

VICE PRESIDENT SEEKS BANGLADESH'S SUPPORT IN RESTRUCTURING THE UN AND OTHER MULTILATERAL BODIES

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Vice President's Secretariat

Vice President seeks Bangladesh's support in restructuring the UN and other multilateral bodies

Says policies that affect the entire world must not be decided by a few countries

India-Bangladesh bilateral ties are a role model of good neighbourly relations: VP

India wants peace, stability and friendly ties with all its neighbours

CAA meant to give citizenship to religiously persecuted refugees and not to take away the citizenship of any Indian: VP

Interacts with trainee-diplomats from Bangladesh

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The Vice President of India, Shri M Venkaiah Naidu today sought Bangladesh's support in restructuring and reforming multilateral organizations such as the United Nations so that policies that affect entire world were not decided by a few countries.

Interacting with trainee-diplomats from Bangladesh at Upa-Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi today, Shri Naidu pointed out that the world was multipolar now, and it was time to restructure multilateral organizations to reflect this new global reality.

Observing that India attaches the highest importance to Bangladesh, he said "Bangladesh is special for us. Therefore, your visit to India is also special for us."

The Vice President said that India always believed that a strong, stable and prosperous Bangladesh was in India's interest and "we would like to partner in your

journey of progress to become a developed country by 2041.”

Asserting that India and Bangladesh have been able to resolve some outstanding issues including the land boundary and maritime boundary issue, Shri Naidu said “Today India-Bangladesh bilateral relations are considered as a role model of good neighbourly relations.”

He observed that India and Bangladesh have the potential to steer the Bay of Bengal region to great prosperity. “We need to play an active role in BIMSTEC to fully utilize the opportunities existing in this sub-region,” he added.

Stating that India was a committed development partner of Bangladesh and has extended cumulative Lines of Credit of over US\$ 8 billion to Bangladesh in the last 7 years for various infrastructure projects, Shri Naidu stressed that this was the largest amount of credit India has ever committed to any single country.

As regards Citizenship Amendment Act, Shri Naidu said that the Indian Government at the highest level had clarified that it was meant to give citizenship to religiously persecuted refugees and not to take away the citizenship of any Indian. “It does not affect the citizenship of Indian citizens of any religion,” he added.

Shri Naidu told the delegation that India was fully aware of the heavy burden on Bangladesh as a result of the influx of lakhs of displaced persons from the Rakhine State of Myanmar and that it appreciates Bangladesh for its humanitarian gesture towards these displaced persons. He said that Bangladesh could count on India’s full support towards their bilateral efforts with Myanmar in the repatriation of displaced Rohingyas back to Myanmar.

Shri Naidu emphasized that India wants peace and stability in the neighbourhood and friendly relations with all its neighbours. He said that Kashmir was a settled issue and that deplored the attempts by a neighbouring country to aid, abet, fund and train terror outfits to promote cross border terrorism.

Giving an overview of India’s growth story, Shri Naidu said that systematic reforms undertaken by successive governments have made Indian economy strong and resilient. He said that there was a rising confidence and optimism about India all around the world.

Ambassador Syed Mausad Mahmood Khundoker, Rector, Foreign Service Academy, Dhaka & Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka and Director General of Foreign Service Academy, Dhaka Mr. Toufiq Islam Shatil and more than 20 Trainee Diplomats were in attendance and interacted with Vice President.

Following is the full text of the speech –

“It is a pleasure to receive the delegation of diplomat trainees from Bangladesh led by the Rector and the Director General of the Bangladesh Foreign Service Academy.

Bangladesh is special for us. Therefore, your visit to India is also special.

I am happy to know that this is the 4th training course for diplomat trainees being conducted by FSI. I recall the visit of the previous batch of officer trainees to Uparashtrapati Bhawan in November 2018.

I understand that you have an intense two-week program in India. The sessions at FSI in the second week would give you an overview on India's foreign policy.

I am glad to know that in addition to India's Political system, cultural diplomacy and soft power projection, you have also called on the Governor of West Bengal and visited the Rashtrapati Bhawan, the Election Commission of India, Shantiniketan, Vishwa Bharti, Elephanta caves, National Gallery of Modern Art, EXIM Bank and Bombay Stock Exchange.

I am also informed that your India visit, unlike those for other training courses by FSI, would cover five cities, which again is in line with the unique nature of ties between India and Bangladesh.

I'm sure that you'll return to Bangladesh with a much deeper understanding of India.

My dear young friends,

India attaches the highest importance to bilateral relations with Bangladesh. We always believe that a strong, stable and prosperous Bangladesh is in India's interest and we would like to be a partner in your journey of progress to become a developed country by 2041.

We reaffirm our commitment to stand with Bangladesh as a modern, secular, prosperous, sovereign State, in keeping with the spirit of 1971 and in line with the vision of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for a developed Bangladesh.

It is highly commendable that Bangladesh has maintained a steady growth rate of 6 percent in the past decade and the poverty rate was also halved. Today, Bangladesh's economic development is considered as a success story.

