Handout Number : 2887

12th ASEM Summit

**Foreign Miniser delivers his statement**

Dhaka, October 19 :

The 12th Asia- Europe Summit (12th ASEM) held in Brussels on 18-19 October 2018 with the theme 'Global Partners for Global Challenges'. Foreign Minister of Bangladesh A H Mahmood Ali led the Bangladesh delegation in this 12th ASEM Summit.

 Today, Bangladesh Foreign Minister delivered his statement in the second plenary titled 'Reinforcing the Multilateral System: Advancing the ASEM Partnership on Global Challenges.'

 In his speech he projected before the forum Bangladesh’s democratic, secular and progressive identity as well as her effort to promote global peace, progress and prosperity as envisioned by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Citing the issue of forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals who took shelter in Bangladesh, Foreign Minister Ali expressed his gratitude to the international community for their continued support to Bangladesh for resolving this complex issue with Myanmar and expressed his hope that the first batch of eight thousand Rohingya people would be able to return to their original villages in Rakhine State soon. He also stressed the need for creating great connectivity between Asia and Europe in order to develop infrastructure, institutions and people to people contact for overall progress.

 Leader from fifty three ASEM partners attended this grand Summit. In the summit it is decided that Cambodia will host the next ASEM Summit in 2020.

 There were two plenaries and one retreat sessions altogether during the summit where leaders of Asia and Europe exchanged views on contemporary issues of global importance such as SDGs, migration, climate change, cyber security, fair trade, women rights, forcibly displaced people etc.

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Tohidul/Mahmud/Abbas/2018/2355 Hours

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Handout Number : 2884

**Foreign Minister met European Leaders**

**on the sidelines of 12th ASEM Summit**

Dhaka, October 19 :

 Foreign Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali met President of the Swiss Confederation Alain Berset, the Maltese Foreign Minister Carmelo Abela and Portuguese Secretary of State for European Affairs Ambassador Anna Paula Zacarias yesterday on the sidelines of 12th ASEM Summit currently underway (18-19 October 2018) at the European Union HQs in Brussels.

  President of Swiss Confederation Alain Berset reassured 'strong support' for resolution of the Rohingya crisis. He further said that '[he] couldn't be more thankful' for what Bangladesh has done hosting the Rohingyas, including sincere efforts to find a stable and peaceful resolution of the crisis.

 President Berset also thanked the Foreign Minister for his very successful visit to Bangladesh on 4-7 February 2018, first ever by any Swiss President since establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1972, when he met with President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, as well as Foreign Minister Ali himself and also paid a visit to the Rohingya camps and one hospital supported by Switzerland in Cox'sbazaar. He further mentioned about his brief meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the sidelines of the recently concluded UN General Assembly held in New York (September 2018) and expressed deep satisfaction about the ongoing excellent bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Switzerland.

 Foreign Minister Ali thanked Swiss President for full support in the Rohingya crisis and expressed hope that Bangladesh and Switzerland will remain committed to further strengthen the existing excellent relations both bilaterally and also at multilateral foras.

 Maltese Foreign Minister Carmelo Abela conveyed that Malta is keen to have more engagements with Bangladesh, as both sides 'need to foster good cooperation' to take the relationship to higher level. He further referred to the pending bilateral instruments i.e., MoUs on Political Consultations and Collaboration between respective Foreign Service training institutes. The Maltese Foreign Minister reiterated his invitation to Foreign Minister Ali to visit Malta and sign those instruments. He also sought Bangladesh's support for Maltese candidature for the non-permanent seat of the UN Security Council for the term 2023-2024.

 Foreign Minister Mahmood Ali also attended the opening ceremony of 12th ASEM Summit in the evening, where more than 45 heads of states/governments, and a few foreign ministers including himself, are leading respective country delegations. He also attended the official Summit Dinner.

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Tohidul/Selim/Parvez/Salimuzzaman/2018/1700 Hrs