

World should take steps to stop war in Ukraine: PM tells CNN

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Online Desk: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said intensified global steps were needed to stop war in Ukraine as it continued to cause common peoples miseries across the world, as she gave an exclusive interview to the CNN TV. “I feel that the world should come forward to stop the war as the common people are suffering,” she said while the US-based Cable News Network (CNN) broadcast her interview’s first episode this morning, reports BSS.

Asked for comments on Bangladesh stance on the war, Sheikh Hasina said “we believe in a peaceful solution”. “If there is any conflict, through dialogue it can be solved. We (Bangladesh) never support any kind of invasion or any conflict,” she said. Numerous questions regarding the Ukraine crisis, Bangladesh relations with China including its loan issues and Rohingya crisis largely featured the first episode of the interview.

CNN is set to air the second episode of the interaction with the Bangladesh premier later this evening while the network’s famed journalist Richard Quest interviewed her. Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh’s foreign policy is very clear, “Friendship to all, malice to none” and “and we’re following that, so, when we see any human rights violation or invasion, we definitely oppose it”. She, however, said no war could be one-sided alone as it needs involvement of both sides “(but) I believe each country has its own rights to live in their own territory (with freedom) and protect their own territory.”

Replying to a question that the USA thinks Bangladesh is getting closer to China, Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh is close to every country which supports its development efforts. “We’re close to everybody, China, USA or India. Those who are supporting our development, we’re with them,” she said. The prime minister said China is a development partner of Bangladesh and they are investing there (in Bangladesh) and they are doing some construction. “That’s all,” she said. She added: “We’re not depending on anybody”.

Replying to another question on Chinese loan, the premier said, “We’re very much careful about taking loan—mostly we take loans from institutions like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. From China, our loan is very low. It is not like Sri Lanka or anybody.” She said unnecessarily her government doesn’t take any loan or any mega project. She said, “We consider from which project we can get a return and we will be the beneficiary.”

Asked on what Bangladesh needs from the international community to deal with the Rohingya crisis, Sheikh Hasina said, “We have called upon the international community that they should pressure Myanmar to bring their citizens back to their country.” “Not only that, we also started a dialogue with Myanmar. Unfortunately, they are not responding properly,” she said. The premier went on saying that her government had already talked to China, ASEAN countries, Japan, USA and others countries and requested them to put pressure on Myanmar to bring their nationals back. “Unfortunately, the Myanmar government is not listening to anybody. That is the problem,” she said.

The prime minister said they have given shelters to the Rohingyas on humanitarian ground considering the plight of Bangladeshi (one crore) people during the Liberation War in 1971 and their shelter in neighbouring India. She said the Rohingyas (12 lakh) are becoming a “big burden” for Bangladesh as it has to feed them alongside ensuring their basic rights despite the country is overpopulated. “I have to feed them (Rohingyas). I have to ensure their basic needs,” she said.