

# Britain, EU fail to reach Brexit deal

AFP, Brussels

Britain and the EU failed to strike a Brexit divorce deal during talks in Brussels yesterday, but said they were "confident" of reaching an accord later this week.

British Prime Minister Theresa May and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker fell short of a breakthrough, despite encouraging progress on the thorny issue of the Irish border.

The EU says Britain must make sufficient progress on key divorce issues -- Ireland, Britain's financial bill for leaving the bloc, and the rights of EU nationals in Britain -- to allow the opening of trade and transition talks at a summit on December 15.

"Despite our best efforts and the significant progress we and our teams have made in the past days on the remaining withdrawal issues, it was not possible to reach a complete agree-

ment today," Juncker said at a joint news conference with May.

"This is not a failure... I am very confident that we will reach an agreement in the course of this week."

Juncker, a former Luxembourg prime minister, said May was a "tough negotiator and not an easy one."

May said differences remained on a "couple of issues".

"But we will reconvene before the end of the week, and I am also confident we will conclude this positively," May said.

The failure of the talks came despite EU president Donald Tusk saying just hours earlier that negotiators were "getting closer to sufficient progress" at the December summit, and that he was "encouraged" by a phone call with Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar.

Tusk -- who was to see May later in Brussels, and who cancelled a Middle East trip because of the "crucial" talks -- said

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## 2 female pilots to join

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Tamanna, who was commissioned in December of 2012, said they have undergone the necessary BAF training at different stages in the last few months ahead of their UN peacekeeping mission.

"We have operated helicopters in Chittagong Hill Tracts to have mountain flying experience because the mission area in Congo is mountainous," she said.

The BAF contingent was deployed with an aviation unit and an air field support unit in the Democratic Republic of Congo for UN Peacekeeping mission in 2003, according to the BAF website.

Female officials from BAF have already been operational in Congo for the last seven years while the duo will be the first-ever female pilots to join in, said Nayma.

"Bangladesh has gotten glorious achievement in UN peacekeeping missions. We will serve our duty with keeping such achievements intact," she added.

BAF selected them as combat pilots considering the professional risks and challenges, says an Inter Services Public Relations handout, provided to media during yesterday's drill.

They started ground training in August, 2014 and flight training in September of the same year in Jessore. After approximately 25 hours of training, they were able to undertake solo flights successfully.

They performed duties in different operational squadrons of BAF after completing 65 hours of basic helicop-

ter conversion training, says the ISPR handout. They have undergone training in aviation medicine course in India and performed as operational pilots in Operation Uttaron in CHT.

Nayma said her family members are nervous but on top of that they are thrilled and blessed her for the mission.

The society is becoming welcoming for women as more of them are shining in different sectors at present, said the BAF official.

She added that alongside them, a few more female pilots are also in the pipeline. They are undergoing training in Jessore air base at present.

BAF is a dynamic force which maintains discipline. The ambiance for women professionals is friendly here, she added.

"I am hopeful that more women will take challenging professions like combat piloting in BAF," she said, emphasising the need for one's dedication and hard labour behind any success.

Tamanna said BAF is a very much supportive institution for women as anyone can succeed there upon completion of their qualification. She grew up in an air force family as her father Lutfor Rahman was also a BAF officer.

Born on June 5, 1993 in Jessore, Tamanna completed BSc (Aero) from Bangladesh University of Professionals in 2013.

On the other hand, Nayma's father Nazmul Haque is a retired official of the Department of Agricultural Extension. She was born on April 20, 1990 in Dhaka.

Like Tamanna, she also completed BSc (Aero) from BUP in 2013.



Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni hands over gifts to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh yesterday on the second day of Hasina's three-day official visit to the Southeast Asian country.

PHOTO: BSS

## Hasina seeks support from Cambodia

FROM PAGE 1

Hasina said they discussed some of the security challenges facing the region and expressed their common resolve to fight terrorism and extremism.

"We've also discussed the Rohingya crisis that threatens peace and stability of our region. Bangladesh continues to shelter more than 1 million Rohingyas. Of them, around seven lakh fled atrocities in Myanmar and took shelter in Bangladesh recently."

