



Bangladesh to hold general elections on January 7



Bangladesh will hold the much-awaited general elections on January 7, 2024, the chief election commissioner announced on November 15.

"The voting of the 12th Jatiya Sangsad (JS) elections will be held in 300 constituencies across the country on January 7, 2024," Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Kazi Habiburul Awal said while announcing the election schedule in an address to the nation on state-run television and radio.

The last date for submission of nomination papers was November 30 and the scrutiny of nomination papers took place between December 1 and 4. The deadline for withdrawal of candidature was December 17.

A total of 2,712 aspirants, including 747 independent candidates, have submitted nomination papers to contest in 300 constituencies in the upcoming elections.

Source : <https://www.bssnews.net/news-flash/158445>

Say no to wars to save the world: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the world should firmly say "No" to all wars and conflicts to protect mankind and humanity.



"In today's globalized world, surely it would be easy to firmly say "NO" to all wars and conflicts to save human lives and humanity," she said.

The Prime Minister made the remarks while addressing the "G20 Leader's Summit 2023" held in New Delhi in India on a virtual platform from her Ganabhaban official residence on November 22.

The summit's theme - "One Earth, One Family, One Future"- was organised to inspire all to care for, protect, and make the Earth, a better place for the future generations, she said.

The Prime Minister said the current war in Europe with sanctions and counter sanctions has taken a worldwide human and economic toll and continues to do so.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, among others, spoke at the summit.

Mentioning that Bangladesh is committed to a peaceful and prosperous world, Sheikh Hasina said: "I am delighted that our sincere deliberations of the past one year on the G20 Platform, notably the Leaders' Summits, have instilled in us a sense of purpose and responsibility."

Source : <https://www.bssnews.net/news-flash/159638>

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina seeks larger foreign investment in Bangladesh

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sought robust foreign investment in Bangladesh saying her government has been taking every possible measure to attract overseas investment.



"We're taking various measures as foreign investment in larger volume can come to Bangladesh," she said.

The Premier said these while opening the two-day programme marking the 60th anniversary of the Foreign Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Investment Expo-2023 in Dhaka on November 19.

Elaborating various steps to attract foreign investment, she said her government is setting up 100 economic zones and has already built 39 high-tech parks across Bangladesh.

"We have kept open the economic zones and high-tech parks for foreign investments. If a country wants land (in the economic zones or high-tech parks) it can get it, or it can also invest in joint collaboration if it wish or can go for investment under the public public partnership (PPP)," she said.

Source : <https://www.bssnews.net/news-flash/159013>

Southeast Asia's largest fertiliser factory opens in Bangladesh



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 12 inaugurated the newly constructed Ghorashal-Palash Urea Fertiliser Factory (GPUFF) in Narsingdi, the largest of its kind in the Southeast Asia, which is expected to help slash fertiliser imports significantly.

She opened the environment friendly energy saving and modern technology based factory with production capacity of 9.24 lakh MT of fertilizer annually by unveiling the inaugural plaque at a civic rally on the GPUFF premises in Palash Upazila.

State-of-the-art technology are installed to run the factory smoothly while skilled manpower have already been prepared through proper training by foreign experts since the project's inception.

With starting operation of the fertiliser factory, the country's dependence on importing fertiliser will reduce significantly as the local factories will produce together 19.24 lakh MT against the country's total annual demand of 26 lakh tonnes.

Built at a cost of Tk 15,500 crore on 110 acres of land, the factory will create 30,000 jobs, according to the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC).

Source : <https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/pm-opens-southeast-asias-largest-fertiliser-factory-narsingdi-3467776>

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina declares 11 more districts landless-homeless free

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 14 declared 11 more districts landless and homeless free, raising its total number to 32 in the country.

The 11 districts are - Tangail, Munshiganj, Narayanganj, Kishoreganj, Jamalpur, Brahmanbaria, Meherpur, Jhenaidah, Patuakhali, Sylhet and Moulvibazar.

The premier made the announcement while inaugurating 10,041 infrastructures (involving the total cost of nearly Tk 100,000 crore), including 5,397 Ashrayan houses throughout the country under 157 projects of 24 ministries and divisions.



She opened the infrastructures through a virtual platform from her official residence Ganabhaban.

In the event, the Prime Minister also declared 60 more upazilas landless-homeless-free following the distribution of the Ashrayan houses. With the new 60 ones, the total number of landless-homeless family-free upazila now stands at 394.

