



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Vice-Chancellor of Visva-Bharati University Prof Sabuj Koli Sen attend the annual convocation of the university at Santiniketan, Birbhum, yesterday. Right, the two prime ministers see the model of Bangladesh Bhavan at Visva-Bharati.

PHOTO: PID

Hasina calls for int'l support

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Rohingya refugees," the state minister said.
On the issue of Teesta water-sharing, he said, "We have full faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi... A track II dialogue [backchannel diplomacy] is already on regarding this issue."
ROHINGYA REPATRIATION
"There are 11 lakh Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. We have given them shelter due to humanitarian consideration, we want them to go back to their land... We appeal to all to keep up pressure on the government of Myanmar to take them back," Hindustan Times quoted Hasina as telling the inauguration.
"When the question of giving them shelter in Bangladesh was raised, I said if we could feed 16 crore people, we could also offer food to a few lakhs. If need be, we would share our food," said Hasina, who turned emotional

during the speech.
Accommodating Rohingya refugees is an issue on which the establishments in Delhi and Dhaka differ. Settlement of refugees also divides the ruling party of West Bengal and the establishment in Delhi.
While the Modi government wants to deport all Rohingya refugees, who are considered as the most persecuted ethnic minority in the world, the West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee has expressed support for them last year, according to the Hindustan Times report.
Hasina also hinted at the unresolved issues with Delhi, including the long-pending Teesta water-sharing deal, although she did name any during the inauguration.
"Neighbours do have problems, but we can resolve them through discussions. I don't want to bring it up and spoil this excellent programme," said

Hasina, who is on a two-day visit there on Modi's invitation.
Modi along with Mamata Banerjee, who has been steadfastly opposing the Teesta treaty for the last eight years, was on the dais as Hasina spoke.
In their speech, neither of the Indian leaders made any specific comment on the Rohingya repatriation or any of the unresolved issues between the two countries.
Hasina and Mamata are expected to meet in Kolkata today when the Teesta issue is likely to figure.
The Bangladesh PM referred to the resolution in June 2015 of the land boundary problem that had festered between Bangladesh and India for over four decades in June 2015 during Modi's visit to Dhaka and completion of exchange of adversely-held enclaves by 2016, reports our New Delhi correspondent.
She said the Bangladesh Bhavan was

the symbol of unity between the two Bengals and recalled how her father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was inspired and influenced by Rabindranath Tagore, who founded Visva Bharati University.
Speaking after Hasina, Modi said India would give full support to Bangladesh's effort to become a developed country by 2041 and pointed out how New Delhi has given eight billion dollars line of credit to support Dhaka's development agenda.
The way India-Bangladesh relations have moved in the last few years is an example for others in the region, Modi said.
Modi promised to increase electricity supply from 600MW at present to 1,100MW by this year-end.
Earlier, speaking at the Visva Bharati convocation, Mamata Banerjee said India-Bangladesh relations would always remain strong and the

Bangladesh Bhavan would become a "pilgrimage centre."
Mamata said that India-Bangladesh relations are continuous and firm since 1971 like the Padma, Meghna and Jamuna.
"Huge water flowed in the past and will also flow in future, but I believe that the relations between the two countries will improve further," she said.
The chief minister said her government set up a university, an airport, a chair and a holy place after the name of Kazi Nazrul Islam, Bangladesh's national poet. "We also want to establish Bangabandhu Bhavan," she said.
Hasina and Modi jointly unveiled the plaque of Bangladesh Bhavan, a two-storey building constructed at a cost of Rs 25 crore.
Bangladesh will provide a one-time fund equivalent to Rs 10 crore for the maintenance of the building and for

conducting its future activities, reports UNB.
Hasina's sister Sheikh Rehana and a number of dignitaries from both countries including litterateurs, academics, poets, singers and artists were present.
The PM recalled India's support during the 1971 war. "Many Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives in the Liberation War of Bangladesh. People of Bangladesh would never forget those supreme sacrifices."
She called for a full utilisation of the mutual cooperation between Bangladesh and India.
"The 'far beyond strategic relationship' between Bangladesh and India is often considered as a 'model of bilateral relation' for the rest of the world. So, we can firmly declare that both the countries will continue this trend of cooperation in the future," she said.