Describing Cambodia as a close regional neighbour of Bangladesh, the PM said the two countries share common aspirations to promote peace, security and development. "We cooperate closely in many regional and global forums, including at ARE, ASEM, ACD and the UN."

She said her visit to Cambodia has been extremely fruitful as Prime Minister Hun Sen and she remained committed to taking the bilateral relations to a new height.

The PM said Bangladesh has proposed holding the first Joint Commission, to be headed by two foreign ministers, in Dhaka next year.

Bangladesh and Cambodia were also considering a proposal for opening resident diplomatic missions in each other's capital, she added.

She said the Bangalee and the Khmer nations share ancient cultural linkages, a Sanskrit and Pali inspired script, and a common new year in the

month of April.

She lauded Hun Sen for the robust growth and development of his country.

The Cambodian PM said they, during the bilateral talks, discussed the Rohingya issue.

"We highly appreciate Bangladesh [for sheltering forcibly displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar]. Though Bangladesh has a population of over 160 million, it took the refugee issue on its shoulder."

Hun Sen also hoped Bangladesh and Myanmar would work together smoothly for the safe return of the refugees to Myanmar.

The Cambodian PM said his country supports the request from Bangladesh to be the sectoral dialogue partner of Asean and it would work to achieve the goal.

He also noted that through the ongoing second official visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Cambodia, the bilateral relations of the two countries would be strengthened further.

Expressing his gratitude to Hasina for inviting him to visit Bangladesh, he said he accepted the invitation with pleasure.

HUN SEN ADDRESSES PM

AS 'SISTER' Cambodian PM Hun Sen yesterday addressed his Bangladesh counterpart as a "sister," reports BSS.

"At the end of the bilateral talks between the two countries today [yesterday], the Cambodian prime minis-

ter addressed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as a sister," Foreign Secretary M Shahidul Haque told reporters after the meeting at the Peace Palace.

"You're not only the prime minister of Bangladesh, but also a sister of mine. That's why I addressed you as my

sister," the foreign secretary quoted the Cambodian PM as saying.

Shahidul said the Bangladesh PM also addressed Hun Sen as a "brother". It demonstrated special relations between the two Asian countries, he added.

PM MEETS CAMBODIAN KING Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni yesterday expressed his satisfaction over the existing bilateral relations between his country and Bangladesh.

The King made the comment when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina met him at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim said the Hasina was accorded a royal reception at the palace.

During the meeting, the Cambodian king and the PM discussed issues of mutual interests.

Hasina invited the Cambodian king to visit Bangladesh.

Bangabandhu's younger daughter Sheikh Rehana, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon and State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak were present, among others.

Hasina later held meetings with Cambodian Senate President Say Chhum and National Assembly President Heng Samrin.

Wrapping up her three-day visit to the Asian country, the PM is scheduled to return home today afternoon.

### THE 10 DEALS

Agreement on cooperation between the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Cambodian Chamber of Commerce.

MoUs on cooperation in tourism, aquaculture, fisheries and ICT sectors.

MoU on cooperation on labour and vocational training.

MoU on cooperation and collaboration in the preservation of war history, monuments and relics.

MoUs on academic cooperation between Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies and the International Relations Institute of Cambodia.

MoU on promotion of investment between Bangladesh Investment Development Authority and the Council for Development of Cambodia.

MoU on the modalities for institutional cooperation under the Joint Trade Council.

MoU on cooperation and collaboration on matters related to SDGs.

## ZIA TRUST GRAFT CASES Khaleda to appear in court today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is set to appear before a makeshift court today in the capital's Bakshibazar to seek bail in the Zia Orphanage Trust and Zia Charitable Trust graft cases.

"She will appear before the court around 11:00am," Sanaullah Mia, one of Khaleda's lawyers, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Judge Md Akhtaruzzaman would hear the arguments in the Zia Orphanage Trust corruption case. Khaleda would place statements in self-defence in the Zia Charitable Trust corruption case.

