

# Hasina

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will be conferred an honorary Doctor of Literature degree by Kazi Nazrul University at Asansol in West Burdwan district.

Hasina is due to leave Dhaka for Kolkata at 8:45am today for a two-day official visit to India at the invitation of Modi.

She will be accompanied by a delegation of 80 members, including Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor and the PM's four advisers on political, economic, international, and energy affairs.

Hasina along with the Indian PM will open the Bangladesh Bhaban at Visva-Bharati. The building has been constructed with the Bangladesh government's fund.

The building will house a library and an archival centre showcasing Rabindranath Tagore's association with Bangladesh, Liberation War of Bangladesh, and Indo-Bangladesh relations.

It will also have an auditorium with a seating capacity of 453, a modern theatre and a display room.

In addition, two large murals of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Rabindranath Tagore have been set up at its entrance.

The Bangladesh Bhaban is a resource centre for visiting academicians and researchers of Bangladesh.

A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the PM and her entourage will take off from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport for Kolkata and is expected to reach Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata at 9:15am local time.

After her reception at the airport, Hasina will go to Santiniketan near Bolpur in Birbhum district, approximately 160-km north of Kolkata, by a helicopter.

Visva-Bharati Vice-Chancellor Prof Sabuj Koli Sen will receive Hasina at Santiniketan, while Modi will later welcome her at the Rabindra Bhaban of the university. Modi will address the convocation of Visva-Bharati -- of which he is the chancellor. Hasina too will be there.

Later, Hasina and Modi will jointly open the newly constructed Bangladesh Bhaban at Visva-Bharati founded by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata will also be there.

After the inaugural ceremony, Hasina and Modi will hold a bilateral meeting at the Bangladesh Bhaban.

The next day, she will visit Kazi Nazrul University in Asansol where she will receive an honorary D Litt. Hasina will deliver a speech at the convocation of the university. Besides, veteran Indian actress Sharmila Tagore will also be honoured with D Litt, while renowned physicist SM Yusuf of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre will be conferred an honorary D Sc degree at the programme.

Mamata will be present at the convocation as the chief guest, while West Bengal Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi will address the ceremony as the chancellor. From there, Hasina will return to Kolkata in the afternoon and will visit Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Museum at Netaji Bhaban, the ancestral home of Subhas, a great patriot of the freedom movement in India.

The PM will return home tomorrow night.

**HASINA-MAMATA MEETING**  
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata yesterday said she would hold a meeting with Hasina in Kolkata tomorrow, but the Teesta river water-sharing issue would not be discussed, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

"We will be meeting in Kolkata before she [Hasina] leaves for Bangladesh the day after tomorrow. There is no place for discussion on Teesta river," Mamata told reporters in Santiniketan where she will attend the convocation of Visva-Bharati and inauguration of the Bangladesh Bhaban there by Hasina and Modi.

Her remarks set at rest speculation if Hasina and Mamata will have a separate meeting during Hasina's visit to India. Mamata, who has been stridently opposing the Teesta treaty for the last seven years, said she shared a very cordial relationship with Hasina and no geographical or political boundary could create differences between West Bengal and Bangladesh as they have the same culture and language.

"I admire Hasina-didi most and she loves me. Our relationship is very honest and everlasting. I hope the relations between India and Bangladesh will grow stronger with time," she said.

# Join monetary

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She appreciated the solidarity that Bangladesh and its host community demonstrated by sheltering some 700,000 Rohingyas, who fled military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine state since August last year, and joined some 300,000 others who had fled the earlier waves of violence in Myanmar.

The UN in a joint response plan in March appealed for \$950 million in humanitarian assistance for the some 1 million Rohingya and 300,000 locals affected by the refugee influx.

Only 17 percent of the money has so far been received, said Kanem, also executive director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

She said the weather-related crisis could aggravate the situations and abrupt the UN ability to "safeguard the lives of women and girls who already have been affected by an unprecedented amount of violence."

"They have found the refuge across the border here. Now the very basic needs of survival -- food, appropriate shelter, and the ability to feel safe and protected -- are barely within reach," she told reporters.

"It threatens our ability to feed over 855,000 on a daily basis. As UNFPA, we have at least 60 newborn babies [at the Rohingya camps] every day. We have at least scores of mothers who are pregnant, who must receive appropriate nutrition, appropriate antenatal care and very importantly, the midwives," the UN official said.

