, Burundi and the Philippines voted against it.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith has sought more Saudi Arabian investments in infrastructure, power and other sectors in Bangladesh, saying the government is providing all sorts of supports to the investors. He said this to the media after having a meeting with a Saudi Arabian business team at Commerce Ministry in Dhaka yesterday. Mr. Muhith urged the authorities concerned to take necessary steps for diversifying export market in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) for reducing the trade gap between the two countries. He informed that the Saudi business delegation and Bangladesh business community will sign several agreements today. Commerce Minister Tofail ahmed was present at the function.

The Asian Development Bank has approved \$ 583 million debt financing and partial risk guarantees to develop the Reliance Bangladesh Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and Power Project. The project, which includes a power generation facility to be located in Meghnaghat near Dhaka and an LNG Terminal near Kutubdia Island in Chittagong, will significantly increase power generation and improve energy infrastructure in the country.

Swedish Embassy to Bangladesh through Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and WaterAid Bangladesh signed an agreement on a five-year project called 'WASH4UrbanPoor', for slums and low-income communities. During its tenure, the project will reach 450,000 people in slums and low income communities across three major cities Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna and three municipalities Paikgacha, Shakhipur and Saidpur. The project aims to reduce water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) deprivations among the urban poor through increased access to climate resilient WASH services, pro-poor local WASH governance and improved coordination with other services.

The Indian West Bengal provincial government is keen to establish air connectivity between Bagdogra Airport near Siliguri city and Dhaka to enhance industrialization, trade and commerce in the sub-Himalayan region. Minister for the Department of North Bengal Development of the Government of West Bengal Rabindranath Ghosh said this yesterday while addressing 'The 5th North Bengal Conclave 2017' organized by North Bengal Zonal Council of Confederation of Indian Industry at Hotel Sinclairs in Siliguri city. Officials, business leaders, entrepreneurs, industrialists of Bhutan, Bangladesh and eight northern districts of West Bengal participated in the conclave arranged for making North Bengal a prominent regional investment destination.

The key index of Dhaka Stock Exchange, DSEX, increased 0.38 per cent, or 23.98 points, to close at 6,286.75 points yesterday after losing 44 points in the previous two sessions.

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