On November 30, the same court

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## AL, BNP to face off in DNCC polls

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Insiders said the parties would take the mayoral polls quite seriously as that would be a crucial test of popularity ahead of the next parliamentary elections, scheduled for late next year.

More than 23.45 lakh city dwellers are expected to cast votes to pick the mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation. In terms of population, the DNCC is the largest city corporation of the country.

In last election held on April 28, 2015, BNP-backed mayoral candidate Tabith Awal boycotted the polls on the voting day, alleging widespread rigging.

Assuming the office, the Awami League-led grand alliance government split Dhaka City Corporation into two in November 2011.

The first election to the undivided DCC was held in January 1994, and Mohammad Hanif became the first elected mayor.

AWAMI LEAGUE

Talking to The Daily Star, at least three

central Awami League leaders said the party forum would discuss about the nomination once Sheikh Hasina, prime minister and also the AL chief, returns from Cambodia today. She went to the Southeast Asian country on Sunday.

One of the leaders said the party would nominate someone from the family of Annisul Huq and in that case, his wife Rubana Huq would be the first choice.

The other contenders could be Dhaka City North AL President AKM Rahmatullah, also the MP from Dhaka-11 constituency, Dhaka-9 lawmaker Saber Hossain Chowdhury and former AL lawmaker Sarah Begum Kobori.

Kobori was a mayoral aspirant in the previous DNCC polls.

Contacted, Rahmatullah said he is keen on contesting the upcoming polls. "As a politician, I have the interest in becoming the mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation. But it is Party President Sheikh Hasina who will take

the ultimate decision."

AL Presidium Member Faruk Khan, a former party election coordinator for DNCC, said some leaders have already expressed their willingness to vie for the mayoral post.

"We are yet to formally discuss the issue, but it will be discussed after the return of the prime minister from Cambodia," he said, adding they would formally begin the procedures to pick the party candidate once the EC announced the polls schedule.

Several BNP leaders said the party would participate in the DNCC polls but was yet to decide whether it would contest alone or under the banner of the 20-party alliance.

If the party goes to the polls alone, it might nominate Tabith Awal or Maj (ret'd) Kamrul Islam for the mayor.

BNP Standing Committee Member Moudud Ahmed said, "The party is yet to take any decision. We will participate in the election but we should not hurry

[to pick the candidate]. We should show some respect to the late mayor."

Tabith Awal told The Daily Star, "We are just mourning the death of Annisul Huq. He was like our family member. So I am not thinking anything about the election right now."

Last time, Tabith's father BNP Vice Chairman Abdul Awal Minto had filed the nomination but that got cancelled. Party sources said Minto would not contest the polls this time.

BNP sources also said if the party goes to the polls under the banner of its alliance, it might consider Bangladesh Jatiya Party Chairman Andaleev Rahman Partha or any other alternative for the post.

Contacted, Partha said, "The alliance will decide who will contest the election. We will accept the decision of the alliance."

To finalise the nomination, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia would hold meeting with senior leaders of the party and the alliance, said party sources.

Ahead of the previous mayor election, there were speculations that Bikalpadhara Bangladesh Joint Secretary Mahi B Chowdhury could get the ticket from the alliance, but he did not.

Talking to The Daily Star, he said, "The party is yet to take any decision. We will sit soon and take a decision. The party will not take any decision alone, we will discuss with some other parties."

Dhaka City (North) BNP President MA Quayum's name could also be discussed as a possible party candidate, said party sources.

BNP, which boycotted the last parliamentary polls, is also contesting the city corporation polls ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections.

The AL and the BNP said they looked to summon all their strength to ensure victory in the mayoral polls to six important city corporations as they believe win in those elections would also boost their morale to a great extent and they would be able to go for the Jatiya Sangsad polls with an upbeat.

## 10pc can be hired from outside admin

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because of the proposed provision of 10 percent quota. "It may pave the way for invigorated politicisation of the administration," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He also said such appointments are already being made though their percentage might be very low. "But creating such a scope through a legal framework might weaken the public administration in future," he added.

Contacted, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiqul Alam said the draft was yet to be finalised and there would be some discussions on it.

