

PM urges Canadian entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh

February 25, 2023

Online Desk: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon the Canadian entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh, particularly in agro-processing sector. She made the call when visiting Canadian Minister of International Development Harjit S Sajjan paid a courtesy call on her at the latter's official residence Ganabhaban in Dhaka on Friday, reports BSS.

Prime Minister's speech writer Md Nazrul Islam told BSS after the meeting. Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh is currently setting up 100 special economic zones throughout the country. The Canadian investors can make investment in the economic zones to build agro-processing industries or any other industry, she said. She said her government puts emphasis on the development of agro-processing industry to export processed foods alongside meeting the local demand.

Noting that Bangladesh is a small country with a large population, the Prime Minister said her government has been trying to boost crops production significantly in a small area in order to feed the local people and export the surplus food or assist other countries with food. She said Bangladesh is largely successful as its scientists have been able to develop many high yielding varieties of crops.

A huge number of lands which once remained uncultivated in the country, particularly in the southern region, have been brought under cultivation thanks to the development of saline-toleration varieties, drought-tolerant varieties and water-tolerant varieties, she added. The visiting Canadian Minister said his country wants agricultural collaboration with Bangladesh particularly in development of food storage and small-scale farmers.

He appreciated Bangladesh's development in agriculture and education as well as praised Sheikh Hasina for developing a large agro-farm inside her residence Ganabhaban complex. In this context, Sheikh Hasina apprised the Canadian minister of her government's steps to promote small farmers. She said the government provides them with subsidies for irrigation, agriculture appliances and agricultural mechanisation, and assists them under many other programmes.

The premier said the government introduced a micro-saving programme and so, the small farmers can save their money and also take loan from it. For irrigation, the government now puts importance on rainwater harvesting and use of surface water instead of underground water for the sake of conservation of nature, she added. About the Rohingya issue, the premier sought cooperation from the development partners over repatriation of forcibly displaced Rohingya people to their motherland Myanmar. She, however, sought their assistance to develop more areas in Bhashan Char, island in Noakhali, to relocate more Rohingyas from Cox's Bazar for their temporary shelter.

Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh developed an eco-friendly human habitat in Bhashan Char with its own fund to arrange a better living condition for Rohingyas. A good number of Rohingyas have already been shifted to Bhashan Char. If the area with better living conditions can be expanded there, more Rohingyas can be relocated from Cox's Bazar, she said, seeking help from the donors in this regard. The Prime Minister said some of the Rohingyas have got involved in various crimes like human and drug trafficking and internal conflicts in Cox's Bazar. She said an inhuman environment has been created there for the women particularly children and adolescent girls. If they go to Bhashan Char, they will get a decent environment.

Outlining Climate Change issue, Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh is mainly emphasizing on the adaptation and mitigation to fight the impacts of climate changes. The own problems induced by climate changes are

being addressed by local solutions, she said. She said the government focuses on minimizing damages of lives and livelihood during natural disasters. In this context, she mentioned that cyclone shelter centres, cyclone-resilient houses and greenbelts were built on the coastal area.

Speaking about education, the premier said her government is putting importance to the development of skilled manpower alongside general education to create scopes for self-employment and increase remittance outflow exporting skilled labour to foreign markets. PM's Principal Secretary M Tofazzel Hossain Miah, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Lilly Nicholls were present.