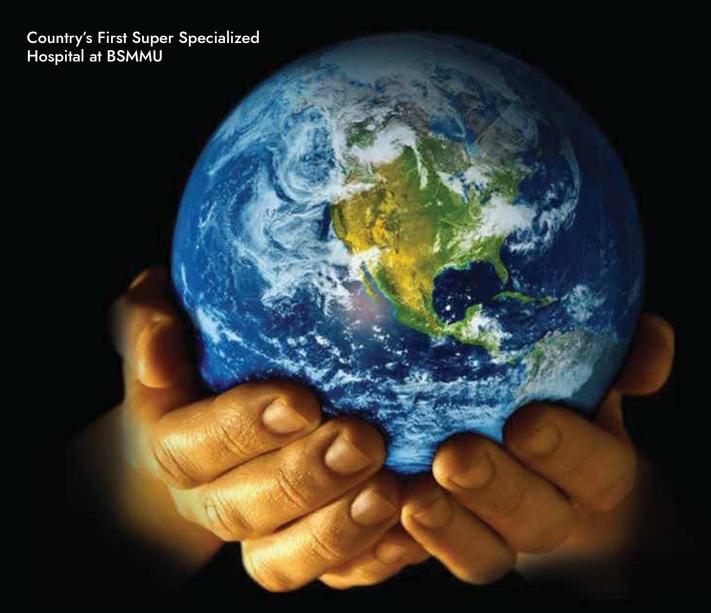
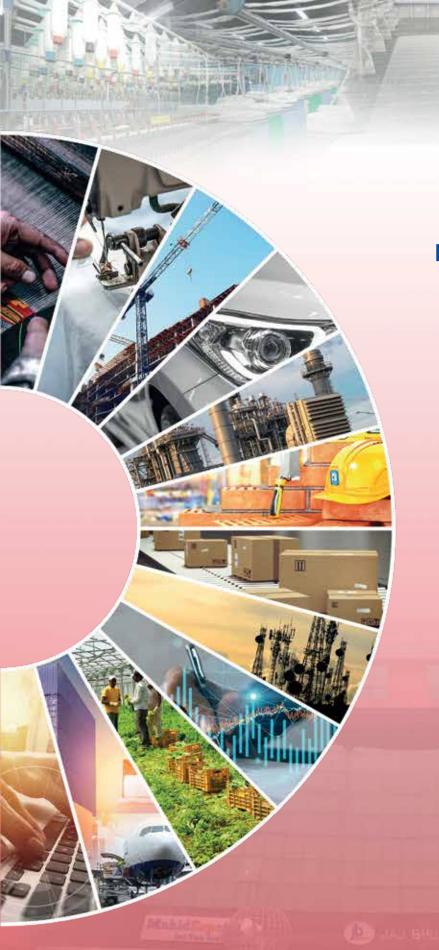
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Country's First Super Specialized Hospital at BSMMU



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Diplomats wishes all its readers a joyous and a blessed Eid Mubarak. The Eid was celebrated in a wide-scale throughout Bangladesh as the Covid restriction was relaxed after two years.

The Trade and the Economy of the country have also improved compared to previous years despite the Ukraine-Russia situation. It was also reported that investments in various sectors are also improving.

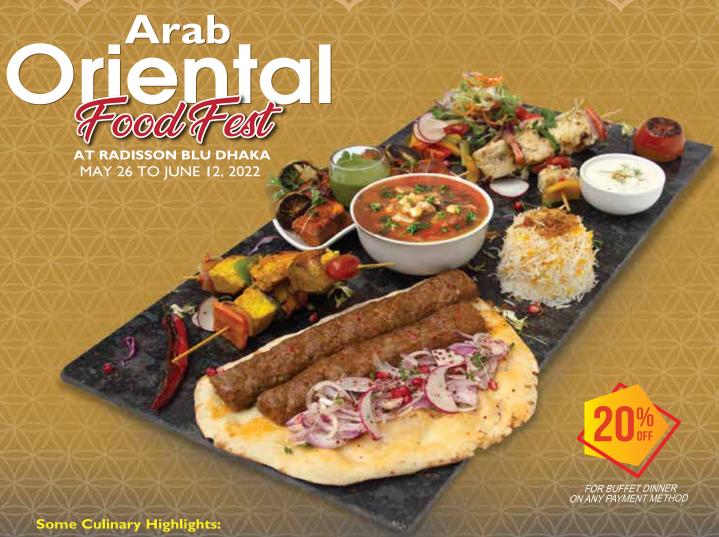
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina assured the best possible policy framework for an investment-friendly atmosphere in Bangladesh and stated that Bangladesh is recognized for promoting investment in the power, energy, ICT, RMG, Plastic, Jute, and Agro-Processing sectors.

Recently, Bangladesh lost an iconic personality, the longest-serving Finance Minister Mr. Abul Mal Abdul Muhith. A well-wisher of the Diplomats magazine. During his tenure as the Finance Minister, Diplomats was honored by his presence at various events. During Mr. Muhith's tenure, Bangladesh witnessed a significant increase in its budget size and extraordinary growth of its economy, and also impressive inflation management. The country moved forward towards graduation from LDC status to a middle-income country. Mr. Muhith also served as an Economic Counselor in Washington DC, he pledged his allegiance in support of an independent Bangladesh and inspired the Bangladesh diaspora to lobby and build support in the US Congress for the independence of Bangladesh. For the role and global support for Bangladesh and his contribution to our Liberation War, Mr. Muhith was conferred with the Swadhinata Podok, the highest civilian award in the country rewarded for his patriotism which he so courageously displayed during the most challenging times. As Finance Minister, he was a voice of reason one could engage in dialogues. He was also an admirer of the arts and culture; the sad demise of Mr. Muhith has left a void in the political arena. A glimpse of his political career speaks of his contribution to the nation. The Diplomats team is deeply saddened by his demise.

This Diplomats issue has a write-up of the Bangladesh-Germany 50 years of diplomatic relations and many other interesting topics including glorious liberation war, Rabindranath poetry, Fashion for the Earth, Rohingya Issue etc.

Shahed Akhtar

Fmr. Ambassador & Secretary, GoB and Editor, Diplomats Publication



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TELIAPARA STRATEGY: A LAUNCH-PAD FOR OUR **GLORIOUS WAR OF LIBERATION**

-Mohammad Shafigul Islam

Since the historic speech of Bangabandhu on the 7th of Mach, 1971 at Ramna Race course (Sahrawardi Uddan) the Bengali nation was bracing up for a fierce resistance against the Pakistani rule. On one hand a strong political dissent started brewing amongst the students and politicians and on the other hand retired Bengali armed forces personnel from army, navy and air force led by Col MAG Osmani and General Mohammad Ishfaqul Majeed, who were elected members of the provincial Assembly, started mobilizing for an armed resistance against the Pakistani forces. Serving Bengali General Khwaja Ausiuddin, who was stationed in West Pakistan, consistently updated critical military information to these two retired Bengali senior officers, turned politicians through his secret contacts. General Majeed and Col Osmani was well aware

of the fact that Mr Bhutto and General Yahiya Khan was buying time through a series of well-choreographed meetings with Bangabandhu, in order to mobilize troops from West Pakistan for a crackdown on Bengalis in East Pakistan. On 23 March, Gen Majeed and Col Osmani organized an oath taking ceremony in the North Plaza of Baitul Mukarram Mosque for the retired Bengali armed forces personnel, pledging to fight for independence of Bangladesh. Their fiery speech generated huge enthusiasm amongst the crowd. The rally then marched towards Bangabandhu's residence at 32, Dhanmondi. Upon reaching the residence, they handed over the Sword of freedom to Bangabandhu. On the same instant, General Majeed was arrested by the Pakistani intelligent service. On the night of 25th March, Pakistani army cracked down on innocent

civilian and carried out a ruthless massacre in the name of 'Operation Search Light'. On the same night, Col Osmany managed to avert arrest and went into hideout.