\$28m seized

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in 26 currencies, though the largest amounts were in ringgit and Singapore dollars.
"We have sat together with bank officials to tally and estimate the total cash seized," Singh said.
Singh said the empty apartment in Pavilion Residences, in the Bukit Bintang neighbourhood of Kuala Lumpur, did not belong to any of Najib's family members. He declined to name the owner.
Police also found 284 boxes of handbags in the apartment, and a further 150 handbags were seized from the home of Najib's daughter, Nooryana Najwa, along with various shoes, including baby shoes.
Singh said most of the bags appeared to be a Hermes brand.
"We have had discussions with Hermes, and we will take pictures and send them to Paris to verify their authenticity and their value," Singh said.
Nooryana, better known as Gina, married a nephew of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev's three years ago.
Singh did not say what was found at the home of Najib's son Ashman.
Experts were being brought in to value the jewelry, watches and other luxury items seized during the raid.
Singh said half a million ringgit, excluding foreign currency, was found at Najib's home.
Najib concluded giving a statement to anti-graft agents on Thursday that was related to transactions of \$10.6 million into his bank account that investigators had traced to a former unit of IMDB.
Najib, who led the country for almost a decade, has consistently denied any wrongdoing, having explained three years ago that \$680 million transferred into his account had been a donation from an unnamed Saudi royal.
In a separate development, Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng said in a tweet that he had asked tax authorities to investigate financier Low Taek Jho and his family as part of the 1MDB probe.
Commonly referred to as Jho Low, the high-living 36-year-old was close to Najib's family. His whereabouts are unknown.
He has previously denied any wrongdoing, but the US Department of Justice is seeking to seize his assets, including a \$250 million superyacht that the department says was purchased with funds "stolen and embezzled" from 1MDB.
Malaysia's new government yesterday pledged to honour all payments on debt arising from 1MDB. It has estimated that government guarantees covered 38 billion ringgit (\$9.54 billion) of 1MDB's debt at the end of 2017.
"We will honour those even though we are not happy with 1MDB, but we have to honour our international obligations," Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng said. "I think this will reassure the markets that this government knows what it is doing."

'Shootouts' claim 10 more

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Three other alleged drug peddlers were shot dead in "gunfights" between their internal groups in Cox's Bazar and Satkhira, police claimed. However, family members of two deceased said plainclothes men had picked them up hours before they were killed.
The recent spate of "shootout" has been continuing despite concern from rights activists over the extrajudicial killings.
In the capital, Kamrul Islam was killed in a "shootout" with Rab in Tejgaon industrial area early yesterday.
The Rab claimed the 35-year-old man was a top-listed drug peddler and accused in at least 15 cases over possessing drugs and firearms.
However, his family members said Kamrul had been living hand-to-mouth as he ran a makeshift hotel on a footpath near Mohakhali bus terminal area. He had a monthly income of around Tk 6,000.
His wife Taslima Begum said her husband used to peddle drugs around 10 years back. He quit the trade after their first daughter was born.
Kamrul was accused in two to cases,

Taslima added.
Sathi Begum, sister-in-law of the deceased, said Kamrul went to her house in Dakshinpara area on Tuesday and took iftar there. He left the house for his hotel around 7:30pm.
"Around 8:00pm, a few people picked him up from in front of the hotel," Sathi said, adding that Kamrul's phone had been found switched off since then.
In Netrakona, two alleged drug traders were killed in a "gunfight" with police in the town's Monag area. One of the dead is Osman Goni from Cox's Bazar, said Md Borhan Uddin, officer-in-charge of Netrakona Police Station.
The identity of the other man could not be confirmed till last night.
Police claimed to have recovered 700gm heroin, 3,500 yaba pills and two firearms from the spot.
In Mymensingh, alleged drug peddler Rajon Mia, aged about 32, was killed in a "gunfight" with police in the city's Purohitpara area yesterday.
Police claimed to have seized 400 yaba pills, three used bullets and two sharp weapons from the spot.
Rajon was accused in at least eight drug cases, said Kandaker Shaker

