



Invest in social justice to build just societies across globe

PM urges international community at World of Work Summit in Geneva

UNB, Geneva

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the international community to invest in social justice in order to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies across the world.

“We can achieve lasting peace and sustainable development on the foundation of social justice. We must invest in social justice in our efforts to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies worldwide,” she said.

The premier was addressing the plenary session of the two-day “World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All” in Geneva, which is a high-level forum for global voices to address the need for increased, coordinated and coherent action in support of social justice.

The ILO’s summit has brought together over a dozen heads of state and government, high-level representatives from the United Nations, other international organisations, and employers’ and workers’ organisations.

Hasina said Bangladesh continues to play a leading role in ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration.

“We urge the international community to pay heed to climate change impacts on human mobility and overall work environment,” she said in her speech delivered in Bengali.

The PM said this summit, with the launch of the Global Coalition, has created an opportunity to place social justice at the heart of all international development agenda, including SDGs.

“Our government will actively consider joining the Global Coalition through further discussions with our social partners at the national level,” she said.

In this context, she placed a five-point suggestion for the Global Coalition.



BNP leaders and activists at a rally in Chattogram city’s Kazir Dewri area yesterday. Party Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir addressed the programme titled “Youth rally for saving the country”. Jubo Dal and Swechchhasebak Dal of Chattogram organised the event. Story on page 5.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

PALESTINE-ISRAEL TENSIONS China willing to help foster peacemaking

Xi tells Palestinian leader in Beijing

REUTERS, Beijing

China is willing to play a positive role to help the Palestinians achieve internal reconciliation and promote peace talks with Israel, Chinese President Xi Jinping told his Palestinian counterpart in Beijing yesterday.

“The fundamental solution to the Palestinian issue lies in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital,” Xi said, according to Chinese state media.

Palestinians seek statehood in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war. Israel withdrew soldiers and settlers from Gaza in 2005 but continues to expand settlements in the West Bank and calls Jerusalem its eternal, indivisible capital.

Peace talks that were brokered by the United States collapsed in 2014, with no revival on the horizon.

“We have always firmly supported the just cause of the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate national rights,” Xi told Abbas at a welcoming ceremony at Beijing’s Great Hall of the People.

Xi and Abbas also announced the two

sides had agreed to establish a strategic partnership and signed a number of bilateral cooperation documents.

Those include an economic and technological cooperation pact, a deal on mutual visa exemption for diplomatic passports, and a friendship between the Chinese city of Wuhan and Ramallah, seat of the Palestinian government in the occupied West Bank.

China has had historically good ties with the Palestinians and since Abbas’ last visit in 2017 has consistently talked up its capabilities in mediation, although with little to show in this regard until it brokered a surprise deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia to restore diplomatic relations in March.

Abbas is in Beijing on a three-day visit in which he hoped to demonstrate Chinese support for a Palestinian state, after failing to meet with US officials while in New York for the United Nations General Assembly last year.

Xi reiterated Chinese support for the Palestinian Authority becoming a full member of the United Nations and said Beijing would continue to stand up for the Palestinian side in multilateral forums, state media reported.

Bangladesh may join BRICS in August: Momen

UNB, Geneva

Bangladesh is likely to become a member of the BRICS alliance in August this year, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said yesterday.

He said this while briefing reporters about the outcome of the meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and South African President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa at the Bilateral Meeting Room of Palais de Nations in Geneva.

“Their conference will be held in August in South Africa and the prime minister would go there,” he said.

BRICS now has five members—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

In the future, they will add eight more countries as members.

They have invited Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia.

“This will be another area of our financing. It will be good for us, as we need money,” he said.

The prime minister requested that South Africa open a mission in Bangladesh to enhance bilateral cooperation.

Earlier, the President of Malta, Dr George Vella, also called on the prime minister at the same venue.

\$1.03b WB project to boost national income by 16pc

FROM PAGE 1

to India could increase by 182 percent from the current levels if the countries implement a free trade agreement.

Improving transport connectivity between the two countries could increase exports even further, yielding a 297 percent increase in Bangladesh’s exports to India.

“The economic benefits from removing all border frictions on the movement of trucks between countries would be vast,” Chen said.

The WB estimates that full transport integration between Bangladesh and India, where exports and imports would be cleared at the destination, could lead to an increase in national income by over 16 percent in Bangladesh, contributing to job creation and poverty reduction, he added.

The \$753.45 million given to Bangladesh will go towards projects to be implemented by the Bangladesh Land Port Authority, the National Board of Revenue and the Road and Highways Department for completion by 2029.

