

**PRESS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH
DHAKA**

MOST URGENT

FOR: BANGLADOOT, ALL MISSIONS

MSG: 119/2017

Date: Friday, 16 June 2017

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News Brief

Bangladesh and Sweden have pledged to work together to combat terrorism and identified new areas of cooperation, like energy security, technological innovation, trade and development of smart cities. The consensus came during the official talks between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Swedish counterpart Stefan Lovfen in Stockholm yesterday. The Swedish Premier at the talks said the visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has opened up the 'next phase of relations' between the two countries. Lofven also expressed Swedish interest to assist Bangladesh in technology innovation and highlighted the role of the private sector in this regard.

According to a joint statement issued on Thursday, Dhaka and Stockholm agreed to work together for transition of the relation to a broader level in the areas of economic cooperation and encourage more bilateral foreign direct investments. They also committed to upholding international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and preserving open and democratic societies. The two Prime Ministers also committed to cooperate within the framework of Global Deal in order to ensure decent work for workers and achieve increased productivity and growth. Both the governments reiterated their strong commitment to a positive and constructive outcome from the ongoing multilateral discussions on the Global Compact on Migration aiming at facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration. The governments of Bangladesh and Sweden encouraged the academic and research communities of both countries to explore further cooperation and to extend it to new areas.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, now in Stockholm on a three-day bilateral visit to Sweden, on Thursday visited Swedish Parliament and held a meeting with acting Speaker Tobias Billstrom. She had an audience with Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf at the Royal Palace. She also held meetings with Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden Isabella Lovin at the Deputy Prime Minister's Office while Swedish Minister for Justice and Migration Morgan Johansson made a call on the Prime Minister at the Grand Hotel. Later, she joined a community reception in the evening at the City Conference Center. She also attended a business dialogue with the Bangladeshi and Swedish business leaders.

Earlier on Wednesday night, a red carpet was rolled out as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina arrived Sweden. A Scandinavian Airlines flight carrying the PM and members of her entourage landed at Arlanda Airport at about 9:40 pm (local time). The Prime Minister was given a guard of honour by the Swedish armed forces.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has expressed deep shock over huge casualties and large-scale devastations caused by landslides in five southeastern hill districts of Bangladesh. In a condolence message sent to President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Russian President conveyed sympathy and support to the bereaved families of the victims and wished immediate recovery of the injured.

The UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Robert D Watkins has expressed solidarity with the landslides victims, and has assured the government that the UN System would continue to support ongoing efforts aimed at restoring services and providing emergency supplies to the affected. Besides, Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund are also conducting assessments and helping with the response.

Foreign Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali said Rohingyas may become a threat for national security in the future. "Among the Cox's Bazar population, 20-25 per cent people are now Rakhine Muslims. Such huge Rohingyas may become a threat for national security in the future," the Foreign Minister informed the Parliament yesterday. The minister said Myanmar intruders are harming Bangladesh in terms of social, economic, political and environmental aspects. "They're contributing to a law and order slide by engaging in various misdeeds. They are also putting a negative influence on our overseas labour market."

The government has appointed two law firms in the US and Canada for bringing the fugitive convicted killers of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman back home, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan told parliament yesterday. In reply to lawmakers' queries, he said as part of the legal procedures to bring back the killers, the government started confiscating their non-movable properties and freezing their bank accounts.

The Chinese government will set up a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) on 783 acres of land in Chittagong's Anwara upazila under a government to government deal. Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) Executive Chairman Paban Chowdhury and China Harbour Engineering Company Ltd. (CHEC) CFO Shengquan Xiong signed a shareholder agreement for setting up the SEZ-Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone- which is expected to attract US\$2.0 billion in investment. The deal signing ceremony was held at the PMO yesterday.

The DSE broad index yesterday rose 0.15 per cent or 8.60 points to close at 5468.32 points.

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