India stands committed to strengthen bilateral relationship with Bangladesh on the basis of friendship, trust and understanding for the mutual benefit of people and collective prosperity of the entire region. We are fully supportive of the hopes and aspirations of the people of Bangladesh.

India-Bangladesh bilateral relations are now growing from strength to strength.

Our Prime Minister Modi aptly describes it as a 'sonaliadhyaya' in our bilateral relationship.

We have together been able to solve some outstanding issues including the land

boundary and maritime boundary issue. Today, India-Bangladesh bilateral relations are considered as a role model of good neighbourly relations.

Bangladesh is India's natural ally and a long-standing reliable friend. India has been consistently making efforts to strengthen the close ties between the two countries.

As regards Citizenship Amendment Act, the Indian Government at the highest level has clarified that is meant to give citizenship to religiously persecuted refugees and not to take away the citizenship of any Indian. It does not affect the citizenship of Indian citizens of any religion.

India and Bangladesh jointly have the potential to steer the Bay of Bengal region to great prosperity. We need to play an active role in BIMSTEC to fully utilize the opportunities existing in this sub-region.

Frequent exchanges between the two Prime Ministers indicate the intensity of our bilateral relations. The recent discussions of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with Prime Minister Modi during the former's visit to India in October 2019 gave a further fillip to our bilateral ties.

India and Bangladesh today enjoy a strong and vibrant partnership. The fact that around 100 agreements/MoUs have been signed between our two countries in the last five years and especially in high-technology areas including space, civil nuclear energy, cyber security and IT, is a testimony of our expanding and strengthening bilateral relations.

India is a committed development partner of Bangladesh and we have extended cumulative Lines of Credit of over US\$ 8 billion to Bangladesh in the last 7 years for various infrastructure projects.

This is the largest amount of credit India has ever committed to any single country.

We have made tremendous progress in increasing connectivity by rail, road, air and waterways. Prime Minister Hasina's vision of restoration of pre-1965 links has been a guiding factor for us in this regard.

Our visa policy has been greatly liberalized and long-term multiple entry visas are the norm now. Five-year multiple entry visas are being given to senior citizens, all mutktijoddhas and eligible business persons.

We are looking forward to participate in the celebrations of 'Mujib barsho' (birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman) next year in Bangladesh.

I would also reiterate the sentiments expressed by our PM Narendra Modi during PM Hasina's visit to India in April 2017 and also during the visit of President of Bangladesh to India in March 2018 of the commitment and continued efforts of Government of India for an early conclusion of the Teesta agreement.

India is fully aware of the heavy burden on Bangladesh as a result of influx of lakhs of displaced persons from the Rakhine State of Myanmar.

India highly appreciates Bangladesh for its humanitarian gesture towards these displaced persons.

India has been impressing bilaterally upon Myanmar to resolve the crisis by ensuring safe and sustainable return of the displaced people back to Myanmar. India is also extending assistance for the socio-economic development of the Rakhine State through construction of low-cost houses that will facilitate the return of displaced persons from Bangladesh.

We hope that our four tranches of relief supplies to the Government of Bangladesh in September 2017, April 2018, September 2018 and December 2018 were useful in meeting some of the requirements of such a large number of displaced Rohingyas.

We will also be extending the fifth tranche of relief and rescue materials, consisting of tents, sewing machines etc.

Our humanitarian assistance is not one-off but a continued one to aid Bangladesh to cope with this enormous challenge posed by the influx of refugees.

You can count on our full support towards your bilateral efforts with Myanmar in repatriation of displaced Rohingyas back to Myanmar.

My dear friends,

As you are all aware, India is writing an impressive growth story. Our economic stability is reinforced by strong fundamentals and resilient institutions and is at its vibrant best. As a society, we are breaking shackles of social evils that hinder our progress.

We have a tremendous youth population that promises a huge demographic dividend. We are reforming our laws and improving the ease of doing business greatly.

There is a rising confidence and optimism about India all around the world. We believe that peace and stability in our neighborhood is an essential pre-condition to furthering our agenda of inclusive and sustainable development. We have always adhered to the principles of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' as encapsulated in one of the core mantras of our civilization 'Loka samastha sukhino bhavanthu'.

We believe that progress and prosperity is meaningful only when it is shared, shared with our friends, shared with our neighbours.

We are confident that Bangladesh will support us and partner with us in our quest for inclusive and sustainable development.

We must recognize that the world now is a multi-polar one.

It is time that we restructure and reform our multilateral organizations, especially the United Nations to reflect this new global reality.

We seek the strong support of our neighbors in pitching the agenda of reforming these international organizations so that policies that effect the entire world are not decided by a few.

My dear young friends,

Let me once again welcome you to the Uparashtrapati Bhawan and wish you all the very best for a long and brilliant career.

I hope that you will break down the narrow walls that divide the world and replace them with bridges that connect people, through effective diplomacy.

Thank You!

Jai Hind!"

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