**PRESS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT**

### GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH

### DHAKA

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**News Brief**

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 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves Dhaka today for London en route to Sweden on a three-day bilateral tour to the Scandinavian country at the invitation of her Swedish counterpart Stefan Löfven. This will be the first-ever bilateral visit by any head of state or government of Bangladesh to Sweden, which is expected to expand cooperation between the two countries on a number of bilateral and regional issues.A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the Prime Minister and her entourage will depart Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 12 noon. The flight is expected to land at Heathrow International Airport at 6:00 pm (local time).

 Seven countries in the Asia-Pacific region will extend duty facilities to 6,029 more goods exported by Bangladesh in line with a revised free trade agreement. The proposal for the second revision of the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) received its final approval from the cabinet led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday. Under the existing APTA, India, China and five other countries grant duty benefits to 4,648 products from Bangladesh. The revision will increase the number to 10,677. The cabinet also approved, in principle, the draft of Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute Act-2017. The Cabinet members congratulated three Bangladesh-origin British nationals Tulip Rezwana Siddique, Rushnara Ali and Rupa Haque for their win as member of the House of Commons in the recently held polls in the UK.

 Bangladesh Armed Forces jointly hosted an Iftar party in honour of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Senakunja of Dhaka Cantonment yesterday. Before the Iftar, the Prime Minister exchanged pleasantries with the members of the armed forces and other dignitaries, and enquired about their wellbeing.

 Bangladesh has taken initiatives to amend the labour law to protect the interests of workers in line with instructions from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), said Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday. The draft of the Export Processing Zone Act has been brought back from the parliamentary standing committee to incorporate provisions aimed at easing formation of trade unions, he said. Minister Huq made the comments during a meeting with ILO Director General Guy Ryder at the United Nations building in Geneva.

 Prime Minister’s Adviser for International Affairs Gowher Rizvi has felicitated the extraordinary growth of the Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BGCCI). The chamber started officially in June 2003. The two-way trade between the countries is more than $5 billion with Bangladesh’s exports making up most of it.

 Russian Ambassador in Dhaka Alexander Ignatov has said that they are looking forward to working closely with Bangladesh for the sake of progress and stability. The Russian ambassador made the remarks in a message marking the Russia Day - the national day of the Russian Federation. He said this year Russia and Bangladesh celebrate the 45th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations. The economic collaboration between the two countries is on the rise, he added. "Till the end of 2016, we had a record-high trade turnover for two years in a row, which exceeded $1.4 billion."

 The government has appointed Md Zulfiqur Rahman as the next Ambassador of Bangladesh to Brazil. Currently he is serving as the Ambassador of Bangladesh to Republic of Korea.

 The government appointed 27 new assistant attorney generals (AAGs) and relieved 23 of their duties from the same post.

 The annual flagship event for the South and Southeast Asian nations to promote regional trade and investment kicked off in Kunming yesterday. Twelve Bangladeshi entrepreneurs are participating in the expo showcasing their products mainly clothing and handicrafts.

 The Business Finance for the Poor in Bangladesh, a five-year programme funded with UK aid, will invest Tk 333 crore to develop the country's micro and small enterprises. Private companies and individuals can now submit business concepts to avail funds from the project. The information was shared yesterday at a roundtable at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

 The key index of Dhaka Stock Exchange, DSEX, declined by 5.05 points, or 0.09 per cent, to stand at 5,450.11 points on Monday.

**Kamrun Nahar**

Principal Information Officer

Ph-02-9546091