

Headlines:

- **Bangladesh-India Ties a Role Model for the World**
- **30 December Election not Free, Fair: US**
- **Public Hearing on Proposed Gas Price Hike held Amid Protests**

Details:

Bangladesh-India Ties a Role Model for the World

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Indian counterpart Narendra Modi hold a joint video conference from Dhaka and New Delhi, respectively, on Monday; March 11, 2019. The two prime ministers jointly inaugurated four projects in Bangladesh through the video conference. The projects include the supply of 1,100 buses and trucks to the Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC). Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that the bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and India is a role model for the rest of the world. Sheikh Hasina also reiterated her strong condemnation of the Pulwama attack in Kashmir last month. She expressed her utmost sympathy for the family members of those killed in the Pulwama attack. (Source: Dhaka Tribune, 11 March 2019)

Sheikh Hasina has put it correctly, indeed the relationship between India and Bangladesh is a 'role model' in the sense that all Mushrik/Kuffar states aspire to have such a relationship of supremacy and subjugation with their neighboring Muslim states. During her videoconference she mentioned "multifaceted and multidimensional cooperation", an undeniable fact but that cooperation was not meant to achieve any common end rather the cooperation was towards materializing the Indian plan to dominate over our country. In fact, this was a cooperation of a loyal servant with her master. We know, due to their political hegemony India by all means secure their economic and strategic interests when they involve in any joint scheme or finance any project in Bangladesh. Likewise, as they are supplying buses and trucks to BRTC they will automatically get the contract of servicing and spare parts. We got to think-why a poor country like India would help us selflessly! While they have thousands of problems to solve and millions of people living under poverty. It is pretty obvious that they wish to usurp Bangladesh economically and politically. Bangladesh has become the fifth largest source of Indian's foreign remittance. (<http://thedailynewnation.com/news/4633/bd-5th-remittance-source-of-india.html>).

Unfortunately, since the birth of this country our rulers either failed to recognise India as an enemy states or deliberately betrayed with the people of Bangladesh by being part of Indian plans. Sheikh Hasina, for example, being a faithful agent, since she was brought to power by the Indian and Western imperialists, has been doing her best to serve their interests. We may name Indo-Bangla relationship as 'one sided love' where Bangladesh is giving everything and in return and getting nothing. We have given them transits, access to our market for both goods and services, our ports, our strategic secret information through joint exercises of military and para military forces etc., but in return we did not even get the just share of water in the common rivers. In return we often got bullets fired on our villagers in border areas, refugee push-backs, etc. All these have been possible due to the vision-less, defeated, treacherous leaderships and unfitting political system imposed upon us by the Western colonialists.

30 December Election not Free, Fair: US

The US Department of State in its latest annual report titled 'Bangladesh Human Rights Report - 2018' states, "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League party won a third consecutive five-year term in an improbably lopsided December parliamentary election that was not considered free and fair, and was marred by reported irregularities, including ballot-box stuffing and intimidation of opposition polling agents and voters". In the report published on Wednesday, the US Department of State also criticised the obstacles opposition political parties faced last year before the parliamentary election. (*Daily Prothom Alo*, Mar 14, 2019)

We need to differentiate between the statements given in public by America and what it actually does in reality. USA may not consider the last national election victory of Awami League as free and fair, but the reality is that this hypocrite state has kept on endorsing Hasina regime even after the massive election rigging since all her geopolitical interests are being properly met through this agent. When the entire nation witnessed the widespread vote-rigging in broad daylight by Awami League goons with the help of administration, USA assured AL immediately after the election that it wanted continue to work with them. It said: "Bangladesh's impressive record of economic development and respect for democracy and human rights are mutually reinforcing, and we look forward to continue working with the ruling government and opposition toward advancing these interrelated goals." (Voice of America, January 04). What is the point to highlight now that there were irregularities and rigging in last national election under Hasina's government when America has said categorically that there had been impressive record of democratic development in Bangladesh for which it wanted to continue work with her! Since people in Bangladesh are losing trust on the very system of western secular democracy especially after what they witnessed in last election, America is trying to befool the people with such irrelevant report which, in fact, has no implication on her foreign policy regarding Bangladesh.

Public Hearing on Proposed Gas Price Hike held Amid Protests

Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission on Monday hosted a public hearing on yet another round of proposed increase in gas transmission tariff amid protests. State-owned Petrobangla is proposing to increase the tariff in just six months after they had it doubled last year. Gas Transmission Company Limited, a company of Petrobangla, proposed to raise the transmission charge to Tk 0.56 per unit from the existing Tk 0.42 per unit. Last week State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid has said the government has moved for raising gas prices, mainly for commercial and industrial consumers and for power plants to offset the losses caused by LNG import. (*New Age*, Mar 12, 2019)

Authority claims that the hike will mainly affect large scale consumers like power plants, fertilizer factories, captive power plants, industries, and CNG refueling stations. But in reality, as a result of this price hike, the price of the commodities, transport cost, house rents all are going to be affected. This simple calculation that estimates the possible increase in public sufferings is ignored by the ruling class with the sugar-coated slogans of improvement in BOP (balance of payments). Because, we see big corporations and banks are being bailed out with people's money collected through rise in tax and prices of raw materials that produces power and energy.

We must not forget that the governments at past and present sold out the mineral resources by taking bribes and forced the people to buy our own gas at international price. The foreign companies in the name of extraction looted and destroyed our natural resources many times. While the domestic PetroBangla performed more efficiently with higher success rates it was given less opportunities to serve the country. The shortage of energy like gas is a huge lie.