Ahmed, inspector (investigation) of Mymensingh Sadar Police Station.
Rajon's father Harun said his son used to take drugs previously, but he was not involved in drug trade. He was accused in two cases.
Harun, security officer of a private organisation, also said his son had been traceless since police picked him up from his house early on Tuesday.
In Gaibandha, alleged drug trafficker Jewel Mia, 35, was shot dead in a "shootout" with police in Falia bridge area, about seven kilometres away from the district town, said Khan Mohammed Shaharier, OC of Gaibandha Sadar Police Station.
Police claimed to have recovered a firearm, ammunitions and 500 yaba pills from the spot.
Jewel's wife Rozi Begum said her husband went out of home for buying iftar items on Wednesday afternoon. He remained traceless after two unidentified men had picked him up.
Abdul Mannan Mia, superintendent of police in Gaibandha, said Jewel was accused in a dozen cases.
In Satkhira, alleged drug peddler Younus Ali was killed in a "gunfight" between two groups of drug traders in

Sonabaria village of Kolaroa upazila, said Biplob Kumar Nath, OC of Kolaroa Police Station.
Police recovered a firearm, two bullets and 70 bottles of phensedyl from the spot.
Younus's wife Rabeya Khatun said police picked up her husband around 9:30pm on Thursday after he had returned home attending Taraweesh prayers.
Two more alleged drug traders were killed in separate "gunfights" between drug traders in Moheshkhali and Ramu upazilas of Cox's Bazar.
The body of Akter Kamal, a member of Sabrang Union Parishad in Teknaf, was found lying beside Cox's Bazar-Teknaf Marine Drive road in Darianagar area, said Monirul Islam, in-charge of Himchhari Police Outpost.
Kamal was a distant relative of local Awami League lawmaker Abdur Rahman Bodi, said locals.
The police official said Kamal, a listed yaba dealer, died from bullets wounds he sustained during a "gunfight" between two groups of yaba traders.
Kamal is also a former president of

Sabrang union Jubo League. His relatives said some plainclothes men had picked him up from Sabrang area on Thursday evening.
Meanwhile, Prodig Kumar Das, OC of Moheshkhali Police Station, said Mohammad Mostaque was killed between two groups of arms and yaba traders, led by Mahmudul Haque and Mostaque, in Pahartoli area.
Police claimed to have recovered four firearms and 1,000 yaba pills from the spot.
In Comilla, alleged drug peddler Kamal Hossain was killed in a "gunfight" with police in Burichang upazila. The 51-year-old man was from Rajamongolpur in the district.
According to law enforcers, he was accused in at least 12 drug-related cases. Police claimed to have recovered a firearm and 50kg cannabis from the spot.
In another incident, alleged drug trader Md Azad alias Kalu Dakat was killed in a "gunfight" with police in Satpakkia village around 2:30am yesterday, said Md Nazrul Islam, OC of Sherpur Police Station.
Police said Azad was accused in 23 cases.

Over 100 dealers control 300 spots

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Barisal Colony on May 17 while Md Sukkur Ali in Bayezid area on May 22.
At least 15 alleged peddlers have been arrested in Chittagong during the drive, this correspondent has learnt from police and Rab.
Talking about the drug menace, several law enforcers and DNC officials said one of the major reasons why the illegal trade has thrived in Chittagong was some law enforcers' involvement in it.
THE 'TOP DEALERS'
The top names in the DNC list included Faruk Hossen alias Baitta Faruk alias Bischu Faruk, Yusuf Ahmed, Belal, Nasir, Salamat, Sukkur and Khasru, according to sources in the department.
Baitta Faruk, who "introduced" yellow yaba pills in Chittagong, was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab on October 20 last year.
Later on, Yusuf took over the charge in the city's major spots including in Barisal Colony and Sadarghat areas and became a yaba godfather, said police. He is accused in over 12 cases filed with different police stations.
Rezaul Karim alias Dail (phensedyl) Karim controls the "phensedyl business" in Chotopul area of Halishahar, locals said.
Mozaher, from Anwara, is said to be another yaba godfather, who was arrested by Rab on April 16 last year along with 20 lakh yaba pills worth Tk 100 crore. He is in jail now.