Bangabandhu was taken into custody in the early hours of 26th March by the Pakistani authority. After the arrest of Bangabandhu, the entire nation sunk into an uncertainty and despair as the country was momentarily left without a leader. There was no one readily available to take over charge during Bangabandhu's absence, as by that time most of his close colleagues would have left the country or be in hideouts to avert political repression by the Pakistani Junta.

In the military's side, five out of eight battalions of East Bengal Regiment was stationed in East Pakistan. On 26th March, 8th East Bengal at Chittagong, 2nd



Major Khalid Musharraf infront of his hideout

East Bengal at Joydebpur, 4th
East Bengal at Brahmanbaria,
spontaneously revolted against
the Pakistani authority followed
by 3rd East Bengal at Saiyedpur
on 28th March. These units being
isolated from each other, suffered
heavy casualties during the
initial clashes with the heavily
out-numbered and out-gunned
Pakistani forces. Revolting
battalions were led by the
Bengali Majors and Captains of
the respective units.

After General Majeed's arrest, Col Osmani remains to be the senior most Bengali war veteran with an experience of WW II, Kashmir War and 1965 Indo-Pak war. Col Osmani, along with some of the revolting Bengali officers felt the need of a unified command and a political leadership to wedge a war of resistance against a formidable opponent. With that in view, Col MAG Osmani and some of the senior officers decided to meet at Teliapara on 4th April 1971 to work out a strategic plan for our war of resistance.

After 7th March speech by Bangabandhu at Ramna Race Course, meeting of the revolting military commanders at Teliapara on 4th April 1971, turned out to be a significant leap forward in the history of our Liberation war. The venue of the meeting was in the Teliapara Tea garden Manager's Banglow, located only two kilometers from the Indian border. Mr Mohammad Abdul Karim was the Garden Manager,

who hosted the gathering. Manager, Abdul Karim along with Mr Abdur Rafique, facilitated and co-ordinated all aspect of the meeting at the banglow. Twenty seven valiant officers of the East Bengal regiment attended the meeting on 4th April 1971.

Earlier, Major Khalid Musharraf, Commanding officer, 4th East Bengal, setup his Headquarters at Madhbpur Rest House. Right in the beginning, he got a road constructed with the help of a local Awami League leader, Mr Dewan Mohammad Ashraf connecting Teliapara tea estate with the Indian boarder. It was done to facilitate cross border operations. From this

Headquarter, Major Khalid Musharraf communicated and co-ordinated with the Director General, Eastern zone of Indian BSF, Brigadier VC Pandey. Their initial meeting was held at the Teliapara BSF boarder outpost. During the short meetings both side used to discuss

about the ways and means to sustain military operations against the Pakistani forces. During these contacts by both sides, it was decided to organize a joint meeting at the Teliapara Tea Garden Banglow, attended by all the revolting army officers along with the Indian representatives. Subsequently, with the help of Brig Pandey, Major Khalid Musharraf communicated with the Indian participants and the revolting army officers who were scattered all over Bangladesh and informed them of the planned meeting. In response to his call, Commander of 2nd East Bengal, Major K M Shafiullah reached Teliapara along with a few others and established his head quarter jointly with the 4th East Bengal. On 2nd April, BSF IG along with DC Agartala, met Major Khalid Musharraf and Major Shafayet Jamil In the **no man's land**, adjacent to Teliapara border, to discuss about immediate support and help needed for the ongoing armed operations.

In the early morning of 4th April, all the army officers gathered at Teliapara Banglow. Brigadier V C Pandey arrived at the battalion Headquarters at 10 am,



Major Khalid Musharraf is administering the oath of allegiance to the revolting army officers at Teliapara on 4th April 1971



Gen MAG Osmani presenting the Guard of Honor to Syed Nazrul Isam, the Acting President of Bangladesh, at Mujibnagar on 17th April 1971

accompanied by D C Agatala, Mr Omesh Saigol and Retired Colonel MAG Osmani.

The historic meeting started dot on time at 1100 hrs. Commander 4th East Bengal, Major Khalid Musharraf, welcomed the participants and introduced the meeting's agenda. A brief discussion ensued and thereafter.

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted in the meeting:

- 1. Acquisition of arms and ammunitions for the Bangladesh forces 2. Permission To use Indian
- bordering areas for launching military operations
- 3. Establishment of unified command with Colonel MAG Osmani as the
- Commander-in-Chief
- 4. Setting up of 'Liberation war monitoring cell'
- 5. Establishment of Four military zones
- 6. Appointment of Commanders and assigning responsibilities.
- 7. Proposal for establishing the Provisional Government of Bangladesh as early as possible to legitimize armed struggle.
- 8. Col MAG Osmani was

entrusted to pursue the formation of a provisional Government with the senior political leadership.

9. Fixing the date for next review meeting

Since the meeting was convened before the establishment of Bangladesh political Government, no minutes were documented in

written form. Liberation forces command structure. appointment of commanders and operational orders were all

Supreme Military Command **Bangladesh Liberation Force**

> executed on verbal instructions. Bangladesh Liberation force was named as Mukti Bahini.

> Maximum emphasis was laid on the immediate formation of a

political Government.

After the adjournment of the meeting, Col MAG Osmani, took out his own pistol and fired into the air and formally declared war against Pakistan. All attending Officers were administered the oath of allegiance in favor of Liberating Bangladesh from Pakistani occupation.

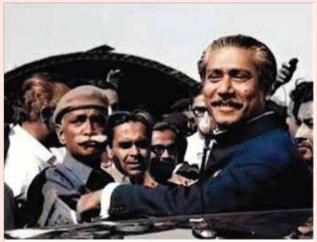
As per the decision of the meeting on 4th April, a follow up meeting was convened at Teliapara on 10th April. The meeting was attended by the attendees of 4th April meet.

At the onset, Col MAG Osmani, informed the forum that, he had managed to contact some of the Bangali MNAs and MPAs who had crossed into India. While discussing the urgency of forming a political government, every one including Mr Tajuddin unanimously acknowledged the importance of immediate steps in that direction. Mr Tajuddin

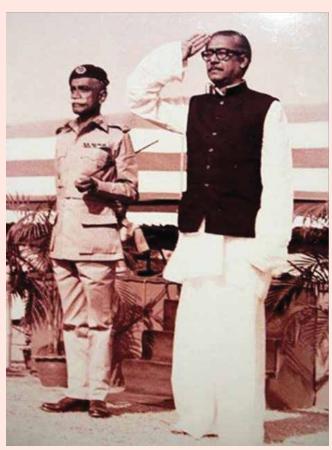
> Ahmed later assured Col MAG Osmani that, he would, very soon, declare the formation of a provisional Government.