One of the components involves upgrading the 43-kilometre two-lane Sylhet Charkai Sheola road to a climate-resilient four-lane road,

connecting the Sheola land port with the Dhaka Sylhet Highway and in so doing, cutting down the travel time by 30 percent.

The programme will support digital systems, infrastructure and more streamlined processes at Benapole, Bhomra, and Burimari land ports, the three largest land ports in Bangladesh handling approximately 80 percent of land-based trade.

There is little communication (electronic or otherwise) between the customs and the Bangladesh Land Port Authority on what goods are present at any given time at the land ports.

Arriving goods for import are normally discharged from trucks and unless they are perishable, are stored in warehouses under the jurisdiction of the BLPA before customs clearance begins.

This has created a system of “border men” that collect documents from truck drivers on the Indian side of the border before arrival and “proxy” customs and freight (C&F) agents standing in line to ensure that the slot is kept while the C&F agents interact with the NBR or other government agencies elsewhere.

Such human facilitation highlights

the need for improved processes, which the project will address.

The project will support the development and improvement of IT-enabled services for trade, to reduce touch points and human interaction, enhance transparency and reduce congestion and truck idling, resulting in faster border clearance time and greater cargo throughput.

Electronic tracking of truck entry and exit, electronic queuing and smart parking would be installed.

It will also support the modernisation of the Chattogram customs house, which handles 90 percent of all import/export declarations in Bangladesh and services more than 45,700 unique traders per year.

The rapidly growing trade volumes have overburdened the Custom House, Chattogram, which was initially constructed in 1920.

Subsequently, the project will entail constructing a state-of-the-art green-building certified, resilient Custom House Chattogram with enhanced capacity to process rapidly growing trade volumes with required infrastructure, collaborative laboratory and other facilities including facilities for women.

sanctions imposed on Rab.

“If two GDs had been filed before, they should have been resolved. If everyone had carried out their respective duties at the right time, no problems would have arisen,” he added.

The committee chief advised everyone to be more responsible.

After the discussion, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said appropriate measures will be taken regarding the Naogaon incident.

Gonoforum lawmaker Sultan Mohammad Mansur, also a member of the JS watchdog, told the meeting that the issue of Jasmine Sultana is very embarrassing.

Referring to Jasmine’s death, Jatiya Party MP Pir Fazlur Rahman, another member of the committee, said, “Rab’s senior officials may be sincere but excesses are seen at the field level. How could this happen? Such incidents are overshadowing many of the

Will be suicidal for the nation

FROM PAGE 1

parties but neither the act has been amended nor the charges have been pressed so far.

Shahriar Kabir, president of Ekattorer Ghatok Dal Nirmul Committee, said Jamaat must be banned, otherwise Bangladesh will be destroyed and eventually be turned into Afghanistan.

“The government’s policymakers and the Awami League have to realise this,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the US government considers Jamaat as a moderate Islamist party. “The government might have allowed Jamaat to hold the programme after coming under pressure from the US.”

“Allowing Jamaat to conduct political activities will be suicidal not only for the Awami League and the government, but also for the country,” he observed.

Shahriar said Jamaat was involved in the 1971 genocide and was subsequently banned after the Liberation War. The international crimes tribunals in several verdicts also held the party responsible for the atrocities.

War crimes researcher Mofidul Hoque said different verdicts by war crimes tribunals had observations regarding Jamaat’s criminal role in 1971.

Keeping the issue of trying Jamaat pending for a long time has created a crisis again, he told this newspaper.

“Trial of Jamaat as a party is not a political issue, it is rather a legal, moral, ethical and historical issue. So, Jamaat should be brought to justice immediately,” said Mofidul, also a trustee of the Liberation War Museum.

He demanded the government make necessary amendments to the

International Crimes (Tribunals) Act immediately for holding trial of organisations.

Asif Munier, president of Projonmo ‘71, a platform of children of the martyrs of Liberation War, said, “Our organisation has a clear stance – no person or party involved in the killing of our fathers [intellectuals] would be allowed to hold state power.”

Allowing Jamaat to hold a programme is alarming for Projonmo ‘71 and it will continue protesting against such a move, said Asif, son of martyred intellectual Prof Munier Chowdhury.

Communist Party of Bangladesh President Shah Alam said the government’s approval for Jamaat’s political programme was not suitable for the political party that led the Liberation War.

He alleged that the activities of the government proved that it was trying to ensure the participation of the anti-Liberation War forces in the next general election.

