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News brief

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) leaders to dedicate themselves to strengthen maritime cooperation for a peaceful and prosperous Indian Ocean, exploring seas for common benefit. The Prime Minister said this while delivering her statement in the general debate on Strengthening Maritime Cooperation for a Peaceful, Stable, and Prosperous Indian Ocean Rim at the IORA Leaders' Summit at Jakarta Convention Center in the Indonesian capital. The Premier particularly proposed setting up of a maritime university in Bangladesh to create a pool of skilled mariners for the region.

Prime Minister attended the simultaneous signing of IORA Concord by 21 HODs, visited the trade exhibition area accompanied by the President of Indonesia and other heads of delegation and joined the social launch at the Jakarta Convention Center. She later attended the closing ceremony of the IORA Leaders' Summit. After concluding her three-day visit, The Premier is scheduled to return home this afternoon.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday requested the Indonesian government to play a role in sending back the Myanmar refugees from Bangladesh. The Prime Minister made this request during a bilateral meeting with Indonesian President Joko Widodo on the sidelines of the IORA Leaders' Summit. The Indonesian President said, his country want to make contribution to Bangladesh's rail sector.

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have agreed to move forward the process of signing a free trade agreement (FTA) between the two countries to boost bilateral trade. The decision came during a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena held in Jakarta.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to make friendlier the visa regime for Bangladeshi nationals, especially for business visas. The Prime Minister made the request when State Minister of UAE Dr Maitha Salem Al-Shamsi called on her at the Jakarta Convention Center.

During a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Jakarta Convention Center, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Nobuo Kishi highly lauded the bold steps taken by Bangladesh in combating terrorism and extreme violence. In another meeting, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of India V K Singh discussed the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India in April.

President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have issued separate messages on the occasion of The International Women's Day. In his message, the President said, It's possible to change the country's overall scenario through ensuring gender equality in national development. In her message, the Prime Minister urged all to build developed, prosperous Bangladesh ensuring women's participation in the mainstream of the national development establishing gender equality at workplace.

The Parliament yesterday passed the 'Bangladesh Accreditation Council Bill, 2017' to establish an accreditation council to ensure the standard of higher education in both public and private institutions in the country. Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid moved the bill in the House and it was passed by voice vote.

Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu yesterday told Parliament that the government is going to set up a new factory with a capacity to produce 2,800 tonnes fertiliser per day to reduce the import dependence. Minister also said there will be no compromise over relocation of Hazaribagh tanneries to Savar tannery estate.

Law Minister Anisul Huq said steps have been taken for the implementation of provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The Law Minister, who is leading a delegation to the meeting, said the Bangladesh will ingrain a culture of human rights in all spheres of society.

The government has decided to allow the export of sand to Singapore and Maldives at Tk 1 per cubic foot. The decision was taken at a meeting with Land Minister Shamsur Rahman Sharif in the chair.

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid said the government is annoyed with Chevron for initiating a deal of transferring its asset here to a Chinese company without responding to Bangladesh's offer. He said this to journalists after attending a meeting in the city on Monday.

The Bangladesh government and IBM Corporation have jointly launched IBM Global Entrepreneur Programme (GEP) to help grow local startup businesses. ICT Division and IBM signed a MoU with regard to this at State Minister of ICT Junaid Ahmed Palak's office at ICT Tower in the capital yesterday.

State Minister for Posts and Telecommunications Tarana Halim yesterday said the government will sit with the Facebook authorities this month to prevent posting of 'offensive' contents. She said this while speaking at the inaugural program of a two-day international workshop on cyber crimes and safe internet in a city hotel.

DSEX, the prime index of the DSE, settled yesterday at 5622.49 points.