A decision was taken in the forum to bring all pockets of fighting sections under unified command and build up a combined resistance. Entire country was divided into six sectors instead of previous four. Two new sectors consisted of greater

Rangpur and a part of Dinajpur under the command of Captain Nawajesh Ali and Greater Rajshahi, Pabna and Bogura



Gen MAG Osmani welcoming Bangabandhu on 10th January 1972



Gen Osmani Presenting a Guard of Honor to Bangabandhu

under the command of Major Nazmul Haque.

Indian representative who were in attendance, informed the forum that, thousands of students and young volunteers started to gather along the Indian

boarder areas to join the freedom fight. They were housed in temporary camps. Separate camps are being setup to accommodate the floods of refugees escaping the atrocities in Bangladesh. They further added that, BSF had started supplying limited arms and ammunitions to the freedom fighters who are engaged in fighting against the occupation forces in different battle fronts. In some areas, BSF was taking active part in operations alongside the

freedom fighters. Brigadier Pandey informed the forum that, there would be a quantum increase in support by the Indian Government to the war effort after the formation of Bangladesh government in exile. Forum felt the need to mobilize

world opinion in favor of Independence of Bangladesh. An all-out media support was assured from the Indian side on this issue.

Subsequently, all verbal orders and instructions and decisions of the meeting were regularized by the newly formed Bangladesh's provisional Government after due additions, amendment and modifications.

In a moment of extreme national crisis, these two meetings were not only the co-ordination meetings of the revolting army commanders, but also a display of extreme patriotism, dynamic leadership combined an with outstanding professionalism on the part of the young military commanders. Their strategic vision played a significant role in laying down the foundation of our glorious War of Liberation and an expeditious Victory for our beloved Motherland, Bangladesh.

Air Commodore M Shafiqul Islam ndc, AWC, psc (Retd) Advisor, Diplomats Publication















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SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION AND **FASHION FOR THE EARTH**

-Bibi Russel

• ince I began my fashion line "Bibi Production", I have been trying to create clothing and accessories such as purses, shoes, stoles, and bangles by using hand-woven technology and completely natural materials. At first; my fashionwear, accessories and scarves are well known for their unique design and materials, but now these are also well acclaimed all around the world for their environment friendliness and sustainable fashion concept. Now I believe we can all work together to bring significant change to our garments production practice by adopting to more sustainable, more environment friendly approaches all while ensuring

better lifestyle and elevating the livelihood for those who are directly involved to this industry.

The Fashion Industry can creatively make a difference to the economy and society. Although the fast fashion industry takes a devastating toll on the labor force and the natural world; sustainable fashion designers have to show the way how responsible fashion, repurposing fashion, slow fashion can bring awareness about the need to reverse the unrestricted and unsustainable fashion industry. From making personal changes to advocating for and legislating better, more sustainable fashion practices, to educating others about the issue, there must be adherence at all levels.

The Environmental Protection Agency, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Endangered Species Act were all passed as a result of Earth Day initiative, which began as a grassroots movement in 1970. Today, earthday.org is trying relentlessly to take action to mitigate the effects of any industry that wastes scarce resources, damages soil, contaminates fresh water with harmful chemicals, and pollutes the atmosphere and seas with microplastics. They even played a vital role to promote the "Fashion Sustainability and

Social Accountability Act" or Fashion Act; which was unveiled in New York State Assembly. The Fashion Act, if passed, would make New York the first US state to pass a law that would hold fashion companies accountable for their role in climate change and other human rights impacts.



Hand-woven technology

The fast fashion business has a destructive impact on the labor force and the natural environment, all for the sake of profit and with little regard for the repercussions. Therefore, "Fashion for the Earth" initiative aims to change the fashion industry's progression and educate the public about sustainable fashion. So, it has been a true honor and immense pleasure for me to pledge my collaboration with "Fashion for the Earth" campaign as its goodwill Ambassador.

'Fashion for the Earth' aims to alter the trajectory of the negative to the environment of the present-day fashion industry. Today, it is imperative that businesses, governments, and citizens who inhabit Earth come together to 'Invest In Our Planet'. Earth, our shared heritage, cries out for commitment at all levels. Change personal lifestyles, inspire others to do the same, advocate for legislation for sustainable fashion practices... there is so much each can do.

Presently there are minimal regulations to ensure that the garment industry maintains

environment-friendly standards. If this state of affairs continues, it will make for a grim scenario. Studies project that 80 per cent of the 100 billion garments produced annually will likely end up in already filled-to-capacity dump sites. Imagine the increased microplastics in ocean waters as synthetic material gets used for over half of these garments!

I have used water hyacinth to make bangles and jewelries. I made fashion goods using recycled materials while



Model Wearing Eco Friendly Clothes

working in Cambodia. I designed Rickshaw-painting inspired eyewear frames. I have also worked in the handicrafts industries of India, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Latin America, and Vietnam over the years. What amazes me from all these experiences is that mass people were always have been

fashion concerned in a sense and they managed to maintain their style from natural and sustainable resource.

But since the beginning of industrial revolution, few countries have forcefully taken the obligation and/or business to provide for the rest. And thus came the ill practice of mass production which seemed holistic at the beginning and now proved to harmful to the environment as well as to the society. These are not produced to last, but to wear and discard over a short wear time. As the garments are priced very low, cheap labor often working out of sweatshops is employed. It tugs at my heart when I see the industry's apathy to human dignity.

Consider water run-off with toxic ingredients such as chemicals, dyes, and heavy metals from garment production units. The fashion industry is responsible for 10% of total greenhouse gas emissions. Look how the garment industry is polluting the environment and harming human health and wellbeing. I will be much obliged and delighted to speak to audiences



Eco-friendly Accessories



Eco-friendly Ornaments



Eco-friendly Clothes and Accessories

all around the world about "Why Sustainable Fashion and How to Switch to It."

During the COVID lockdown, I have spoken at multiple webinars aimed at inspiring youngsters, who make up the majority of ready-to-wear, off-the-rack customers. What surprised me that most of them are appreciating the concept but also arguing about the importance of mass production practice. I needed to explain that I am not entirely against mass production but there should be technologies and research to make the process and administration less harmful to the environment along with more caring to the society.

Throughout my life and work, I have earned a lot of worldwide support for my efforts to promote Fashion for Development and sustainable fashion concept. The UNESCO recognized the link between fashion and development, education, and health through my work. I went to major institutions to see how they are using fashion to help people in developing countries. I have been cordially welcomed by the Indian government to assist them strengthen their Khadi sector, which is basically homemade garments.

The fashion industry has the ability to make a difference via creativity. The fast fashion sector has a negative impact on both the work force and the environment. Sustainable fashion designers must demonstrate how ethical fashion, repurposed fashion, and slow fashion can raise awareness about the need to reverse ill practices of the traditional fashion industry. There must be commitments at all levels, from

personal adjustments to campaigning for and enacting better, more sustainable fashion processes to educating others about the issue.

There are still debate continues about where the responsibility for changing the fast fashion industry lies: with the brands, the consumers or governments. I think the answer is all

three. The keys to change are in educating consumers, forcing brands to alter their current business model based on price and volume, and increased regulation by governments. While progress has been made, much more is needed. The theme for this year's Earth Day is 'Invest in Our Planet.' If we invest in the



Displaying Handmade Clothes

crafts and handloom sector, we are not only providing sustainable livelihoods but are also preserving our culture and heritage.

