

**India – Bangladesh Joint Statement during the
State Visit of Prime Minister of Bangladesh to India**

1. H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, paid a State Visit to India from 05 to 08 September 2022 at the invitation of Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi. During the visit, H.E. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called on the President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu and the Vice President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Minister of Development of North Eastern Region Shri G. Kishan Reddy called on her. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s programme also includes launching of “Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Student Scholarship” for 200 descendants of Indian Armed Forces personnel martyred and critically injured during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971. She also addressed a business event, jointly organized by Indian and Bangladesh business communities on 7 September 2022.
2. Both Prime Ministers held a restricted meeting and tête-à-tête followed by delegation level talks on 6 September 2022. The meetings were marked by great warmth and cordiality. The two Leaders expressed satisfaction at the excellent state of bilateral relations, based on deep historical and fraternal ties and shared

values of democracy and pluralism, which is reflected in an all-encompassing bilateral partnership, based on sovereignty, equality, trust and understanding that transcends even a strategic partnership.

3. The two Leaders recalled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's State Visit in March 2021 to join the celebrations of the Golden Jubilee of the Independence of Bangladesh, the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 50 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Bangladesh, which was followed by the State Visit of the President of India in December 2021, to attend the celebrations of the Golden Jubilee of the Victory Day of Bangladesh, as the Guest of Honour.
4. The two Prime Ministers noted with satisfaction the continued exchange of high-level visits which have helped in achieving progress in the various areas of cooperation. Both sides also recalled the successful holding of the Seventh Meeting of the Joint Consultative Commission, led by the Foreign Ministers of two countries held at New Delhi, India in June 2022.
5. The two Prime Ministers held discussions on the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation, including political and security cooperation, defence, border management, trade and connectivity, water resources, power and energy, development cooperation, cultural and people-to-people links. They also agreed to collaborate in new areas

of cooperation, such as, environment, climate change, cyber security, ICT, space technology, green energy and blue economy.

6. They further discussed the various aspects of regional and global issues of interest. Keeping in mind the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the supply chain disruptions due to global developments, the Leaders emphasized the need for greater collaboration in the spirit of friendship and partnership for prosperity and development of the region.
7. The two Leaders underscored the importance of implementing bilateral and sub-regional rail, road, and other connectivity initiatives. Both sides welcomed the ongoing bilateral initiatives, such as, conversion to dual-gauge of Tongi-Akhaura line, supply of railway rolling stock, capacity building for the personnel of Bangladesh Railway, sharing of IT solutions for improved services of Bangladesh Railway etc. Both sides also welcomed the new initiatives, namely, Kaunia-Lalmonirhat-Mogalghat-New Gitaldaha link, establishing a link between Hili and Birampur, upgradation of track and signaling systems and railway stations along the Benapole-Jashore line, link restoration between Burimari and Changrabandha, construction of a container depot at Sirajganj etc. and both sides agreed to explore funding of these projects through a range of financial instruments under the bilateral development cooperation. The Bangladesh side

welcomed the gesture of India for providing 20 broad-gauge diesel locomotives on grant.

8. The two Leaders appreciated the growth in bilateral trade, with India emerging as the largest export destination for Bangladesh in Asia. The Bangladesh side requested the Indian side for predictable supply of the essential food commodities from India such as rice, wheat, sugar, onion, ginger and garlic. The Indian side conveyed that Bangladesh's requests will be favourably considered based on prevalent supply conditions in India, and all efforts will be made in this regard.
9. Recognizing that peaceful management of India-Bangladesh border is a shared priority, the two Leaders directed the officials to expedite work to complete all pending developmental works within 150 yards of the Zero Line, including fencing starting with the Tripura sector with the objective of maintaining a tranquil and crime-free border.
10. Noting with satisfaction that the number of deaths due to incidents along the border has significantly reduced, both sides agreed to work towards bringing the number down to zero. Both sides noted with appreciation the stepped up efforts by the two border guarding forces against smuggling of arms, narcotics and fake currency and to prevent trafficking, particularly of women and children. Both Leaders

reiterated their strong commitment to eliminate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and decided to further strengthen their cooperation to counter and prevent the spread of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalisation in the region and beyond.

11. Noting with satisfaction the convening of the 38th Ministerial Meeting of the Joint Rivers Commission of India and Bangladesh (23-25 August 2022, New Delhi), the two Leaders welcomed the signing of an MoU between the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of the Republic of India and Ministry of Water Resources, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on Withdrawal of Water by India and Bangladesh from Common Border River Kushiyara, that will help Bangladesh to address its irrigation needs and facilitate water projects for South Assam.

12. The Indian side requested for early signing of the interim water sharing agreement on Feni River, taking into account the urgent irrigation requirements of the State of Tripura. The Bangladesh side took note of the Indian request. The Indian side thanked Bangladesh for enabling India to construct the intake well to implement the 2019 MoU between the two countries on withdrawal of 1.82 cusec of water from Feni River for drinking water supply for Sabroom town in Tripura.