Natalia said the refugee women should be able to have freedom of

mobility within the camp without fear of their safety. UNFPA is providing flash lights so that they may go back and forth to look after them after when the police protection and other forms of physical protection are not available.

"We will need to have much more solar and other types of sustainable lighting in the camps in order for the women to move about safely."

Asked on holding the perpetrators accountable, Kanem said women and girls bear the brunt not only of displacement but also of sexual and gender-based violence.

"As the UN, we are calling for the establishment of effective accountability mechanisms for any human rights violators," she said.

Kanem also said the country is an international success story for reducing total fertility rate, which is 2.3 per mother now, as well as maternal and child deaths.

However, it was important to reduce the child marriage and early pregnancy to sustain the progress. Presently 66 percent girls marry before they reach 18 years.

She said the UNFPA is working with Bangladesh government to ensure that adolescent girls' education is not disrupted for their marriage and pregnancy.

"We are having great impacts but these need to be accelerated," Kanem said, adding that she highlighted these aspects during her meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

# 'Yaba village' unscathed

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but in the last seven years, about 100 villas, some costing Tk 5-7 crore, have been built there.

Most of the locals were labourers and rickshaw pullers. But now many of them have turned their fortunes. They can now afford lavish cars too.

But it is not a fairy tale rags to riches story in which entire villages start to prosper overnight.

Some of the locals became rich smuggling yaba pills from bordering Myanmar, said their neighbours.

According to local sources, about 400 people are involved in yaba smuggling in Nazirpara and Moulvipara. Nearly 150 of them run large-scale yaba trade and have amassed significant wealth over the last few years. They built some 150 new villas and mansions in the two villages.

As the special drive against yaba dealers goes on, questions arise as to why some alleged yaba godfathers in Ukhia-Teknaf, the gateway of smuggling the crazy drug into Bangladesh, remain beyond the reach of the law.

Their names have prominently figured in multiple intelligence reports over the years.

Yesterday, The Daily Star correspondent visited the villages and talked to several locals.

The air was tensed. Many went into hiding and those who stayed behind were scared even to talk. The reason for their fear is that around 52 alleged drug dealers have been killed in "shootouts" with law enforcers over the last 10 days.

One of the home-ministry listed yaba godfathers in Nazirpara village, just two kilometres away from Teknaf town, is Nurul Haque Bhutto.

Bhutto has a luxurious duplex surrounded by high walls. He has security guards round-the-clock.

He had been arrested by law enforcers in connection with yaba smuggling in the past but he jumped bail recently.

In May, 2016, Bhutto, then 34, led a group of people who swooped on journalists with sharp weapons when they went to Nazirpara to collect information about yaba smuggling.

The attackers hurt five journalists and also took away their cameras and mobile phones and vandalised their vehicle.

Locals claim that Bhutto and his family members accumulated over Tk 100 crores smuggling the drug into Bangladesh and shipping them inland.

Talking to this paper yesterday, a villager of Nazirpara said, "The yaba cartel has their paid employees deployed all over the village. Whenever a stranger arrives, they follow his or her every movement like detectives."

The villager said most yaba godfathers in the two villages went into hiding following the recent crackdown. A few low-tier dealers are still in the villages but they do not go out during the day now.

A shop owner in Moulvipara said two sibling godfathers and another top leader of a drug smuggling gang went on the run in the last four days fearing the crackdown would eventually reach the villages.

The shop owner said the siblings could be seen all the time at the market but they just vanished.

A local farmer told The Daily Star that he himself was involved in the drug trade but returned to farming a few years ago. He said most of the yaba barons might have taken shelter in their second homes in Chittagong and Dhaka.

Officer-in-Charge Ranjit Kumar Barua of Teknaf Police Station said yaba traders and peddlers dominate the villages. Most of the top yaba traders in Teknaf are from the two villages. Law enforcers and different intelligence units monitor the villages, he claimed, adding that most of the yaba traders left their homes following the crackdown.

Additional Superintendent of Cox's Bazar Police Muhammad Afrozul Haque Tutul said police have already captured some yaba peddlers and have gathered intelligence on the bosses.

"Hopefully, we will have some success soon," he told this paper over the phone.

He refused to acknowledge that Nazirpara and Moulvipara are known as "Yaba Villages".

# Provide info

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three times previously.