From the very beginning of my journey as a fashion designer, I have been focusing on the good of our planet by promoting the

practice of sustainable fashion. My collections are limited and use natural colors and Iso dyes only. My Fashion for Development portfolio sees her traversing the world, revitalizing traditional fabrics and assisting artisans; which eventually bestowed me with the prestigious 'Artist for Peace' award by UNESCO. Ever since I

am committed to altering the trajectory of the fashion business and educating the public on sustainable fashion. As a part of campaign 'Fashion for the Earth'; I hope I can pass my enthusiasm to ensure a better livable earth among various policymakers and organizations around the world

Bibi Russel UNESCO Artist for Peace





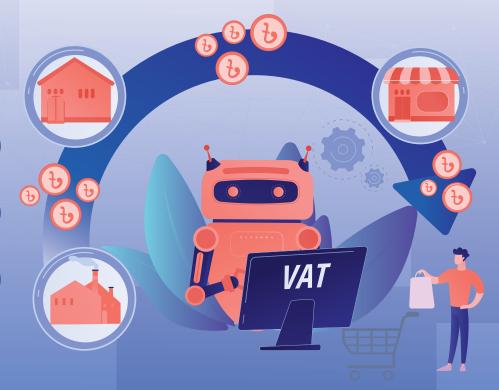
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MESSAGE FROM GERMAN AMBASSADOR ON:

GOLDEN JUBILLE YEAR OF GERMAN-BANGLADESH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS





This year marks the 50 years of diplomatic relationship between Bangladesh and Germany. In 1972, Germany was one of the first countries in Europe to recognize the People's Republic of Bangladesh. On 4 February 1972, the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Dhaka sent a Verbal Note to the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Bangladesh, which 11 months earlier had declared its independence from Pakistan. Over the past five decades, Bangladesh has achieved outstanding socio-economic development and Germany is delighted to contribute in the process. A strong pillar of our bilateral relationship remains the development cooperation in the areas of climate change, good

governance, renewable energy and recently also for the Rohingvas and host communities.

Bangladesh, despite being exposed to frequent natural disasters and poverty, has shown strong character for resilience and growth. The poverty rate

has been halved since 2000 and it has one of the highest economic growth rates in Asia even during the Covid-19 pandemic. By 2026, Bangladesh will officially graduate to the status of a Least Developed Country (LDC), and by 2041, the country aims to become a high-income industrialized country (HIC). In order to meet the increased energy demand without harming the environment and climate, Germany supports Bangladesh's efforts to achieve a maximum coverage through renewable energies sharing the experience from our own transition to renewable energies.

It is impressive what Bangladesh has achieved since

independence. Germany is the largest trading partner of Bangladesh in Europe and the second largest globally. RMG exports to Germany in FY20-21 stood at \$5.95 billion as against \$6.97 billion in earnings from the US market. Currently, around 65 German companies are working in Bangladesh, particularly in the textile, transport, energy, logistics sectors and the building materials industry. In cooperation with the German company Veridos, Bangladesh has officially entered the era of e-Passports in 2020. BGCCI is one of our partners that promote business between the two countries. Since the beginning of bilateral development cooperation in the 1970s, Germany has provided more than 3 billion EUR in bilateral development cooperation projects in Bangladesh. A special focus is put on improving labor conditions and environmental standards in the Ready Made Garment (RMG) sector. Besides, Germany has helped Bangladesh fight the challenges of Covid-19 by donating vaccines, ventilators and medical masks. Germany



Celebration of 50 years German-Bangladesh Diplomatic Relations

also extends its support to the humanitarian crisis in Bangladesh, investing more than 53 million EUR to support the Rohingya refugees and the host communities since 2018. Besides, we are working together with our partners in the EU to find a political solution together with the UN.

The cultural and educational cooperation between Germany and Bangladesh dates back even before their diplomatic relationship. The cultural and educational cooperation is mainly channelled through the Goethe Institut Dhaka that

facilitates exchange of literature, music, film, arts and ideas. The cultural and educational cooperation has significantly expanded with more students choosing Germany as their key destination for higher-studies.

After fifty years, the excellent relationship between Bangladesh and Germany continues to reach new heights with deeper and stronger cooperation. Due to its strategic location in the Indo-Pacific region and its growing importance as a strong political and economic actor, Bangladesh today is an important economic and

political partner of Germany. We share the same values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and numerous international conventions, and we work together for a rule-based international order. Both Bangladesh and Germany are committed to democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law. As we reflect on our close relationship on the 50th anniversary, it is evident that Germany will continue to remain a committed partner in Bangladesh's development journey in the years to come.

Achim Tröster Ambassador Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dhaka

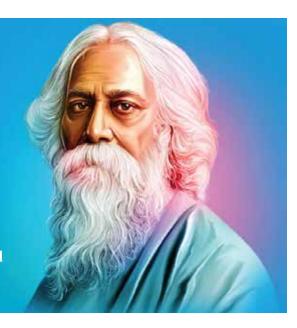






RABINDRANATH TAGORE A POET OF THE PEOPLE & FOR THE WORLD

-Md. Abu Sadeq



abindranath Tagore is one of Rangladesh's most celebrated Renaissance personalities, and he is credited with putting Bangla on the international literary map. He was a poet's poet, shaping not only Bengali literature but the modern world mentality as well. Tagore was a multifaceted artist who excelled as a poet, short story writer, novelist, playwright, essayist, painter, and song composer. His international reputation as a social, political, theological, and aesthetic thinker, an educator, and a proponent of the "One World" concept gives him a living presence. He was dubbed the "Great Sentinel" by Mahatma Gandhi.

Rabindranath Tagore was born on May 6, 1861, in Jorasanko, Calcutta, to a wealthy joint family. His father, Maharsi Debendranath Tagore, was a religious reformer, scholar, and leader of the Brahmo Samaj, and his mother, Sarada Devi, was a religious reformer, scholar, and leader of the Brahmo Samaj. He

was the youngest of thirteen brothers and sisters. Since his mother died while he was young, he had spent much of his childhood with servants. His house was the epicenter of intellectual and dramatic endeavors. Rabindranath Tagore married Mrinalini Devi Rai Chaudhuri in 1883. They have three daughters and two boys.

Tagore disliked school activities within the enclosure since he was a youngster. He like being outside, with the open sky above him and the ground beneath his feet. As a result, he was schooled at home by private tutors in a variety of topics. Tagore moved to England for higher studies, but he disliked the typical educational system there as well. After a year, he returned to India. He returned home and dedicated himself entirely to writing. He had written almost 6000 lines of poem and prose before he reached 18 years old. He became a member of the Bengal Literary Academy and wrote to a variety of publications.

Rabindranath Tagore had an impression on the literary world.

For all 250 million Bengali speakers throughout the world, Tagore has been an undeniable personality. He is renowned across Bangladesh and India. In the Bengali-speaking world, he is a towering figure. His literary accomplishments eclipse all that came before him and everything that came after him in Bengali literature. Tagore is ingrained in the collective consciousness of educated Bengalis. "Gurudev" (grand maestro), "Kabi Guru" (poet master), and "Viswa Kabi" (World Poet) are some of the titles he has received. That is how Bengali speakers regard him, and one would wonder if Tagore, a literary genius, has now been raised to the status of a cult figure.