Source : <https://www.newagebd.net/article/217696/pm-declares-11-more-districts-free-from-landless-homeless>

First ever local currency card "TakaPay" launched in Bangladesh



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 1 unveiled Bangladesh's first- ever local currency card, "TakaPay", aiming to reduce dependency on international cards such as Visa, Mastercard as well as to save foreign currencies.

Addressing the launching ceremony, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the national card scheme TakaPay is another step towards building Smart Bangladesh. This sovereign domestic payment system is also an initiative for the cashless society in Bangladesh.

The TakaPay card is being issued by state-owned Sonali Bank alongside private sector's City Bank and BRAC Bank in collaboration with the Bangladesh central bank.

Officials said that initially the banks will introduce Taka PayCard on a pilot basis and the card has been developed by French consulting firm "Fime".

The Taka Pay will reduce the cost of foreign exchange, as a good amount of money has to be spent as service charges for foreign companies.

Source : <https://www.bssnews.net/news-flash/155927>

Bangladesh candidate Saima Wazed voted as new WHO regional director

Bangladesh candidate Saima Wazed has been elected as World Health Organisation's (WHO) new regional director for South East Asia region for a five-year term beginning from 2024.



Saima Wazed, also the daughter of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, is known for her global campaign on mental health with extra focus on autism.

Member states voted to nominate her during a closed meeting at the seventy-sixth session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia Region.

Saima Wazed was elected in a secret ballot with the participation of 10 member states of WHO regional nations including India while she bagged 8 votes and her contender Dr Shambhu Prasad Acharya of Nepal received 2.

Officials familiar with the election process said in line with the practice, her nomination would be submitted to the WHO Executive Board during its 154th session, taking place on 22-27 January, 2024 in Geneva of Switzerland.

The newly appointed regional director will take office on 1 February 2024.

Source : <https://www.who.int/southeastasia/news/detail/01-11-2023-ms-saima-wazed-nominated-to-lead-who-south-east-asia-region>

Bangladesh elected to UNESCO Executive Board



Bangladesh has been elected to the UNESCO Executive Board in a keenly contested election held on November 16 during the 42nd General Conference of the UN body.

This election brought Bangladesh back to the board for the term 2023-27 after two years.

This is the third contested election Bangladesh won at UNESCO in the last one and a half years. Earlier, Bangladesh was elected at the Executive Council for Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission in June this year and at the Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritages in July 2022.

"Bangladesh's victory at UNESCO is the result of our deep engagement and diplomatic strides at the international fora under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina," said Education Minister Dr Dipu Moni, who led the Bangladesh delegation at the UNESCO General Conference.

Source : <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/bangladesh-elected-unesco-executive-board-740642>

Bangladesh Ambassador Imran presents credentials to Colombian President



Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Mr. Muhammad Imran, concurrently accredited to Colombia, has presented his credentials to Hon'ble President of the Republic of Colombia Gustavo Francisco Petro Urrego.

Ambassador Imran formally presented his credentials to the Colombian President at a colorful ceremony held at the Presidential Palace in Bogota, the capital of Colombia, on November 8.

Upon his arrival at the Presidential Palace, the Bangladesh Ambassador was greeted with a Guard of Honor by a smartly turned-out contingent of the Presidential Guard Regiment. He was later introduced to Colombian President Gustavo Francisco Petro Urrego. Acting Foreign Minister Mr. Francisco J. Coy G. and senior officials were present on the occasion.

While presenting the credentials to the Colombian President, the Ambassador conveyed greetings to him from Hon'ble President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The Colombian President reciprocated the greetings to the Bangladesh President and the Prime Minister.

Colombian President Gustavo Francisco welcomed the Bangladesh Ambassador in his country and expressed his satisfaction over the excellent bilateral relations existing between the two countries. He also hoped that the ties would be further consolidated in the coming days.

The Colombian President, from his government, assured the Ambassador of extending all kinds of support to discharge his diplomatic duties.

Later, the Ambassador had a meeting with Ms. Nelsy Raquel Munar Jaramillo, Director for Asia, Africa and Oceania, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Carlos A. Forero, Coordinator, Asia Pacific at the Foreign Office.

During the meeting, they discussed a wide range of bilateral issues and focused on many areas of cooperation. The Ambassador apprised them of Bangladesh's tremendous socioeconomic progress that took place in the last 15 years under the dynamic and visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Ms. Nelsy Raquel expressed his keen interest in cooperation in ready-made garment (RMG) and pharmaceutical sectors between Bangladesh and Colombia as well as signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on regular Foreign Office Consultations (FOC).