Sources said the dealers in Chittagong also include Md Manzurul Alam Manju alias Kana Manzu and Maijja Mia of Bahaddar Hat area, Faisal of Jamtal area, Nurul Islam of Akbar Shah area, Nurul Alam alias Laden of Panchlaish, Md Babul of Bakalia, Asraf of Halishahar, Md Kamal of Bihari Colony of Akbar Shah, Rowson Ara Begum of Chandgaon, Abu Taher alias Thakur of Khulshi, Aklima Begum of Kotwali, Abdur Razzak of Pahartali, Babul Dutta of Hazari Lane, Shahidul Alam Hiru of Chandgaon and Rezaul Khokon of Firingi Bazar area.
Almost all the big shots in the business have been on the run since the anti-narcotics drive began, said law enforcers.
A NEW YABA ROUTE
Usually, yaba pills are smuggled into Bangladesh from Myanmar through Teknaf and then are sent to other parts of the country mainly through Chittagong.
The tablets reach the port city via the Cox's Bazar-Lohagara-Satkania-Karnaphuli-Bakalia route despite frequent raids by law enforcers, said police.
However, as the route has become "risky" due to the drives, some smugglers started using a new one involving Chittagong Hill Tracts, Hathazari and Bayezid areas to bring the pills into Chittagong.
Explaining about the route, several law enforcers said yaba consignments first reach Naikhyanchhari border

area of Khagrachhari and then are loaded into trucks and other vehicles. Later, they are taken to Dhaka either via Feni or Chittagong. Some indigenous people are involved in it, according to law enforcers.
Deputy Commissioner (DB-Port) Mohammed Shahidullah said, "We came to learn about the new route after the arrest of five drug peddlers in Bayezid area on March 20."
Law enforcers, investigating several drug cases, said yaba consignments are also being taken directly to Chittagong in fishing boats through the Bay of Bengal.
Peddlers unload the consignments either in Anwara or near Sitakunda upazila's coastal region.
Rab-7 Commanding Officer Lt Col Mifta Uddin said, "The syndicate members keep changing the sea routes in the face of strong vigilance by Coast Guard and Rab members."
"The yaba traders are now taking directly the contraband items to Barisal, Borguna, Patuakhali and Hatiya from Myanmar through waterways and later distribute them among the local yaba agents dodging the law enforcers," the official said.
Alleged yaba godfather Mozaher was arrested after eight of his associates were detained in deep sea area, said Rab sources.
On May 4, police arrested two siblings, including "yaba godfather" Ashraf, who used to smuggle yaba pills into the port city in speedboats.

During the arrest in the city's Halishahar area, 13 lakh yaba tablets were seized from their possession.
Assistant Commissioner of DB (west zone) Moynul Islam told The Daily Star, "Ashraf had unloaded the yaba pills in the coastal part of Sitakunda and later brought those to his Halishahar home by his car."
"He mainly supplied the pills to retailers and wholesalers in Dhaka and Chittagong," added the AC.
Asked about the steps taken to contain yaba menace in Chittagong, DC Shahidullah said, "We have been intensifying intelligence gathering at all the entry points of the city to arrest yaba peddlers."
Additional Commissioner (Crime and Operation) of CMP Amena Begum said drug dealers come out of jail even after being caught red-hand taking the advantage of some "loopholes in law". She did not explain it.
According to the CMP, 4,191 cases were filed with 16 police stations in connection with recovery of yaba pills in 2017.
Amena said most of the people, arrested over the cases, were "yaba carriers". "We can't arrest the top guns if the arrestees don't name them in their confessional statements."
"If we find anything fishy, we check the bank statements of the arrestees and the other suspects. If we find anything concrete, we can file cases against the big shots under the Money Laundering Act," she said.
Asked about the list of drug ped-

dlers prepared by the home ministry, Shahidullah said, "We have the list and we are gathering intelligence."
'POLICE-PEDDLER NEXUS'
Wishing not to be named, a top DNC official said a section of unscrupulous police personnel was involved in the drug trade.
"It is the reason why the illegal trade has seen a boom in recent years," the official added.
On May 8, five policemen, including two sub-inspectors of Barawlia Highway Police Station, were closed as they were trying to sell some 28,000 yaba pills seized earlier, said police sources.
Earlier on April 25, police constable Kamruzzaman of CMP was arrested in connection with a yaba case filed with city's Double Mooring Police Station. Later, he was suspended.
On November 27, 2016, ASI Ridwan of Bakalia Police Station was arrested along with 1,700 yaba pills while on November 28, 2017 ASI Anwar of District Special Branch (DSB) was arrested by CMP for possessing 1,000 yaba pills.
Contacted, Deputy Inspector General SM Moniruzzaman (Chittagong Range), said, "If any police personnel is found involved in yaba trade, departmental action will be taken against that individual."
Amena Begum said, "Punitive actions were taken against the dishonest police personnel found involved in the illegal businesses."

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