

## African countries praise Hasina for BD IMO scholarships

Ambassadors, High Commissioners, and Permanent Representatives of more than 40 African countries, members of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), praised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for offering 10 marine cadetship scholarships from Bangladesh for African LDCs and SIDS at

the IMO, reports UNB.

At a reception hosted by Bangladesh High Commission London in honour of African members of the IMO who supported Bangladesh's candidature to the IMO in council Category C elections last December, Ambassador of Guinea on behalf of African Union and Ambassador of Nigeria on behalf of IMO African group at the IMO thanked Bangladesh government for announcing 10 scholarships for African groups and SIDS in Bangladesh marine academies, said the Bangladesh High Commission, London on Thursday.

They said Bangladesh's election to the IMO council is a well-deserved honour and Africa wants to foster a stronger partnership to promote and mutual collaboration and understating at the IMO in addressing climate change and GHG reduction from shipping sector enhancing safety and security from maritime cooperation, promoting digitalization and advanced technologies and welfare and working conditions of seafarers.

High Commissioner of Bangladesh and PR to the IMO Saida Muna Tasneem said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina over the past decade and half has completely transformed Bangladesh's maritime landscape with building country's first Deep Sea Port in Matarbari, the first Bay Terminal in Chattogram, the first LNG FSRU in Moheshkhali, the first Single buoy mooring in Kutubdia, the first Maritime University, the Pyra Specialized port and the Delta Plan 2100 -all part of her 'Smart Bangladesh' Vision.



A six-member delegation led by University Grants Commission Acting Chairman Prof Dr Muhammad Alamgir hands over 49th UGC Annual Report 2022 to President Shahabuddin at Bangabhaban on Thursday. PHOTO: PID

## Prez calls for imparting quality higher education

President Mohammed Shahabuddin on Thursday called for imparting quality education along with increasing the number of students in higher studies.

He said this when a six-member delegation of University Grants Commission's (UGC) led by its acting chairman Professor Dr Muhammad Alamgir met him at Bangabhaban.

The delegation handed him UGC's 49th Annual Report, President's press secretary Md Joynal Abedin told UNB.

The president asked the UGC to take extra initiatives to promote research activities at universities.

He suggested the university regulatory authority form a panel in accordance with the policy for the appointment of vice-chancellor (VC) and pro-vc of public universities.

The president welcomed the government's goal of building 'Smart Bangladesh'. "Our country is now on the way of being 'Smart Bangladesh. To build Smart Bangladesh, every student should also be smart."

He asked the UGC to strictly monitor the administrative and overall higher education activities of every public and private university.

The president directed the UGC to play an effective role for expanding higher education across the country.

During the meeting, the UGC acting chairman briefed the president about the overall activities of the commission, future plans and various aspects of the report.

The UGC delegation presented 14-point recommendations to the president for spreading higher education in the country.

The delegation members thanked the president for extending cooperation in the activities of UGC and sought his direction in future programmes.

Secretaries concerned to the president's office were present at the meeting. —UNB

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# Israel sends troops into 'besieged' Gaza hospital

Agence France-Presse ·  
Palestinian Territories

ISRAEL sent troops into a hospital in war-torn Gaza on Thursday where it said hostages may have been held, as medics warned the key medical facility was operating in 'near impossible' conditions.

The raid came after days of intense fighting between troops and Hamas militants around the Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis — one of the largest medical sites in southern Gaza, and one of the few hospitals that are still operational in the territory.

Israel, which has accused Hamas militants of using hospitals for military purposes, said it was carrying out a 'precise and limited operation' at the facility with 'no obligation' for patients or staff to evacuate.

Israeli army spokesman Rear-Admiral Daniel Hagari said there was 'credible intelligence from a number of sources, including from released hostages, indicating that Hamas held hostages at

the Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis and that there may be bodies of our hostages' at the hospital.

The health ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza has reported that thousands of people who had sought refuge at the hospital, including patients, have been made to leave in recent days.

It has called the situation at Nasser 'catastrophic', with staff unable to move bodies to the morgue because of the risks involved.

Nurse Mohammed al-Astal said this week that the facility had been 'besieged' for a month and was facing deadly sniper fire, sewage in the emergency room, and a lack of drinking water.

Doctors Without Borders has warned its staff there are continuing to treat patients 'amid near impossible conditions'.

The World Health Organisation has described Nasser hospital as a critical facility 'for all of Gaza', where only a minority of hospitals are even partly operational.

The army, citing intelligence estimates and information from the ground, said 'over 85 per cent of major medical facilities in Gaza have been used by Hamas for terror operations'.

Roughly 130 hostages are still believed to be in Gaza after the October 7 attack on Israel by Hamas militants, which resulted in the deaths of about 1,160 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official Israeli figures.

Dozens of the estimated 250 hostages seized during the attack were freed in exchange for Palestinian prisoners during a week-long truce in November. Israel says 29 of those still in Gaza are presumed dead.

At least 28,663 people, mostly women and children, have been killed in Israel's assault on the Palestinian territory, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

Israel launched more deadly strikes on southern Gaza on Thursday, after Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted it would push ahead with a 'powerful' operation in the overcrowded city of Rafah for 'complete victory'.

AFP photographs show thick black smoke billowing into the sky over Khan Yunis, as Israeli bombardments continue.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been driven into Rafah, seeking shelter in a sprawling makeshift encampment near the Egyptian border.



SOURCE: The daily NEW AGE on 16/02/2024