13. Recognizing the importance of water management in the bilateral

relationship, the Leaders appreciated the decision of Joint Rivers Commission for widening the area of cooperation by including additional number of rivers for prioritizing the exchange of data and formulating the framework of the interim water sharing agreements. The Leaders welcomed the formation of a Joint Technical Committee to conduct a study for optimum utilization of water received by Bangladesh under the provisions of Ganges Water Sharing Treaty, 1996.

14. Recalling earlier discussions, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reiterated Bangladesh's long pending request for concluding the interim agreement on the sharing of the waters of the Teesta River, the draft of which was finalized in 2011. Both Leaders also directed the officials to work together to address issues such as pollution in rivers and to improve riverine environment and river navigability in respect of common rivers.

15. In the spirit of enhancing sub-regional cooperation, the two Leaders agreed to expeditiously implement projects to connect the two countries' power grids synchronously, including through the proposed high capacity 765 KV transmission line from Katihar (Bihar) to Bornagar (Assam) through Parbatipur in Bangladesh, to be made through a suitably-structured India-Bangladesh Joint Venture for a Special Purpose Vehicle. It was agreed to strengthen sub-regional

cooperation in the power sector. The Bangladesh side requested for import of power from Nepal and Bhutan through India. The Indian side informed that the guidelines for the same are already in place in India.

16. Both Leaders reviewed the progress made on the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline that will contribute to addressing energy demands of Bangladesh. They expressed hope that the project would be completed at the earliest. The Bangladesh side also requested the Indian side to assist in meeting its domestic requirement for petroleum products. The Indian side agreed to facilitate discussions between the authorized agencies of both sides. The Indian side appreciated Bangladesh's timely support in allowing transportation of Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants from Assam to Tripura via Bangladesh in the light of disruptions due to the devastating floods in Assam and Meghalaya. The Indian side also welcomed the decision of the Bangladesh side to enlist Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL) as a registered G2G supplier of refined petroleum products to Bangladesh.

17. Both Leaders expressed satisfaction at the robust cooperation between two sides in development partnership. The Bangladesh side appreciated the efficiency at which the development funds were disbursed by India, becoming the top development partner in terms

of funds disbursement during the last financial year.

18. The two Leaders welcomed the successful completion of trial runs under the Agreement on the use of the Chattogram and Mongla Ports (**ACMP**) and looked forward to its full operationalisation at the earliest. The Indian side reiterated its request to work towards the expansion of the bilateral Coastal Shipping Agreement of 2015 to include third-country EXIM cargo. The two sides also agreed to expeditiously explore direct shipping links between the two countries. They also agreed to implement the decision to start riverine services under the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT) routes 5 & 6 (Dhulian to Rajshahi -extension to Aricha) and 9 & 10 (Daudkandi to Sonamura). The Indian side requested Bangladesh to complete remaining infrastructure, immigration, and customs facilities for the operationalisation of the Maitri Bridge over River Feni, connecting Tripura with Bangladesh, at an early date.

19. The two Leaders agreed to expedite efforts to improve bilateral and sub-regional connectivity through early operationalisation of the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement. The Indian side requested the Bangladesh side for cooperation for initiating new sub-regional connectivity projects including a highway from Hili in West Bengal to Mahendraganj in Meghalaya through Bangladesh and in this regard, proposed preparation of a Detailed Project Report. In the same spirit,

Bangladesh reiterated its eagerness to partner in the ongoing initiative of the India – Myanmar - Thailand trilateral highway project.

20. The Indian side informed that it has offered free transit via its territory to Bangladesh for exporting its products to third countries through specified Land Customs Stations/Airports/Seaports. In this regard, the Indian side invited Bangladesh business community for using its port infrastructure for transshipment to third countries. India has also been providing free transit to Bangladesh for exporting its products to Nepal and Bhutan. The Bangladesh side also requested rail connectivity with Bhutan through the newly inaugurated Chilahati – Haldibari route. The Indian side agreed to consider the request, based on its viability and feasibility. To make this and other cross border rail links viable, the Indian side requested the Bangladesh side to remove port restrictions, inter alia at the Chilahati – Haldibari crossing.

21. The two Leaders welcomed the recent finalization of a Joint Feasibility Study which recommended that Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) will be beneficial for both countries. They directed trade officials on both sides to start negotiations within the calendar year 2022 and to complete these at the earliest, in time for Bangladesh's final graduation from LDC status.

22. Reiterating the importance of facilitating trade between the two

countries, they stressed the urgent need for up-gradation of infrastructure and facilities at the Land Customs Stations/Land Ports, and for removal of port restrictions and other non-tariff barriers at identified Land Custom Stations. The Indian side reiterated its request for at least one major land port without port restrictions or negative list of restrictions, on the border with North Eastern States of India, for easier market access, starting with ICP Agartala-Akhaura. Both Leaders welcomed the progress made on India's proposal to fund the development of a second freight gate at Petrapole-Benapole ICP and directed the officials to complete the work at the earliest.

