



A visit more crucial amid global crisis

Hasina flies to Delhi today

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM
MOLLA and PALLAB
BHATTACHARYA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today begins a four-day New Delhi visit, which is expected to take the 50-year diplomatic ties between India and Bangladesh to a new height amid global and regional crises fuelled by the Ukraine war and the Covid pandemic.

Bangladesh expects its closest neighbour to play a generous role in solving issues like Teesta water sharing and Rohingya refugee repatriation in the context that the two countries managed to end longstanding disputes over land and maritime boundaries.

Hasina is flying to India at the invitation of her counterpart Narendra Modi with agendas also including enhanced trade relations, power and energy sector

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Two boys plucking waterlilies spread over a swamp as far as the eyes can see in Abhaynagar of Jashore. The rainy season heralds an abundance of the national flower across the country's lakes and beels. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

EC to procure 2 lakh EVMs

Cost to be higher than before

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission is going to buy two lakh Electronic Voting Machines for the next national polls, spending more than 10 times what India paid to obtain its EVMs.

An EVM in India costs about Rs 20,000, said an EC official on the condition of anonymity.

When the EC bought 1.5 lakh EVMs from Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory (BMTF) in 2018, each machine cost Tk 2.3 lakh, the official said.

This time, the outlay is bound to be more due to the appreciation of the dollar, the official pointed out adding that a development project proposal involving Tk 7,500-Tk 8,000 crore was being prepared.

More than four years back, the EC bought the EVMs under a Tk 3,825-crore project.

The base price of an EVM was \$2,387 (about Tk 2,26,842 in today's money); another Tk 25,000 had to be paid for its accessories.

Last time, there was no value-added tax on the final price of the EVMs but this time there might be taxes, which would increase the cost further, the official said, adding that the base price would remain the same.

Asked why the Bangladeshi device was more expensive than that of many countries including India, EVM Project

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India should show more generosity

Says PM in interview with ANI

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has termed India a trusted friend and said New Delhi, despite its goodwill, could show more generosity regarding water-sharing issues, especially involving the Teesta.

Before her trip to India, in an interview with ANI Editor Smita Prakash released yesterday, she also touched on a number of topics ranging from personal to bilateral issues.

When asked about water-sharing, the PM said New Delhi has the scope to do more.

Urging more generosity from India, she said the lack of water from upstream sometimes causes sufferings for people here. She said both the countries will benefit if such a deal can be achieved.

Noting that the Indian PM Narendra Modi is also "eager" to solve the issue, she said the problem lies with India.

"Only Ganges water we share. ... We signed the treaty. But we have another 54 rivers. Yes... So it's a long-standing problem, so it should be solved," she said.

In the interview, Sheikh Hasina acknowledged the Rohingya crisis as "a big burden" on Bangladesh and said the country is reaching out to the international community to ensure they return to their homeland.

The PM also said that India could play a major role in resolving the issue.

"... For us, it's a big burden. India is a vast country, you can accommodate [Rohingyas], ... On humanitarian grounds, we give them [Rohingyas] shelter and everything, but how long will they stay here?" she asked.

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Teesta sorrows everflowing

PINAKI ROY and S DILIP ROY

When Bangladesh and India were about to ink a deal on sharing the Teesta water in 2010, people living by the river in Rangpur region dreamt of better days.

But as political considerations came into play on the other side of the border, the deal was never signed. Meanwhile, India keeps making empty promises about the deal as farmers in northern Bangladesh wait for a time when they will be able to irrigate their lands with Teesta water round the year.

Abdul Hakim, 68, a resident of Kalmati village in Lalmonirhat, has 16 bighas of land on the banks of the Teesta. But he can grow crops only on less than 5 bighas once a year. The rest remains either submerged or too dry for cultivation.

"Water flows in the Teesta at the wrong time

of the year. From January to April, when we need irrigation, there is nothing," he told The Daily Star recently.

Meher Ali, 65, a farmer in Rajarhat, Kurigram, said people in his area suffer floods and erosion during the monsoons and scarcity of water during the dry season.



The bed of the Teesta becomes an unyielding field in dry seasons.

PHOTO: FILE

According to Bangladesh India Joint Rivers Commission, between 1973 and 1985 when the barrage was yet to be built in West Bengal, the daily average flow of water in the river during the last 10 days of March was 6,710 cusec (cubic feet per second).

In 2012 and 2013, it dropped to 3,506 cusec and 2,950 cusec. On March 22, 2015, only 232

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GAZI MAZHARUL ANWAR (1943-2022)

A songsmith extraordinaire

ZAHIH AKBAR

"Joy Bangla, Banglar Joy."

These words have resonated and are still resonating in the hearts of the Bangladeshis since the birth of Bangladesh. Perhaps, even earlier.

These words came from none other than Gazi Mazharul Anwar, 79, who passed away early yesterday at a city hospital.

Shahan Mirza, his daughter-in-law, said he had been suffering from acid reflux for the past few days and collapsed on his way to the washroom yesterday morning

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Pakistan's Khushdil Shah (R) celebrates with Iftikhar Ahmed after a nail-biting five-wicket win over India in an Asia Cup Super 4 match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

ENSURING SAFETY AT BRT LINE-3

Planning Commission questions implementing agency's role

Probe clears project authorities of liability for Uttara girder incident

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The implementing authority of the BRT Line-3 has so far spent Tk 5.57 crore for ensuring safety at the project site, but it has failed to do so. The deaths of five people last month are a testament to the failure.

If this is the case, what is the rationale for such allocation and spending? Why safety could not be ensured even after the money was spent for this purpose?

These are the two vital questions the Planning Commission raised after the project authorities sought revision of the long-delayed project for the third time.

Though the commission questioned the project authorities' role, a probe body, formed by road

transport and bridges ministry, said it didn't find any fault of the authorities for the incident that left five people dead on August 15.

The committee, led by Neelima Akhter, additional secretary of the Road Transport and Highway Division that supervises the project, held the project's Chinese contractor responsible for the incident.

In its final report submitted to the road secretary on Thursday, it said the project authorities should have strengthened round-the-clock monitoring to ensure safety at the site.

The authorities should have also seen whether the consultants were discharging duties properly, it mentioned.

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Pakistan beat India in a thriller

SPORTS REPORTER from Dubai

In a match with a lot of T20 ammunition, it was Mohammad Rizwan's stoic knock and Mohammad Nawaz's quickfire 42 which sealed a Super Four win in another tight affair of the Asia Cup between Pakistan and India.

India openers started the game taking the attack to the Pakistan pacers. Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul appeared to have a point to prove as the former tonked one over from Naseem Shah over cover for four and followed it up with a six over mid-wicket. India raced to 54 for one before Haris Rauf broke dismissed Rohit for 28 and Shadab Khan soon struck to remove KL Rahul for the same score.

Virat Kohli came in and kept things going with India scoring close to 10 an

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SPORT



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Mushfiqur calls time on T20I career