“People of the country is not taking this move cordially. It is like abandoning the spirit of Liberation War,” said Shah Alam, also a valiant freedom fighter.

Asked about the allegation that the AL was improving its ties with Jamaat to put pressure on the BNP, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said the BNP has brought them to the field.

“Because they won’t join the general election, but would resort to violence. The Jamaat is the BNP’s ally in violence,” he told reporters after attending a programme at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday.

China lauds Hasina’s remarks

FROM PAGE 1

a certain country has long been interfering in the internal affairs of Bangladesh and many other developing countries under the pretext of democracy and human rights,” he said.

Wang Wenbin further said China and Bangladesh have been traditionally friendly neighbours and that China firmly supports Bangladesh in “safeguarding its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, upholding independent domestic

Plant 10 trees for each one you chop down: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday said 10 trees must be planted for every tree cut.

“In public interest, a few trees can be felled after receiving permission from the authorities. But new trees must be planted to substitute the felled ones. Trees cannot be cut in wholesale in any situation,” said the HC bench of Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman and Justice AKM Rabiul Hassan.

The bench made the statement while hearing a suomoto rule over the incident of felling 30 palm trees Patuakhali’s Kolapara for constructing a road.

The court said this to Md Mamunur Rashid, project director of Climate Tolerance Rural Infrastructure who appeared before the bench in compliance with its earlier directive.

1.15 lakh yaba pills seized from minibus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox’s Bazar

The Department of Narcotics Control seized 1,15,000 pieces of yaba pills from a minibus in Cox’s Bazar early yesterday.

The minibus was rented out to an international NGO, which worked at the Rohingya refugee camps, said DNC’s Teknaf (special zone) unit Assistant Director Md Sirajul Mostafa.

Driver Md Sahed, 20, who is an employee of the rental company, was detained on his way back to Cox’s Bazar when DNC officials conducted a drive in Teknaf’s Kekepara area.

A case was filed with Teknaf Police Station in this connection, the official added.

Two killed in Dhaka, Jashore road crashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least two people died in road accidents in Dhaka and Jashore yesterday.

In Dhaka, a rickshaw puller was killed after a lorry hit his three-wheeler in Jatrabari area.

Al Amin, 21, lived in Narayanganj’s Siddhirganj upazila.

He died on the spot after the lorry hit the battery-run rickshaw around 1:30am at Chourasta area, said Mofizul Alam, officer-in-charge of Jatrabari Police Station.

Police seized the lorry and detained its driver, he added.

In Jashore, a trader was killed and another seriously injured when a truck overturned onto a roadside tea stall.

The deceased Nazir Ahmed, 53, was a shopkeeper. The injured was identified as Indro, 34, said Nawapara Highway Police OC Hamid Uddin.

The OC said a truck was heading towards Khulna from Benapole. When the truck reached the Chanchra Bablatala area, the driver lost control of the vehicle while trying to avoid hitting a three-wheeler, and the truck overturned and fell onto the tea stall.

The truck was seized but its driver managed to flee.

[Our correspondent from Jashore contributed to the report]

It tarnished the image of country, govt, Rab

FROM PAGE 1

A day after her detention, she was sued under the Digital Security Act in Rajshahi “for syphoning off money from job seekers using a Facebook account”.

Her son Shahed Hossain Saikat, a student of Chattogram University, had then said, “She died due to torture in Rab custody. She has an injury mark on her head.” Family members had also said she was in perfect health.

RMCH Director Brig Gen FM Shamiim Ahmed had said Jasmine was brought in by a Rab team in a critical condition. A CT scan found multiple intracranial bleeds in her head.

Enamul Haque, the local government director of Rajshahi divisional commissioner’s office, filed a DSA case with Rajpara Police Station in Rajshahi city against Jasmine.

The case was recorded more than 31 hours after Jasmine had been picked up by Rab and when she was unresponsive

in a hospital bed.

Enamul alleged that he had been receiving complaints from people who were defrauded through his Facebook account, which was hacked in 2017. This continued when he was serving in Natore, Chapainawabganj, and Rajshahi.

He said he filed general diaries with police stations in Natore and Chapainawabganj. After joining Rajshahi divisional office in November last year, he sought Rab’s help after receiving similar complaints.

According to the meeting minutes, Rab DG M Khurshid Hossain said, “The joint secretary [Enamul Haque] whose name came up his Facebook ID was used to harass him. Two years ago, he filed two general diaries against the woman [Jasmine].”

At that, Awami League lawmaker Benajir Ahmed, chairman of the committee, said it’s already an embarrassing situation because of the