Tagore became the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize in Literature for his famous volume of poetry, 'Gitanjali' (Song Offerings) in 1913, only a



Rabindranath Tagore and his wife Mrinalini Devi, 1883

year before World War I broke out. Great literary personalities like William Butler Yeats and Ezra Pound responded enthusiastically to Tagore's literary oeuvre. They also exposed him to the literary community in London at the time. To Europeans, he projected a saintly aura, a mystic guru who delivered a



Tagore in 1912, when Gitanjali was being translated to English

genuine message of peace and reason from the East to a materialistic Europe in the midst of a devastating war. Tagore even gave the impression of an eastern sage, according to Yusunari Kawabata, the second Asian to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1968.

Rabindranath Tagore was a poet with a sensitive mind, a humanist in particular, but he was also a prominent social reformer and anti-class activist of his time. His rural experience reporting the plight of the

'have-nots' affected him on the inside, and he determined to fight for the benefit of his Zamindari's destitute people. His first rural development experiment began with a modernized agriculture technique at 'Shilaidaha' (1900). Deep plowing, top quality seeds, and fertilizers are all part of the system. In addition to paddy planting, he encouraged

villagers to plant maize. For the local peasants, he even imported high-quality corn seeds from America.

Although we rarely recognize this fact, but Rabindranath was the first to assist the economically disadvantaged by lending money at a simple and cheap interest rate (only 12 percent simple interest). He established the 'Kaligram Krishi Bank' in Patisar in 1905 to lend money to needy peasants. The money-receivers lent the money without any kind of collateral.

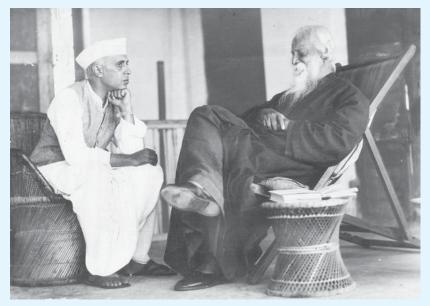
According to economists, this arrangement is now characterized as a "micro-credit system." The bank grew in popularity. Poor farmers and weavers raced to take out loans to escape parasitic moneylenders. Finally, the moneylenders were forced to depart Kaligram, as stated by the editor of 'Rajshahi Gazetteer', Mr O'Malley. Rabindranath was portrayed by him as a compassionate, liberal 'poet-zamindar.'

He was also a political activist who was a fervent advocate of

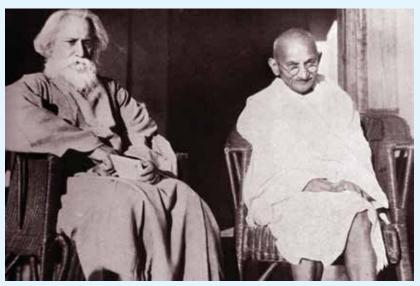


Tagore with his immediate family

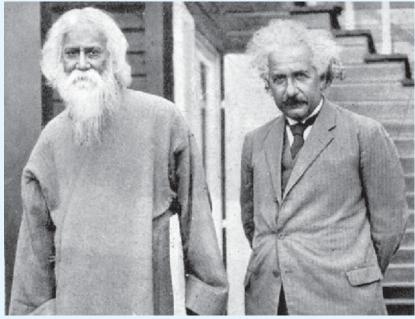
Indian independence and a key opponent of Bengal's division in 1905. All Bengali gentry, including Tagore, were against the division of Bengal in 1905. Although he was greatly praised by British monarchy for his contribution in literature and social development works, that did not stop him from returning his Knighthood in the wake of the Jalliwanabagh massacre in 1919, only four years after (1915) he received it. But he was not core 'Nationalist', rather he declared himself as a 'Humanist'. Despite bestowing the moniker Mahatma (Great



Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindranath Tagore



Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi



Rabindranath with Einstein in 1930

Soul) to Gandhi, he was also a moderate critic of Gandhi, questioning his mixing of religion and politics.

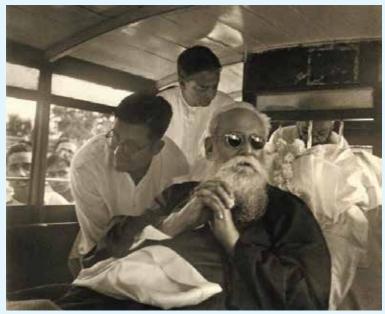
At a period when the society was strongly marked by the absence of it, his brand of nationalism is defined by 'inclusiveness.' Tagore was indifferent by a person's religious affiliation. Whether they were Hindus or Muslims didn't matter to him. He had been agitated by the communal division. His essays frequently chastised Hindus for their social insensitivity. As he concentrated more on the underclasses, regardless of their community identification, his vision embraced both horizontal and vertical dimensions. This is evident in his poetry 'Bharat-tirtha' and the song 'Jana-gana-mana'; which later became the national anthem of India.

Even his writings affected the freedom and independence of what is now Bangladesh during its province tenure as East-Pakistan from 1947 to 1971. East Pakistani Bengalis and Indian Bengalis had a same language and culture. Tagore was a well-known person among Bengalis in India and Pakistan. However, the passions of the 1952 language struggle, which opposed the government's effort to impose Urdu as the official language, gave Tagore a permanent home in the hearts of Bengali Muslims, which he has never lost. Throughout the 1960s, whenever the government attempted to prohibit the broadcasting of Tagore birth anniversary programs on state-sponsored media or the

singing of Tagore songs, a reaction ensued, forcing the administration to recede.

Even after the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was so touched by Tagore's universal humanism that he did not hesitate to select a Tagore song on Bengal as new country's national anthem: 'Amar Shonar Bangla, Ami Tomai

Bhalobashi' (My Golden Bengal, I love You); which conveys the spirit of riverine, deltaic, lush country and its people; it overcomes the barriers of class, caste, religion, race, and creed as though Tagore anticipated the conclusion of Bengalis' ambition



Last picture of Rabindranath, 1941

for an independent Bangladesh.

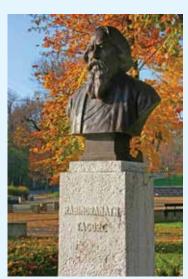
Tagore's concept of tolerance and humanism was crucial in inspiring Bengali intellectuals and political leaders to conceive a separate Bengali country in contrast to Pakistan's Islamic Republic. Creating a discourse for a new nation was a sensible path of action. Tagore's literary talents are still regarded as momentous among Bengali speakers. His Bengali collected works span over 18,000 pages, demonstrating the range of his creative output. He touched on almost every literary genre imaginable. He looked into a variety of topics, including political, cultural, social, and women's

concerns. For all of his intellect and literary accomplishments regardless of nation, religion, gender, class, caste and creed; Tagore has literally become 'Poet of the World'.

