

Modi, Hasina launch oil pipeline, rail projects

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 18 SEPTEMBER

Taking yet another significant step to enhance economic cooperation between their two countries, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart, Sheikh Hasina, on Tuesday jointly inaugurated the construction work of a cross-border oil pipeline and two rail projects with the Indian leader describing the two neighbouring nations as members of the same family. Modi and Hasina joined the event via video-conferencing from New Delhi and Dhaka, respectively.

The 130-km India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline connecting Siliguri in India with Parbatipur in Bangladesh will transport petroleum products from Numaligarh Refinery in Assam. Of the total length, 125 km will be constructed in Bangladesh and 5 km in India.

Geographically, the countries were neighbours but emotionally they were members of the same family, Modi said while addressing the programme. "We have shown the world, what can be achieved when neighbours work together," he said.

At the same event, the ground-breaking ceremony of two rail projects to improve Dhaka's connectivity with Tongi and Joydebpur, two towns on the outskirts of the capital city, was also held. The projects were inaugurated just days after the two PMs

inaugurated two railway projects and an electricity project connecting the two nations.

Stating that the pipeline will further boost bilateral cooperation, Modi said energy was the cornerstone of any country's development.

"The pipeline will help in the development of northern Bangladesh. Though it is being done with grant-financing from India, the project will be dedicated to the people and government of Bangladesh once completed," he said. Modi said the railway project will bring relief to road traffic in Bangladesh.

Speaking from Dhaka, Hasina said ever since she formed her government in Bangladesh in 2009, she has been working relentlessly to deepen ties with India. She thanked Modi for the new projects which she said will help in Bangladesh's development. External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj and petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan joined the video conference from Delhi and Bangladeshi foreign minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali from Dhaka.