"The CEDAW committee's rare request for Myanmar to report on sexual violence against Rohingya women and girls outside normal reporting procedures shows the extreme nature of the military's mass atrocities," said Sky Wheeler, women's rights emergencies researcher at HRW. "The government should cease its shameful denials and start openly cooperating with international monitors."

The CEDAW committee's request followed numerous reports of Myanmar army-led attacks on Rohingya Muslims, including mass killings, rape and other sexual violence, and widespread arson in hundreds of predominantly Rohingya villages, forcing more than 717,000 Rohingyas to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh since August 2017.

The joint report by HRW and Fortify Rights includes information based on hundreds of interviews with Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, including 37 women and girls who were raped in August and September 2017, mostly by gangs of uniformed soldiers.

Witnesses and survivors also saw many other women and girls raped in groups, which amounted to patterns of gang rapes, as well as biting, kicking, and other physical abuse. Many recounted soldiers killing their elderly parents or children, even by throwing their infants into fires.

"Myanmar's security forces used brutal gang rapes to terrify and injure as part of their ongoing attack on the Rohingya population," said Matthew Smith, chief executive officer at Fortify Rights. "The authorities' denials, essentially saying Rohingya women are liars, compound the terrible harms inflicted."

The CEDAW committee also requested that the Myanmar government report on any efforts to provide justice and other reparations to victims of sexual violence, as well as on access to sexual and reproductive health care for Rohingya women and girls.

Successive Myanmar governments have persecuted the Rohingya for decades, denying them citizenship rights, freedom of movement, and equal access to education and healthcare.

"Myanmar has repeatedly ignored international calls for information and access," Smith said. "The CEDAW committee's report request was an important step, but the UN should now ramp up its pressure on the government to end its atrocities against women and girls as well as its denials of the abuses ever taking place."

# World should

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in 1975, saying, "Those incidents taught us to stand beside humanity during anyone's bad time."

Hasina said her government has been making efforts to give the Rohingyas all the support, but it is not possible for the government alone to mitigate their sufferings.

Unicef and other international agencies should come forward with more support, she said.

**'WORLD'S RESPONSIBILITY'**

Speaking at a press conference later in the day, Priyanka told the world, "Open your hearts with compassion. Please be sympathetic and treat these [Rohingya] children as your own."

She asked what will happen to the world when there is a huge generation of children that become vulnerable to violence as there is rising trend of violence happening all around the world.

"Do we need anymore [violence]?... the only thing I can see is a generation of children who don't have education, healthcare and who will be vulnerable to violence," Priyanka told a packed room at Le Meridien Dhaka hotel.

"The refugee children are the world's responsibility. Because they don't have anywhere to go, they don't have anyone to call their own."

She asked the audience what would happen if their children would face something that the Rohingya children are facing today.

"This is possible. Countries are being bombed, people are being killed. If that happens to your children, would you want someone to help them? That's the same question."

"A child is a child. It doesn't matter where they come from...where they are going, what their religion is, what country they come from. It is the responsibility of the globe."

She expressed worries over what might happen to the Rohingya children if there is heavy rain and cyclones. The Indian actor, however, said it was also wonderful to see the spirit and shining eyes and hope of the children.

She told story of a 12-year boy, Mansur Ali. Six months ago, the boy drew football field being bombed, arms, and mortar shells dropping off roving helicopters. But now he draws pictures of Bangladesh, sunshine, greenery, thatched roofs and teachers.

This happened in six months during which teachers in the learning centres of Unicef taught them maths, English, Burmese.

"[this is] because humanity has been shown to them. And that's what is important for refugee children around the world. I would really appeal the world to have little bit of compassion for the people who don't have anything."

She also said it was extremely inspiring to see the way the government of Bangladesh and the people have opened up their hearts towards the refugees. "It was incredible to see."

Journalists asked if she has any message to Myanmar where the Rohingya have long been denied citizenship and other basic rights, Priyanka said, "I am too small to speak about the political situation. Or, may be, not aware. I am not someone who believes in blame game. I think that creates more hatred and animosity."

Another question to her was if she can influence Indian government to put pressure on Myanmar over the crisis. In reply, she said in a light mood that if she was a prime minister, she would surely do that.

Priyanka arrived in Bangladesh on Monday on a four-day visit to draw the world's attention to the displaced Rohingya children being sheltered in Bangladesh.