Ambassador Imran shares success stories of Bangladesh with members of US Congress



Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Mr. Muhammad Imran has met two members of the US Congress and apprised them of impressive socioeconomic progress and success stories of Bangladesh under the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Ambassador Imran held the meeting with Republican Congresswoman Young Kim on November 13 in Washington DC as a part of the Embassy's outreach program to deepen the bilateral relations with the USA.

Congresswoman Young Kim, who was elected from California's 40th District, serves on the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Chairwoman of the Indo-Pacific Sub-committee. She is also a member of the Africa Sub-committee and the House Financial Services Committee.

During the meeting with Congresswoman Kim, the Ambassador briefed her about Bangladesh's robust ready-made garment (RMG) exports, thriving pharmaceutical industry, diversified leather products, food processing industry and resilient remittance inflows.

They also discussed about US-Bangladesh partnership in various areas of social advancement and economic development as well as cooperation in the fields of power and energy.

Ms. Young Kim commended Bangladesh government's efforts for creating equal opportunities for womenfolk in all sectors. She also expressed her keen interest to work closely with Bangladesh aspiring for any constructive and forward-looking vision.

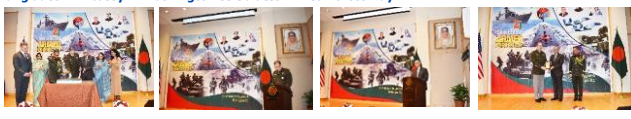
Earlier, Ambassador Imran met Republican Congressman Ken Buck, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the House Judiciary Committee, at his office in the Capitol Hill.

Congressman Ken Buck also serves as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Sub-committee on the Indo-Pacific and Western Hemisphere representing Colorado's 4th Congressional District.

They discussed about the forcibly-displaced Rohingya people sheltered in Bangladesh and the role of the international community in repatriation to their homeland.

During the meeting, Congressman Ken Buck showed his interest to join the Congressional Bangladesh Caucus.

Bangladesh Embassy in Washington celebrates Armed Forces Day



The Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC hosted a reception on 21 November to celebrate the 52nd Armed Forces Day.

Deputy Chief of Staff of US Army Lieutenant General Patrick Matlock addressed the function as the Chief Guest held at the Bangabandhu Auditorium of the Embassy in the evening.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Mr. Muhammad Imran and Defence Attaché of the Embassy Brigadier General Md Shahedul Islam spoke at the event.

Lieutenant General Gerry Glavy, Deputy Commandant of US Marine Corps, Ms Afreen Akhter, US Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, Lieutenant Colonel Seamas Whitsel, Director for South Asia Regional Affairs of US National Security Council, joined the reception, among others.

Alternate Executive Director of the World Bank Dr. Ahmad Kaikaus was also present at the function.

Lieutenant General Patrick Matlock, in his speech, highly praised the Bangladesh Armed Forces for their contribution to safeguarding national independence and establishing world peace.

He said the Bangladesh Armed Forces have been in the forefront of security and national independence, providing relief to fellow citizens in times of natural disasters, sheltering the destitute and bringing peace and stability around the globe.

Noting that Bangladesh is the world's largest troops' contributors to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation, Patrick Matlock said the world is grateful for the sacrifice in the contribution of the Bangladeshi troops.

He pointed out partnership of the Armed Forces between Bangladesh and the USA, and welcomed the continued expansion of this partnership for peace and prosperity in the years to come.

Ambassador Imran paid deepest homage to the architect of Bangladesh, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who led the nation to achieve its long-cherished independence. He also recalled with profound respect three million martyrs, including the members of the armed forces, for their great sacrifice in the War of Liberation.

He mentioned the multifaceted collaboration between the armed forces of Bangladesh and the United States, saying that two countries share the convergent views on a range of defense and security issues.

The Ambassador said as a development partner and friend, the USA has extended support to Bangladesh in the past in its development journey, and Bangladesh looks forward to working together closely with further engagements to take the relations to new heights.

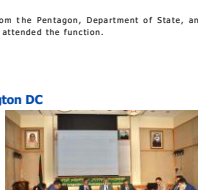
Defence Attaché of Bangladesh Embassy Brigadier General Md Shahedul Islam welcomed the guests at the reception and thanked the USA for the support and cooperation extended that is mutually beneficial for the two countries. Minister (Political) Md. Rashedujjaman conducted the program.

The function began with the playing of the national anthems of Bangladesh and the USA. Then a short documentary on the activities of the Bangladesh Armed Forces was screened.

Ambassadors, diplomats and defence attaches from a number of countries, senior officials from the Pentagon, Department of State, and other US organizations, members of Bangladeshi diaspora and Embassy officials and employees attended the function.

The program ended with cutting of a cake by the chief guest in presence of other dignitaries.

