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**News Brief**

The ECNEC has approved a total of 14 projects involving Taka 18,482.92 crore. The approval was made at the ECNEC meeting held at Sher-E-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair. The ECNEC meeting approved the construction of flood shelters at flood prone areas with Taka 1,507.43 crore. The meeting also approved development of infrastructures of 3,000 dilapidated private secondary schools in the country. The meeting also gave nod to the 'Greater Chittagong rural infrastructure development project-3' involving an estimated cost of Taka 1,290 crore.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the two-day Bangladesh Development Forum today with the theme 'Partnership for development'. The main focus of BDF will be the review of the 7<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan alongside sharing the country's challenges and way forward on SDGs. Finance Minister AMA Muhith will chair the inaugural session to be held in Dhaka.

Bangladesh and Myanmar have signed a document on 'Physical Arrangement' which will facilitate return of Rohingyas to their homeland from Bangladesh. The 'Physical Arrangement' stipulates that the repatriation would be completed preferably within two years from the commencement of repatriation. Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque and Myanmar Permanent Secretary Myint Thu led the respective sides at the meeting in Naypyidaw yesterday. The repatriation process would start on next Tuesday. Both countries agreed to form two technical working groups- one on verification and the other on return. Meanwhile, UNHCR stressed on the importance of Rohingyas' return meeting the international standards saying that they are willing to be part of these talks on repatriation.

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed the "Bank Company (Amendment) Bill, 2018" with a view to bringing some changes in the process of nomination to the top positions of the bank and tenure of the directors. Finance Minister AMA Muhith moved the bill in the House. In reply to a question at the House, Minister for Water Resources Anwar Hossain said, the government has finalized an interim water sharing agreement framework of the River Teesta. He hoped, the government will be able to sign the Teesta River water sharing agreement based on equality.

Former Indian President Pranab Mukherjee has sought a thorough academic investigation into the assassinations of South Asia's independence leaders such as Bangabandhu and Mahatma Gandhi. He came up with the proposal as the Chittagong University conferred upon him a honorary D. Litt on its campus yesterday. Mr Mukherjee asked particularly the researchers of South Asian universities to explore reasons behind a common fact that saw assassinations of the region's top independence leaders soon after the independence of subcontinent countries, exposing them to a leadership vacuum and instability.

World Bank Vice President for the South Asia Region Annette Dixon has praised Bangladesh of increasing its capacity in project implement and fund disbursement in last six years. She told reporters after a meeting with Finance Minister AMA Muhith at the Secretariat yesterday. During the meeting, they discussed various issues, including the progress of Bangladesh economy and the World Bank-supported projects.

US Ambassador in Dhaka Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat has said, bilateral trade between the USA and Bangladesh reached an impressive US\$ 6.8 billion in 2016. She noted, the United States is the top single-country export destination for Bangladeshi products. The envoy said this while exchanging views with the leaders of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries at the port city yesterday. The US envoy said, while the United States imported US\$ 5.9 billion of products from Bangladesh in 2016, it exported just US\$ 895 million worth of goods the same year.

DSEX, the benchmark index of the Dhaka Stocks Exchange, settled yesterday at 6,129points.

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