

India had role in Bangladesh's progress

Hasan Mahmud tells Indian media

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

With the Jatiya Sangsad elections due by early 2024, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud has said political stability in Bangladesh is "very important" for regional stability and "there lies the importance of India".



Interacting with the Indian media at the Press Club of India in New Delhi yesterday evening, the minister said Bangladesh made robust economic progress under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as evidenced by the rise in GDP and per capita income.

"Bangladesh's economic progress would not have been possible without India's political support," he said in his opening remarks before a question-answer session.

The minister said the two neighbours should work together and enhance bilateral cooperation to overcome the adverse effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which was impacting the availability of commodities, especially food grains.

"Bangladesh imports many commodities, many of which are from India. So, if we work together and if India helps us, it will be better."

Replying to a question about the pending Teesta river water-sharing deal, the minister said Bangladesh-India ties does not depend only on this issue, rather it depends on much more diverse issues.

"There is progress on the [Teesta] issue. There are some constitutional issues involved and once they are sorted out, there would be progress," he said making an apparent reference to the fact the consent of the Mamata Banerjee-led West Bengal government, which opposed the deal, is necessary to resolve the issue.

Asked about a question on
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With cars of a showroom parked right on the pavement, pedestrians can hardly access the footbridge in front of Willes Little Flower School and College in the capital's Kakrail. Built on the sidewalk, the footbridge itself obstructs the movement of pedestrians. Other parked vehicles have also narrowed the road. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Power, water restored in Kyiv

Says mayor after missile strikes; grain exports from Ukraine continue despite Russian withdrawal from deal

AGENCIES

Water and power supplies were fully restored in Kyiv yesterday a day after Russian missile strikes, as grain exports from Ukraine continued despite Moscow pulling out of a deal to let ships through.

Russian authorities meanwhile announced that tens of thousands more civilians would be "evacuated" from the Russian-occupied southern Ukrainian region of Kherson amid a counter-offensive from Kyiv.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Oleksiy Arestovich said Monday's bombardment was "one of the most massive shelling of our territory by the army of the Russian Federation".

Following the strikes, aerial views showed Kyiv plunged in darkness overnight, with the only lights coming from cars driving through.

The shelling had left 80 percent of the

capital's consumers without water and 350,000 homes without electricity. Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko yesterday said water and electricity supplies had been "fully restored" in the capital.

In the south, Kyiv's forces are preparing for fierce battles to recapture the city of Kherson and its surrounding region. Russian occupation authorities in Kherson said yesterday that tens of thousands more people would be "evacuated" from the region amid Kyiv's counter-offensive.

This comes after 70,000 people already left their homes in Kherson, Moscow-installed local authorities said last week.

The Russian-installed leader of the Kherson region, Vladimir Saldo, said yesterday new resettlements were being carried out because of the risk of a "massive missile attack" by Ukrainian forces on a local dam.

But Ukraine said that Russian "occupiers are carrying out forced displacement of the

civilian population", reports AFP.

Also yesterday, three more grain-loaded cargo ships left Ukrainian ports despite Russia's decision to suspend its participation in a deal to allow grain exports to cross the Black Sea.

Russia announced the move after accusing Kyiv of a "massive" drone attack on its fleet, which Ukraine labelled a "false pretext".

At least 10 ships sailed from Ukraine's ports on Monday along the maritime corridor. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said it was "risky" to continue with the exports without Russia's consent.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky spoke to his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron yesterday.

He thanked Macron for "specific decisions on strengthening Ukraine's defence capabilities. Specific initiatives to restore the destroyed energy infrastructure."

Unforgiven

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Meanwhile, Gias Uddin, 60, was acquitted as the charges against him could not be proven.

Five other accused in the case passed away during the long trial period.

Judge Bahauddin Kazi of Gazipur's Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court-2 delivered the verdict.

"I was worried whether my mother could live to see justice being served. My mother and I are satisfied with the verdict," Mustafizur told The Daily Star.