'National Constitution Day' observed at Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC



The 'National Constitution Day' was observed at the Embassy of Bangladesh in Washington DC with a call to uphold the holy constitution and to maintain the continuation of democracy in the country.

On November 4 in 1972, the much-awaited Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Bangladesh, and it came into effect on December 16 the same year.

The program of the Embassy began with placing of a floral wreath at the bust of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Muhammad Imran. Officials and employees of the Embassy were present at that time.

Then the messages issued on the occasion by Hon'ble President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina were read out by Defense Attaché Brigadier General Md Shahedul Islam and Counsellor (Political) Arifa Rahman Ruma.

Later, a seminar titled "The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh: Human Rights and Other Issues" was held at the Bangabandhu Auditorium of the Mission.

First Secretary (Passport and Visa) Muhammad Abdul Hye Milton presented the keynote paper, while Minister (Press) AZM Sajjad Hossain took part in the discussion on it.

While presenting the keynote paper, Abdul Hye Milton highlighted the historical context of the constitution and said that since the people are the owners of the sovereign power in a democratic state system, it is the responsibility of every citizen to have a clear understanding of the constitution, the highest document of the people's aspirations.

He expressed the hope that every citizen will play an effective role from their respective position in building a happy and prosperous Bangladesh through the proper application of the safeguards that the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh ensured to protect the human rights.

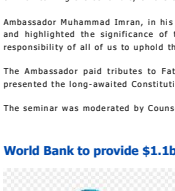
Taking part in the discussion, Minister (Press) AZM Sajjad Hossain said within 11 months of independence, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman gifted the holy constitution to the nation which is rare in the history of the world. To advance the country further, he emphasized on maintaining the continuity of the country's hard-earned democracy by upholding this sacred constitution.

Ambassador Muhammad Imran, in his concluding remarks, described the 'National Constitution Day' as a historic day for the Bengali nation and highlighted the significance of the day. He said that this constitution is one of the best constitutions in the world and it is the responsibility of all of us to uphold this holy constitution.

The Ambassador paid tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and said the greatest Bangalee of all time presented the long-awaited Constitution to the newly-independent nation within only 11 months of independence.

The seminar was moderated by Counsellor and Head of Chancery Shamima Yasmin Smriti.

World Bank to provide \$1.1b to Bangladesh; 5 deals signed



Bangladesh and the World Bank have signed five financing agreements worth over \$1.1 billion to help the country achieve resilient and inclusive growth by improving early childhood development, secondary education, riverbank protection and navigability, urban primary health, and gas distribution efficiency.

The agreements were signed by Sharifa Khan, Senior Secretary, Economic Relations Division (ERD), the government of Bangladesh and Abdoulaye Seck, World Bank Country Director for Bangladesh and Bhutan, on behalf of Bangladesh and the World Bank, respectively.

The credits are from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA). Bangladesh currently has the largest ongoing IDA program, totaling \$16.46 billion in 57 projects, said a press release.

ERD Secretary Sharifa Khan said these projects are aligned with the Eighth Five-Year Plan 2021-2025 and support the country's graduation from LDC status in 2026 and the vision 2041.

Source : <https://www.bssnews.net/news-flash/159763>

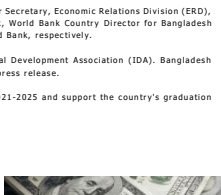
Bangladesh receives \$1.98b in remittances in October

Bangladesh received \$1.98 billion in inward remittances in October, the highest in four months, due to increase in dollar rate as well as increase in incentives.

According to the central bank data, expatriates sent \$643 million more remittances in October compared to September, having a growth rate of 48.20 percent. In October 2022, Bangladesh received \$1.59 billion in remittances.

The remittance incentive has been increased from 2.5 percent to 5 percent at the end of this month for which remittances have come in higher this month.

Source : <https://www.bssnews.net/business/156056>



Bangladesh's export earnings notches 3.52% growth during July-October



Bangladesh's export earnings during the first four months (July-October) period of the current fiscal year (FY24) notched a 3.52 percent growth totaling \$17,447.47 million.

According to the latest statistics of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), the country's export earnings during the July-October period of the last fiscal year (FY23) were \$16,853.51 million.

The performances of the major exportable items during this four-month period of the current fiscal year were RMG with \$14,783.10 million including knitwear \$8,676.78 million and woven garments with \$6,106.32 million, home textile with \$238.81 million, footwear \$155.26 million, plastic products with \$71.12 million, leather and leather products with \$325.57 million.

Source : <https://www.bssnews.net/business/156212>