

SHUN MAJORITY-MINORITY MINDSET, SAYS SHEIKH HASINA

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Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the closing session of the India Economic Summit in New Delhi.PTI-

Pluralism is fundamental to South Asia and countries of the region should avoid “majority-minority mindset”, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said here on Friday.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum (WEF), the visiting leader said South Asian countries should work together to defeat common challenges like poverty.

“We should strive to secure peace, stability and harmony for every individual across our societies. We must move beyond the majority-minority mindset. Pluralism has been a strength of South Asian countries. We should be able to celebrate South Asia’s regional, ethnic and linguistic diversity. This is fundamental,” said Ms. Hasina.

She highlighted Dhaka’s efforts to resolve difficult issues through diplomacy and pointed to the Rohingya refugees issue with Myanmar as an example that her government is trying to resolve through dialogue.

Her emphasis on pluralism is significant as it comes a day before she holds bilateral talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the backdrop of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam.

The visiting leader who is paying an official visit to India described her country as “secular progressive” and said her government follows a policy of “zero tolerance” towards corruption and terrorism. In her speech at the India, Bangladesh Business Forum, she spoke about positive ties with the political leadership of India and said that both sides are geared to create an enabling environment for economic growth. In a light-hearted manner, she referred to the hardships being faced by Bangladesh citizens after India stopped export of onions.

“I have asked my cook not to prepare meals with onions since you have stopped sending us onions. In future, do alert us if you plan to take such steps so that we can prepare ourselves better,” said Ms. Hasina.

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