# Cyclone Mekunu pummels Yemeni island, 17 missing

AFP, Socotra

Seventeen people were missing and hundreds of others evacuated from their homes yesterday after Cyclone Mekunu hit the Yemeni island of Socotra, causing severe flooding and damage, officials said.

Neighbouring Oman is preparing for landfall today, with national weather experts expecting Mekunu to intensify to a category two cyclone from category one, after it hit Socotra on Wednesday night.

The missing people had been in two boats that sunk and three vehicles swept away by floods, said Ramzy Mahrous, governor of Socotra, an island paradise 350 kilometres (220 miles) off Yemen in the Arabian Sea.

Yemen's internationally recognised central government early yesterday declared Socotra a "disaster province" and Mahrous said it could not handle relief efforts on its own, with the number of missing expected to rise.

"The coastal areas were submerged by floods causing heavy damage to homes," with more than 10 villages in Socotra's south and east cut off, Mahrous told AFP.

# Still available

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together, you can get them for Tk 200 each," said the 26-year-old who has been taking the pink pills for five years.

He said he bought yaba pills on Monday from Mohammadpur's Geneva Camp, a drug hub popular among the addicts.

On May 4, Rab launched its own anti-narcotics operations while the police headquarters on May 16 instructed all police units across the country to conduct a special 10-day drive from May 18, according to Rab and police officials.

A reporter of The Daily Star visited the Geneva Camp, also known as Bihari Camp, for the last four days.

Narcotics were sold there openly till yesterday, but the number of peddlers and customers dropped significantly since an anti-drugs drive on Tuesday.

During a visit to the camp yesterday evening, this reporter saw seven to eight peddlers loitering near several shops, including Ashraf General Store, Imran Electronics and Ma Jewellers. A number of Yaba users, known to them as customers, bought the pink pills from them.

Seeking anonymity, one of the peddlers said they stopped selling narcotics openly as police have scaled up surveillance in the area.

"We now sell drugs only to trusted customers," he added.

The picture was different on Monday. Around several hundred yards from the main entrance to the camp, about 15 peddlers were seen loitering on a lane with yaba pills in their hands around 1:00pm.

Three to four rickshaw-pullers were seen buying the pink tablets from them, keeping their rickshaws nearby.

One of the peddlers said, "The price is Tk 190. Don't bargain please."

A rickshaw-puller then bought some pills and got out of the camp.

As our reporter approached the rickshaw-puller, he refused to talk.

Mistaking the reporter for a policeman, the rickshaw-puller said, "Please forgive me, sir. I am very poor. Please don't take me away."

As the reporter gave his identity, the rickshaw-puller immediately left the spot.

He was one of the rickshaw-pullers who consume the pink pills and also sell those to other users, a number of camp dwellers later told the correspondent.

In the evening, drugs sale at the spot gained pace as the number of both drug peddlers and consumers rose.

But the situation changed the following day as the narcotics department with the help of police conducted a drive in the camp.

Three peddlers were picked up from there. Police were seen frisking people inside the camp before iftar.

But the peddlers became active again in the evening after the drive ended.

This time, they were alert and were selling the pink pills only to trusted customers.

A number of customers were seen approaching the peddlers who hid the pills inside mobile phones or tiny boxes.

The alarming thing was that they were using children to deliver the pills to customers, found this reporter.

Several drug addicts said they still got the pink pills from their sources, contacting them over the phone. But the prices were a bit higher than those sold on the spot.

Kabir, a university graduate who has been buying yaba from Geneva Camp for over five years, believes this crackdown would not be able to stop yaba trade.

Shoukat Ali, general secretary of Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee, told this newspaper, "More than 40,000 people living in the camp are held hostage to a racket of drug dealers. They are powerful. We welcome the move of the law enforcement agencies."

Several leaders of the platform said a drug racket of 30 run the illegal trade in the camp and maintain close ties with law enforcement agencies and political parties.

The Daily Star could not independently verify their claims.

They also said several hundred youths and teenagers in the camp abuse drugs.

"If anyone from the camp helps catch a drug dealer, the person is targeted and harassed ... People here are scared to say anything against them [drug dealers]," said another leader of the platform, seeking anonymity.

Apart from Bihari Camp, narcotics were available in two known spots in Nilkhet and Chankharpool areas.

Jamil Hasan, a 24-year-old yaba addict, said yaba pills were still sold in the two areas.