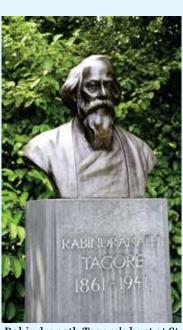
> **Md. Abu Sadeq** Managing Director, S.S Group & Advisor, Diplomats Publication



Bust of Tagore in Gordon Square, Bloomsbury, London



Bust of Rabindranath in Tagore promenade, Balatonfüred, Hungary



Rabindranath Tagore's bust at St Stephen Green Park, Dublin, Ireland





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MAY DAY AND LABOR FORCE OF BANGLADESH: EXPECTATION VS REALITY

-Abul Hasan Chowdhury

The first May Day Co. Premised on workers, took he first May Day ceremony place on May 1st 1890, after the proclamation of the "Workers Day of International Unity and Solidarity" by the first international conference of socialist parties in Europe on July 14th 1889 in Paris, France. Since then, 1st of May was designated as Labor Day in recognition to the Chicago workers' sacrifice and achievements. On May 04, 1886, a bomb was thrown at a squad of police officers attempting to break up a peaceful labor gathering in Haymarket Square in Chicago, Illinois. The police retaliated with indiscriminate shooting, resulting to killing of many individuals and injuring many more; the workers were protesting for their minimum basic rights - "Eight hours labor, eight hours pleasure, eight hours relaxation".

This is the day when workers' were freed from the scourge of capitalism, and the promise to destroy classism and break

capitalism's chains of enslavement via social revolution was fulfilled. This day is a motivating symbol for the union of all workers across the world, and its significance in the establishment of socialism cannot be overstated. The May Day movement was crucial in laying the groundwork for a society free of exploitation, and it also signaled the start of a global shift among the working class. May Day is known as the Certificate of Workers' Liberation from Capitalist Slavery.

May Day is a national holiday in Bangladesh. The day is observed by all labor rights organizations and unions. It's the day when workers who have been overlooked all year get some recognition. While Bangladesh celebrates the day with great enthusiasm, the country's labor laws and policies do not reflect the spirit of this historic day. Every year during May Day in Bangladesh, we address some very common concerns.

Although it has been 130 years since May Day was first observed in 1886, these concerns remain pertinent. Workers in various regions of the globe have established their rights, such as a safe working environment, benefits, and wage allowances, since May Day. Globalization and capitalism are inextricably linked, and both have contributed to greater global economic dynamism and wealth over the last two decades, but also rising inequality and hardship. Bangladeshi laborers are also victims of industrialists' incompetence and exploitation, as well as political entities and government interests.

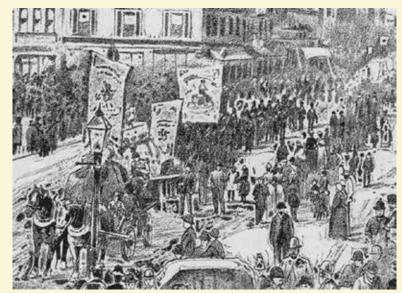
Bangladesh's government passed the Labor Act of 2006 in 2006. Despite the fact that this Act is intended to play a significant role in protecting workers' rights in Bangladesh, it does not cover all sectors of the economy. Workers are defined in section 2(65) of this Act, and employees are categorized in section 4, however it excludes a huge

number of workers, such as domestic workers, agricultural workers, and construction workers. The legislation divides workers into many categories, allowing some firms to use non-regular workers (apprentices, casuals, substitutes, probationers, and temporary workers) to avoid paying certain worker benefits and avoiding unionization.

"All are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law," says Article 27. However, the family size requirement has not been considered for setting minimum pay.

Section 62 of the Labor Act requires plant owners to maintain worker safety and requires employers and factory management to implement safety measures such as effective fire safety systems and worker training. However, they are merely words on a page, legal jargon. The tragedies

of the Tazreen fire and Rana Plaza demonstrate the veracity of this law. According to Section 44 of the Act, a child under the age of 12 may be employed in light work that is not hazardous to his health and does not interfere with his education. Because there is no clear definition of "light work" or how a kid's education



First Labor Day Celebrations

should be maintained, you'd expect young laborers to work in unsafe industries like local shoe manufacturers.

Despite the fact that section 46 of the Act mentions maternity benefits, no factory in practice offers four months of maternity leave. Most factories offer only unpaid maternity leave. If a woman is pregnant, she is frequently obliged to leave her job. Women of reproductive age may opt not to have children for fear of losing their jobs. There is no effective monitoring system in place to verify that factory

owners and employers adhere to the labor laws set forth in this Act.

The legislation imposes a stringent and practically unattainable requirement: the backing of 30% of workers in a plant or industry to create a union. It is almost a trade union prohibition in today's owner-dominated

workplace circumstances. The compensation portion is similarly antiquated and lacking empathy for workers. It is absurd that the country's compensation law has not altered after the Tazreen fire and collapse at Rana Plaza. It's unthinkable that a worker's total loss of production is only about Tk 1, 25,000. Aspects of social protection, such as pensions and medical and life insurance for workers, have been unaffected by Bangladesh's labor code.

Millions of Bangladeshi workers, particularly in the garment

> industry, shipbuilding industry, construction industry, and other non-government industries, do not earn adequate salaries and are denied various rights. Workers' rights are still restricted to paper and pen, but they do not have full access to their rights. It is past





Women working in Garments Factory

time for their rights to be restored. Because of the employer-worker conflict, workers' fundamental necessities are disregarded. Workers are often wounded or murdered on the job, yet they are not adequately compensated.

We have a large number of female workers in our nation, and they continue to face a

variety of challenges in the workplace. Women and children are observed in a range of dangerous tasks, and the position of migrant women workers abroad, particularly in the Middle East, is far worse. Women migrant workers pay substantial sums of remittances to their home countries and contribute to the economy, but they are frequently exposed to sexual harassment and abuse.

Women's workplace safety is still an issue, and while around 9 lakh migrant women workers contribute to the country's economic progress, their safety is not guaranteed.

However, as a result of numerous government programs, the number of young laborers has expanded significantly in recent years, while the advantages of other employees have increased significantly. Migrant workers, often known as remittance warriors, play an important part in the country's economic

development, yet their rights are frequently ignored. Workers are a country's economic driving power, and they are involved in production, therefore genuine progress is impossible without them.

May Day represents the development of workers' rights through the self-sacrifice of dedicated employees, and it is a



Labor working in abroad

notable episode in the history of the labor movement. This day commemorates the workers' unwavering battle while also being a day of tremendous celebration for them. This is the day when workers' rights are freed from the scourge of capitalism, and the promise to destroy classism and break

capitalism's chains of enslavement via social revolution is fulfilled. However, employees' safety in all industries should be



Workers in Tea Garden

prioritized, and we must also protect their livelihood throughout the post-pandemic era. Despite the fact that the working class is the majority, profit and pay disputes have left them vulnerable and abused. They still have to march to the streets to demand regular payment of salaries and allowances, despite the fact that they are far from upgrading their living

conditions. It is high time to recognize the significance of May Day and defend workers' basic demands and interests.

> **Abul Hasan Chowdhury** Fmr. State Minister Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Executive Advisor, Diplomats





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BANGLADESH-GERMANY 50 YEAR'S DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS & BEYOND

-Shahed Akhtar



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with former Chancellor Angela Merkel

Germany, one of the first European countries to recognize Bangladesh. It has emerged as one of the biggest export markets for Bangladesh. The bilateral trade volume is growing steadily. This is encouraged by EU tariff preferences. Over 90 percent of Bangladeshi exports to Germany is apparel. Bangladesh imports Frozen food and leather products, machinery and chemical products and electrical goods. Moreover, in recent years, the number of Bangladeshi students in German Universities has steadily increased. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and other organizations award numerous scholarships to students and young researchers each year in order to promote academic exchange between the two countries. Many of these

scholarship recipients join alumni associations.