On the night of September 15, 1993, Sultan was stabbed and shot to death by his brother Mayen Uddin Bepary, 65, stepbrother Abul Kashem Bepary, and their cohorts over a land-related family dispute in Beraider Chala village under Sreepur upazila of Gazipur.

The murder took place right in front of the victim's family members, including Mustafizur, while they were all kept hostage at gunpoint.

A general diary was lodged over the murder on August 31 and a case was filed later with Sreepur Police Station by the victim's brother Motahar Hossain.

In 1995, the police submitted a charge sheet, accusing 13 people. The trial began in 1997.

After the verdict on Monday, Mustafizur said, "I could not forget the day when my father was ruthlessly killed right before my eyes."

"I decided to become a lawyer when I was a college student in 2005 after seeing the case was not making any progress."

"It's a huge achievement for me that I have been able to secure justice in my father's murder case," Mustafizur said.

Greece searches for dozens of migrants in stormy seas: coastguard

AFP, Athens

Greece's coastguard said it was engaged in two separate rescue operations yesterday in search of dozens of migrants feared missing in gale-force winds.

A coastguard spokeswoman said nearly 60 people were believed to be missing near the island of Evia after their boat sank in winds of over 60 kilometres (37 miles) per hour.

"One of our high-seas patrol boats rescued nine men from an islet," she told AFP. "They said there were around 68 people on board."

Dollar crisis to go by next June

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excessive. They are too many downside risks," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute.

The direction of the balance of payment in the first two months of the fiscal year has been opposite to what is assumed in the projections for the whole fiscal year, Hussain said.

From mid-September, remittances have moved down from a \$2 billion per month trajectory to the \$1.3-1.7 billion a month trajectory thanks to multiple exchange rate system.

"At this rate, it will be impossible to reach even close to the \$25 billion projected for the year," he added.

According to data released by the BB yesterday, inflows in October were 7.4 percent lower than a year earlier at \$1.52 billion.

"There are doubts of remittance

hitting \$20 billion this fiscal year," said Mansur, a former economist of the IMF.

The outlook is heavily banking on the budget support to come through from the development partners.

"What if the agreements don't happen? That's where the problem is. In that case, it will be difficult to support the imports," he added.

Despite the host of government measures, imports are expected to swell to \$91.8 billion this fiscal year from \$82.5 billion in the central bank's projections.

Project implementation capacity must also improve by leaps and bounds for the projected foreign aid to come through, according to Hussain.

But disbursements have been slow so far this fiscal year.

The projections look very ambitious even considering reforms that could happen if there is an IMF programme

IMF calls for quarterly GDP data

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The base year of 2005-06 does not capture the existing scenario, the mission told BBS officials.

"I don't disagree with any of these recommendations," Planning Minister MA Mannan told The Daily Star. The planning ministry oversees the BBS.

The inflation base year is revised from time to time, so it can be done as per the IMF's recommendation too.

The government has been discussing internally about switching

to quarterly reporting of GDP data, according to Mannan.

"We have had discussions in the last 3-4 months. I am interested in quarterly GDP data too."

He, however, failed to give a timeframe for when quarterly GDP reporting would happen.

"This is hard to say as there are so many stakeholders involved such as the NBR, the finance division, EPB and the business community," Mannan added.

The IMF is providing technical

support to BBS on how to conduct quarterly GDP reporting, Md. Matiar Rahman, the director-general of BBS, told reporters yesterday.

BBS will then brief its data collection agents.

But he also declined to give a timeline of when quarterly GDP can be expected.

"We need to prepare ourselves first. IMF has just started giving us training. Besides, the other stakeholders have to come on board with it," he added.

complemented by budgetary support from the WB, the Asian Development Bank and others, he said.

"Under the business-as-usual scenario, that is no significant reforms, reducing a \$5.4 billion overall balance of payments deficit in the previous fiscal year to just \$150 million is pie in the sky."

If all decisions are taken based on these projections, then there will be danger ahead, according to Hussain.

The hit then will feel more brutal as it would be unexpected by the authorities.