He mentioned that there is already a provision of 10 percent quota but the number of people appointed through it is very few. "But you will not be able to show that anyone was appointed on political consideration," he said.

A Cabinet Division official, wishing not to be named, said the provision exists under an administrative order and now the government is giving it a legal coverage by incorporating it in the draft law.

appointments and services of civil servants have been regulated by the rules promulgated by the country's presidents at different times, he noted.

The official also said the Awami League government soon after assuming office in 2009 took an initiative to frame a comprehensive law for the government officials aiming at making a merit-based administration which will have performance evaluation system and legal protection.

"The new draft law brought the existing rules under a legal framework. There is nothing good or bad in the proposed law," he added.

An official of the finance ministry said the World Bank gave various proposals to the government on reforms of the civil administration quite long ago. There were some discussions at the government level, but that did not move further, he said.

OTHER PROVISIONS

The draft law made it mandatory for the law enforcers to seek government permission for arresting a public servant before the charge sheet is accepted.

Currently, law enforcers can pick up any government staff before the charge sheet is filed.

However, such permission will not be required for arresting any public servant under the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004.

If a public servant is sentenced to death, life term or more than one year in jail in any criminal case, he/she will be dismissed the day of conviction, the draft said.

It said if any official is handed down one year in jail or pays fines in any criminal case, he/she will get minor punishments, including suspension of promotion and salary hike and relegation of salary to lower scale.

The major punishments the official will get include forced retirement and removal or suspension from the job.

The proposed law said the government can send any official into forced retirement without serving any show-cause notice if he completes 25 years in his/her job.

No public servants will become citizens of any other country. If anyone gets citizenship of another country, the government can send the official on

forced retirement after giving him a chance to come up with explanation in his favour.

The civil servants can take foreign or private jobs following the conditions set by the government. But the official cannot work there for more than five years during the entire service period, said the proposed law.

Officials in the public administration said the draft law was first placed in the cabinet in 2015. The cabinet approved it in principle but sent it back to the ministry with some observations.

In November last year, the draft was again placed in the cabinet which sent it to the secretary-level committee on administrative reforms with some directives for holding discussion on the draft law.

An inter-ministerial meeting was held in December last year on the proposed law. The stakeholders there discussed different provisions of the draft and gave their opinions.

The public administration ministry incorporated the opinions and sent it to the secretary-level committee on administrative reforms for approval.

## Govt plans to build

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Kabir and Chairman of Universal Medical College Hospital Priti Chakraborty yesterday signed a contract at a local hotel to build the resort named "Oboshor" on six-acre land. Finance Minister AMA Muhith and Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan were present.

Muhith expressed hope that the initiative would benefit senior citizens.

The hospital in a statement says there would be about 100 safe residential units and a 50-bed hospital.

The resort would provide comprehensive, in-home, non-medical and personal care services to senior citizens and others in need of assistance.

"Oboshor" facilitates independent living, assisted living and nursing home care in one location, the statement adds.

The resort would have a range of options with multiple facilities. Depending on the age and mobility of the patients, it would also offer accessible accommodation and ground-floor rooms without stairs.

The resort, in one of its documents, said spouses could live close to each other even if one requires a higher level of care. The cost would be reasonable

and affordable, it said.

Priti told reporters the estimated cost of the project is more than Tk 80 crore. She added accommodation cost was not yet fixed but expressed hope that it would be lower if they could manage grants and soft loans.

Ashis told The Daily Star there would be two types of arrangements -- rent and lease.

A person can rent accommodation for three days or a month to leave their elderly father or mother before going abroad or under any such circumstances.

Or a person can take lease of accommodation for 30 to 35 years, he added.

Besides, if children of senior citizens staying in the resort want to stay there, separate dormitory facilities would be available for them, he said.

There will be indoor and outdoor games, fishing and outings in the nearby tea gardens as part of recreational activities.

Currently, the number of senior citizens in the country is about 1.5 crore, which is 7 percent of the total population. Every year the number is increasing at a rate of 4.41 percent due to a rise in the average life span.