The German Development Cooperation with Bangladesh includes climate and energy, good governance, displacement and migration, vocational education and training, and sustainable supply chains. A particular focus is on promoting adequate working conditions as well as compliance with environmental standards in the textile industry. Germany also provides humanitarian assistance to support the Rohingya who have fled from Myanmar. Germany is also campaigning for a voluntary, safe, and dignified return of the Rohingya to Myanmar.

As Bangladesh will become a middle-income country by 2026.

It has several challenges. On the other hand, the post-Covid new normal, Germany, likewise other European Union (EU), needs to harness new avenues for economic and infrastructural development along with facing the challenges of economic reconstruction.

The bilateral economic ties between Bangladesh and Germany have been steadily increasing. Germany is now one of the enthralling and lucrative export destinations for Bangladesh. Germany is currently the second largest export market for Bangladesh. The volume of bilateral trade with Germany has increasingly enlarged in recent years. In 2018, Bangladesh exported goods worth about 5.8 billion Euros to Germany and imported worth 800 million Euros with a gross 6.6 billion bilateral trade. 90% of the exporting products Bangladesh to Germany are textile material along with frozen foods and leather products.

In a recent meeting the Railway Minister of Bangladesh, The German Ambassador has expressed his desire to be a part of the development partner of Bangladesh especially through investing in the Railway sector. The government of Bangladesh has given more importance to the railway sector. Many projects are currently underway in the railways including Dhaka to Jessore through the Padma

Bridge Rail Link Project, Bangabandhu Railway Bridge, Dhaka-Cox's Bazar rail link and Jessore-Satkhira rail line. Germany with its high technological advantage can play an important role in investing as well as digitalizing the railway sector of Bangladesh.

Along with the railway, German investment in Bangladesh is also increasing in other sectors since 2016. The notable works of German-based companies received, included e-passports, 3,600 megawatt LNG-based power plants and the supply of 15 oil and gas-fired engines to generate 260 megawatts of electricity.

Moreover, Germany has agreed to provide 339.54 million euros for various development projects in the country which is signed by the Secretary of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) of Bangladesh and the Ambassador of Germany. Technical and financial agreements are executed between the governments of Bangladesh and Germany every two years. Of the 339.54 million euros, 48.4 million euros are being given as grants

and 292.5 million euros as loans, which are repayable at nominal interest for 25 years. These grants and loans will be used in various development projects in the country.

Bangladesh has been able to retain its GDP growth rate at around 7 per cent in the last decade before the Covid-19 attacked. Even during the pandemic, Bangladesh maintained a positive growth rate at 5.24 per cent in the 2019-20 fiscal year. To make its economic development more dynamic, the Bangladesh government is focusing on the mega infrastructure projects i.e., Padma Multipurpose Bridge, Metro rail project or Matarbari deep seaport. Bangladesh will soon become a middle-income country where there are enormous opportunities for Germany for trade and investment. Bangladesh's economic development has been





praised by various

German economic

organizations, the

International Monetary

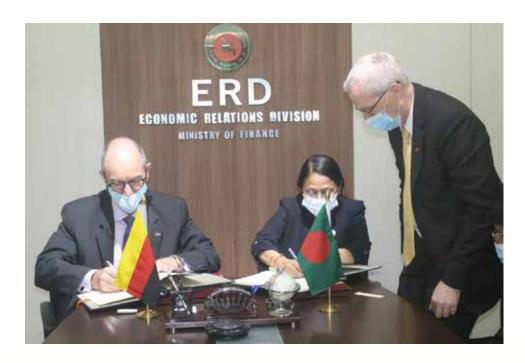
Like to mention that speaking at a seminar organized by the German-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce during a visit to Germany in October 2011, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh called on German entrepreneurs to invest in the pharmaceutical, tourism, manufacturing, ICT, ceramics, and renewable energy sectors for joint ventures.

In order to expand German-Bangladesh bilateral trade in the future, new export sectors need to be harnessed keeping in mind the need for environment and labor-friendly production. To diversify the

> exporting areas, shipping industry, vaccine production and technological cooperation could be the potential areas of bilateral trade in the upcoming days. Although Bangladesh has given priority to the textile sector, the sectors of leather goods, frozen fish, engineering products



Bangladesh-Germany Relations



and medicines need to be developed to diversify the exporting products. The technological sector and agricultural and industrial equipment of Germany is far better than Bangladesh. Bangladesh has been developing 100 economic zones where German industries can work through investment and technology sharing. In a word, there is huge potential to accelerate the bilateral relations to a new height.

Moreover, Cultural cooperation is mainly directed through the Goethe Institute. In Bangladesh, the Institute is the key meeting place for all those interested in Germany. It offers diversified cultural events through film festivals, seminars and lectures on contemporary arts, culture and exhibitions of both German and Bangladeshi artists. German government has been providing different education and cultural exchange programs for the foreign students. Besides, in the higher study level, they are providing scholarships like

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) scholarship which is a really good opportunity for people-to-people contact and cultural affinity. The DAAD and other organizations offers a number of scholarships to Bangladeshi students and young researchers each year in order to promote the academic exchange between Germany and Bangladesh. Besides, in February 2021, GIZ, a German-based organization, has expressed interest in providing

more technical assistance to Bangladesh to create skilled human resources in the field of textile education. The company has proposed a new project called 'Higher Education and Leadership Development for Sustainable Textiles in Bangladesh (HELD)' to assist the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

All in all, Bangladesh-German relations have been enjoying economic and cultural ties. Germany is one of our biggest trading partners and the second largest market. The pharmaceuticals, eco-friendly agricultural products, leather, and ceramic products need to be prioritized for export diversification. Germany is an all-weather development partner of Bangladesh.

They are supporting Bangladesh in numerous developmental activities through GIZ in the technology, health, education, environment, climate change, good governance, and renewable energy sectors. Recently, Achim Tröster, German Ambassador met Foreign Minister Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen. He appreciated



Bilateral Trade with Germany



Vaccine donated by Germany

the excellent bilateral relations existing between Bangladesh and Germany. He congratulated the new German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and the new German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock to visit Bangladesh on the occasion of the fifty years of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Dr. Momen urged Germany to continue to remain engaged on the of Rohingya repatriation and acknowledged the German support thus far.

Ambassador Tröster appreciated Bangladesh for its generous hosting of this forcibly displaced population from Myanmar. The Foreign Minister appreciated Germany's contribution of nearly 8 million AstraZeneca vaccines and other medical equipment.

Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen highlighted Bangladesh's efforts at green transition as part of its efforts to control climate change. He urged the Ambassador to facilitate German investment in electric vehicles and locomotives in Bangladesh. They also exchanged views about the progress with the E-Passport project implemented by a German company and other possible areas of collaboration. Acknowledging Germany as one

of Bangladesh's largest trading partners, the Minister invited the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry to set up its office in Bangladesh. Momen also asked the German Embassy to facilitate student visas for young Bangladeshi applicants. They discussed the possibilities of enhancing cooperation in IT sector.

It will be useful for both
Bangladesh and Germany to face
challenges in growth, Trade &
Commerce. Germany has
emerged as a trusted
development partner of
Bangladesh.