Subsequently, Hussain called for strong reforms in exchange rate management and the financial sector without further delay.

Reforms include, among others, moving to a uniform and flexible exchange rate and removal of the interest rate cap.

Boost food production

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from the Gono Bhaban. She said different international organisations predicted that the worldwide famine might hit and many developed countries are also facing economic recession now.

"To keep Bangladesh free from it [the brunt of any global famine and economic recession], every inch of our land should be cultivated. Besides, more steps should be taken to produce food items and processed food," said Hasina.

Noting that the youth is a very powerful force in Bangladesh, she said the soil of Bangladesh is very fertile and its biggest power is manpower. "We need to utilise this power," she added.

Zakir Hossain from Noakhali Sadar (1st position), Suraiya Farhana Reshma (2nd) from Sherpur of Bogura and Billal Miah (3rd) from Araihazar of Narayanganj received the National Youth Award under the successful self-employment category, while Rita Jasmine from Barishal Sadar (1st) and Abu Russell Huda (2nd) from Birol of Dinajpur received the award under the best youth organiser category.

Besides, successful self-employed youths and youth organisers received the award under divisional quota.

On behalf of the PM, State Minister for Youth and Sports Zahid Ahsan Russel handed over the award to the recipients. Every award winner was conferred with a crest, a certificate and a cheque of award money.

Youth and Sports Secretary Mesbah Uddin, and two award recipients Zakir Hossain and Rita Jasmine spoke on the occasion.

The prime minister said the country's young people and students will have to keep pace with new technology and new inventions in

science in the world.

"We want to develop our youth as trained and skilled manpower making it fit for the fourth industrial revolution," she added.

She said her government has been establishing different institutions including, hi-tech parks, software parks, IT training and incubation centres, specialised labs and union digital centres so that the youths can get training there.

"I believe that our youth are very talented and they would be able to show their competence in every job," she added.

Telescope captures

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captured in detail with the VLT Survey Telescope, hosted at the European Southern Observatory's (ESO's) Paranal site in Chile.

The new 554-million-pixel image provides an extremely detailed view of the Vela supernova remnant, named after the southern constellation Vela (The Sails).

Experts say nine full moons can fit in this entire image, and the whole cloud is even larger.

At only 800 light years away, this supernova remnant is one of the closest known to Earth.

As the star exploded, its outermost layers were ejected into the surrounding gas, producing the spectacular filaments.

What remains of the star is an ultra-dense ball in which the protons and electrons are forced together into neutrons - a neutron star.

The neutron star in the Vela remnant is a pulsar that spins on its own axis at an incredible speed of more than 10 times per second.

Can Tigers upset India?

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defeat for the Tigers in Bengaluru in 2016.

Bangladesh will be hoping to learn how to win close matches, especially against a limping India, who will be equally hungry for a win that will take them closer to a semifinal spot. They can also take heart from their last game at Adelaide, which saw them defeat England in the 2015 World Cup and book a place in the quarterfinals.

"In T20 matches, the result of the game is mostly decided in the last or second-last over. Since it's a fast-paced game and competition is high, there will be more close matches. So it's important to hold your nerve. We are learning how to reverse the situation compared to what happened previously and win. I'm not saying we have already achieved something, but there has definitely been improvement," Shakib told the media ahead of the game yesterday.

India lost to South Africa in their last group-stage match by five wickets. With four points from three games, Rohit Sharma and his team will be desperate to catch up in the points table by sealing two points against Bangladesh.

On the other hand, Bangladesh may opt for a change in mindset and team combination after a dramatic win against Zimbabwe in their previous game as they aim to 'upset' a rather strong Indian outfit that boasts Virat Kohli in imperious mood.

"India are the favourites. They have come here to win the World Cup. We are not here to win the World Cup," Shakib said. "You can understand the situation. If we win against India, it will be an upset. And we will try our best to upset India," Shakib added.

Weather, however, may play spoilsport, with the forecast suggesting a possibility of rain.