23. The two Leaders also expressed satisfaction at the intensification of bilateral defence ties. They also agreed for early finalization of projects under the Line of Credit for defence, which would be beneficial for both the countries. India welcomed the finalization of initial procurement plans for vehicles for the Bangladesh Armed Forces in this regard and looked forward to enhancing bilateral defence ties. The Indian side reiterated its request for implementing the 2019 MoU for providing a coastal radar system for greater maritime security, at an early date.

24. Welcoming the close cooperation between the two countries during the COVID-19 pandemic including through Vaccine Maitri and

Oxygen express trains to Bangladesh, and Bangladesh's gift of medicines to India, the two Leaders emphasized the need to increase people-to-people ties. The Leaders expressed satisfaction at the resumption of rail, road, air and water-related connectivity. In this regard, the Bangladesh side welcomed India reopening facilities at most of the road and rail immigration check posts and requested restoration of immigration facilities to pre-COVID-19 level at all land ports/ICPs to facilitate movement, at an early date. Both Leaders welcomed starting of regular services of *Mitali Express* since June 2022, the third passenger train between India and Bangladesh.

25. Both Leaders looked forward to the early launch of the jointly-produced film on Bangabandhu (*Mujib: the Making of A Nation*). They also agreed to work towards other initiatives including operationalisation of "Shadhinota Shorok"- the historic road from Mujib Nagar in Bangladesh to the India-Bangladesh border in Nadia, West Bengal, and production of a documentary on the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971. The Bangladesh side also proposed joint compilation of rare video footage on the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971. The Bangladesh side appreciated the establishment of Bangabandhu Chair at University of Delhi, by the Indian side.

26. The two Leaders looked forward to the first visit of a start-up

delegation from Bangladesh that would stimulate partnership in innovation between the two countries. Both sides also expressed satisfaction at the resumption of youth exchanges being planned in the coming months. The Bangladesh side conveyed deep appreciation for India's initiative to provide medical treatment of Bangladesh's Muktijodhas at medical facilities in India.

27. The Leaders stressed on the effective implementation of the 2011 MoU on 'Conservation of the Sundarbans' including through the convening of the JWG at the earliest, so that the ecosystem of this deltaic forest and the people dependent on this ecosystem can live sustainably.

28. Both sides acknowledged the importance of leveraging the potential of new and emerging areas of cooperation and directed authorities on both sides to augment cooperation in cutting edge areas of peaceful use of outer space, green energy, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and technology enabled services in finance, health and education.

29. With regard to the regional situation, India expressed appreciation at the generosity of Bangladesh in sheltering and providing humanitarian assistance to over a million persons forcibly displaced from the Rakhine State in Myanmar and underlined its continuing commitment to support both Bangladesh and Myanmar, as the only country that is

neighbour of both, in the effort to ensure safe, sustainable, and expeditious return of these forcibly displaced people to their homeland.

30. The two sides underscored the need to work for strengthened regional cooperation through regional organizations. The Indian side appreciated the contribution of Bangladesh in hosting the BIMSTEC Secretariat and developing its infrastructure. The Indian side reiterated its support to Bangladesh in its capacity as the Chair of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

31. The following MoUs and Agreements were signed and exchanged during the visit:

- a) MoU between the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India and Ministry of Water Resources, Government of Bangladesh on Withdrawal of Water by India and Bangladesh from Common Border River Kushiya;
- b) MoU between the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board), Government of India and the Ministry of Railways, Government of Bangladesh on Training of Bangladesh Railway Personnel in India;
- c) MoU between the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board), Government of India and the Ministry of Railways, Government of Bangladesh on Collaboration in IT systems such as FOIS and other IT Applications for Bangladesh Railway;

- d) MoU on Scientific and Technological Cooperation between Council for Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), India and Bangladesh Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (BCSIR), Bangladesh;
- e) MoU on Cooperation in the Areas of Space Technology between Newspace India Limited and Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited;
- f) MoU between the Prasar Bharti and Bangladesh Television (BTV) on Cooperation in Broadcasting; &
- g) MoU between the National Judicial Academy, India and the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on Training and Capacity Building Programme for Bangladesh Judicial Officers in India.

32. The following were unveiled/announced/released during the visit:

- a) Unveiling of Unit-I of Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant, Rampal, Bangladesh;
- b) Inauguration of Rupsha railway bridge;
- c) Announcement of signing of project management consultancy contracts for Khulna – Darshana railway line and Parbotipur – Kaunia railway line.
- d) Presentation of the book containing translation of the historic '7th March Speech' of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

in 23 Indian and 5 languages of other South Asian countries, by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

e) Announcement regarding offer of 20 broad gauge locomotives to Bangladesh Railway on grant basis.

f) Announcement regarding supply of road construction equipment and machinery to Road and Highways Department, Government of Bangladesh.

33. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the warm and generous hospitality of the Government and the people of India. Prime Minister Hasina extended a cordial invitation to Prime Minister Modi to visit Bangladesh and the two Leaders looked forward to continuing interactions at all levels and fora.

New Delhi

September 7, 2022