"On a narrow lane close to Nilkhet book market, you will spot some child ragpickers who sell the pink pills openly," he said.

In Chankharpool area, the dealers deliver drugs to users upon requests over the phone, added Jamil.

Narcotics were also available in some other parts of the city.

This reporter visited Karwan Bazar railway slum on Tuesday evening, and saw a few peddlers loitering along the railway lines. They were calling potential customers in low voices.

Several residents at Sweeper Colony in Old Dhaka told this reporter on Wednesday that a few peddlers sell

cannabis at a known spot in Gonok Tuli area in the evening. But they were unsure whether yaba pills were also available there.

Asked, Mukul Jyoti Chakma, deputy director (Dhaka Metro) of the Department of Narcotics Control, told this newspaper that they have prepared a list of 37 top drug dealers who control the narcotics trade in the capital.

"We have information about their establishments and wealth. We will take action accordingly," Mukul said on Tuesday after a raid in Bihari Camp.

Biplob Kumar Sarker, deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Tejgaon division) told this newspaper last night that they have been conducting drives in the camp regularly and picking up those found in possession of narcotics.

When informed that narcotics trade was still going on inside the camp, the DC said, "As the place is densely populated, it is tough to search every nook and cranny."

"However, we will keep raiding the spots on the basis of intelligence," he mentioned.

About the top drug dealers in Bihari Camp, Biplob said it is hard to catch the "big fish" as they don't live in the camp.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan vowed to rid Dhaka city of the narcotics menace at any cost.

"Drug peddlers have no place in Dhaka city," he said during an awareness campaign against narcotics in the Farmgate area yesterday.

"We have drawn up a list of drug dealers based on intelligence agencies' information. They will be brought to book one after another," he said, adding that the drug dealers have to pay for their misdeeds.

DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia said, "Anti-narcotics crackdown is underway. We will bust all the drug dens in this city".

In the neighbouring districts of Gazipur and Narayanganj, peddlers were found inactive at the known spots as they delivered drugs to consumers at "safer" places.

The picture was almost the same in Savar as well.

In Chittagong, two alleged drug dealers were killed in a "shootout", but narcotics trade went unabated in the city.

Locals said that fearing "shootout", the top drug dealers went into hiding, but their accomplices were carrying on the illegal trade.

In a joint drive in Barisal Colony area in the port city, police, Chittagong district administration and Bangladesh Railway recently demolished around 30 shanties that were set up for running narcotics trade.

Our Sylhet correspondent reports that the main drug spots in the city remained untouched.

Sylhet Railway Gate and Sweeper Colony were still hotspots for retail trade of yaba, cannabis and other drugs.

Many of the drug dealers changed the spots for the illegal trade as some low-profile peddlers were arrested in recent drives by law enforcers in the city.

The addicts avoided the known spots, instead they phoned the dealers to deliver the narcotics at "safer" places. But they had to pay prices a bit higher than usual.

Our Rajshahi correspondent also gave a similar account of narcotics trade in the city.

In Nilphamari, the drug traders became very alert as they shifted their delivery spots to rural areas, and deals were done on mobile phones, using code words.

Our Chapainawabganj correspondent depicted the same picture in the town.

Most of the drug peddlers in Jhenidah town went into hiding in the face of the anti-narcotics crackdown.

Our Bogra correspondent also gave a similar version.

Drug peddlers in Brahmanbaria changed their tactics. They stopped selling narcotics in the known spots and chose "safer" places to deliver drugs to addicts. They were also providing home-delivery service.

# Traders sued

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Kotwali Police Station, said Officer-in-Charge Mohammed Mohsin of the police station.

According to a case statement, Mizanur took loans over Tk 52.39 crore from Agrani Bank's corporate branch in Laldighi to import a ship on behalf of Mishmak Ship-Breaking Industry from August 19, 2010 to December 9, 2013.

He repaid a small amount of the loan.

Two years ago, Mizanur fled abroad with his family. Before leaving, he also took loans from other banks and didn't pay off those, the case statement said.

According to another case statement, his brother Mujibur had imported a ship after taking over Tk 91.92 crore as loan from the same branch. The incident happened between June 2, 2011 and June 6, 2014.

Mujibur also paid back a small amount of the loan.

Two years ago, Mujibur also fled abroad with his family. Like his brother, Mujibur misappropriated a handsome amount of money from other banks, said the case statement.