Shahed Akhtar Executive Advisor & CEO, BGCCI Editor, Diplomats Publication

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PROSPECT OF NON-TRADITIONAL EXPORT IN THE FACE OF SUBSIDIZED EXPORT

-Shah Md. Abu Raihan Alberuni

'n the face of a very competitive global export market, relying solely on a few popular export commodities will not sustain us in the long run. Because science and technology are constantly bringing about revolutionary changes in our way of life, our likes and preferences are swiftly molded and transformed as a result of all of these changes. Countries that can successfully read consumers' needs and engage appropriately at the proper time will have an advantage over others in the global export market. Making the precise decision at the right time is crucial to establishing a firm and sustainable market footing.

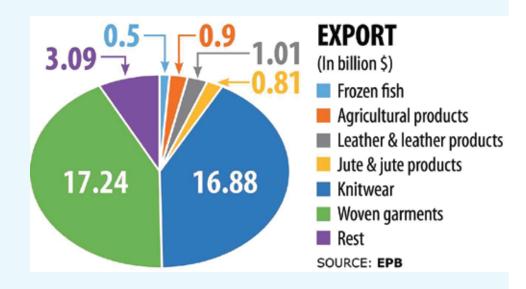
Jute, the golden fiber of Bangladesh, was formerly the country's most significant cash crop and exporting product. Then readymade garment (RMG)

industry has become a major source of foreign currency. Aside from RMG, the nation exports a variety of non-traditional goods. These items' export earnings are likewise satisfactory. However, the drop in worldwide demand for coronavirus pandemic in 2020 hurt the country's export economy badly. Despite the challenges experienced by RMG and leather goods exports, certain non-traditional products saw positive development in exports during the pandemic.

Lockdowns, production closures, and even buyer cancellations did not stop non-traditional commodities from being exported. During the pandemic, however, certain non-traditional products have boosted export revenue as fresh new things. Pharmaceuticals,

fruits, jute and jute goods, raw jute, vegetables, shoes (excluding leather), furniture, carpets, jute yarn and twine, golf, tobacco, ships, tea, handicrafts, ash, and others are among these items. The income generated by exporting these commodities was almost \$250 million in the previous fiscal year.

Every year, Bangladesh exports over 700 goods, with varied volumes and percentages. RMG and accessories are now Bangladesh's highest-earning export goods. RMG products and garments account for 80.6 percent of Bangladesh's overall export volume. Other major export commodities include footwear (2.3%), paper yarn (1.7%), fish (1.6%), miscellaneous textiles (2.5 %), headgear (0.7%), leather (0.7%),



raw hides (0.5%), and vehicles (0.2%). Paper and pulp, leather, raw skins, fish, and other traditional things are frequently included in this category.

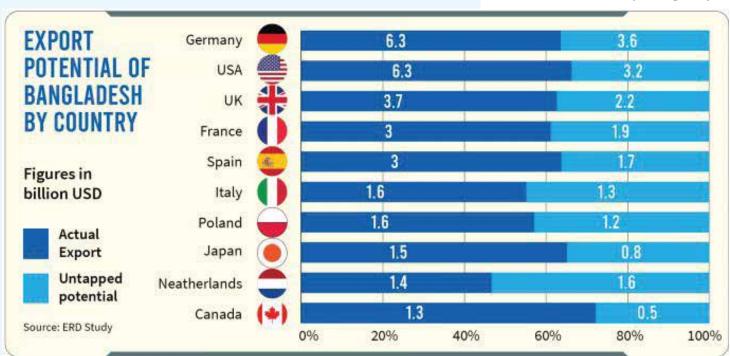
Non-traditional products are often defined as exportable items that are less commonly delivered to buyer nations and account for a small fraction of total export revenues. These products that are not commonly produced or produced as a byproduct of some other product. If the PET bottle that has been used and discarded

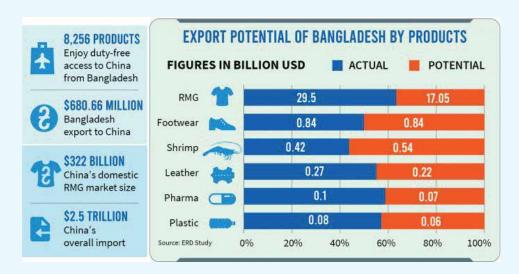
and if it is picked up, processed and recycled, then it will be considered as a non-traditional product. In the same way, if something new is made by extracting rubber from the discarded tires of a car, it is a non-traditional product.

Traditional export commodities are now facing the strongest competition in history from a slew of global competitors. These competing nations have already presented a severe challenge to Bangladesh in traditional commodities

because to their creative marketing mechanisms and high-quality products. To meet this difficult marketing challenge, it is high time for Bangladesh to establish strategies for pursuing a rapid export promotion program. According to business leaders and entrepreneurs, the government should meet down with each individual entrepreneur and listen to their difficulties individually. They also stated that after the government has handled all of the export entrepreneurs' complaints and inconveniences, a forward-looking sustainable export guideline would automatically be in place.

The cabinet adopted the draft Export Policy 2021-2024, which aims to almost quadruple Bangladesh's export profits to \$80 billion from \$45 billion by enabling shipments of varied, non-traditional commodities and labor-based products over the next five years. According to the draft policy published by the commerce ministry, the policy





intends to boost the export of high-value items by maintaining standards and compliance as well as fostering contemporary, sustainable, and green technology. Product diversification, identification of key items, growth of export sectors, and making trade and investment simpler to enhance exports are all priorities of the program. The policy was created to address the issues that may arise once the country is no longer classified as a least developed country.

The country's export sector is unable to move forward without government subsidies, incentives or cash assistance. Many sectors are not sustainable even after receiving cash assistance year after year. Even though some products including readymade garments have been established as an export sector, they have not been able to avoid the habit of taking special advantage. As the exporters demanded that the existing facilities be maintained as per the rules, further increase in the sector and new sectors be included in this facility, the government does not disappoint the exporters. The trend of providing cash

assistance to the export subsidy sector is increasing every year to encourage export growth. Thus, the subsidy allocation in the export sector is going on year after year.

However, experts do not think that the country's export sector is improving much with this incentive. On the contrary, the reliance of the entrepreneurs in the sector on the financial support of the government is increasing. As a result, the entrepreneur's innovative capacity and ability to deal with risks in expanding, diversifying and improving the quality of the export sector is not manifesting

itself. In this context, economists and trade analysts are worried about creating a sustainable export sector in the country. They say trying to increase export earnings with cash assistance is not a permanent solution at all. There, year after year, the ability to be self-reliant is decreases as a sector or sector-related entrepreneur relies on incentives. It also undermines the aims and objectives of the government.

Export sector cannot be sustained in the long run with cash assistance. This requires export-friendly tariff policy and favorable exchange rate. Even with the help of cash, exporters often sell goods at a lower price than the cost of production. Trade experts believe that the cash assistance is responsible for the anti-dumping tariffs imposed by India on jute exports to Bangladesh. In addition, if a country subsidizes the export of goods, the importing country may impose a countervailing duty against it as a precautionary measure. Some companies are





withdrawing cash assistance by showing exports instead of exporting products.

On the other hand, by exporting goods at a lower rate or outside the scope of cash assistance, they are showing higher rate products. In some cases, the same product has been exported less and more, but some people are manipulating the cash assistance inappropriately. Chittagong Customs House has instructed the officials to be

more careful in the goods consignment test to prevent such manipulation. In particular, the Chittagong Custom House Authority has directed to check the accuracy through physical examination of shipments of goods involving additional cash assistance and shipments of relatively risky goods.

No specific research has been conducted in Bangladesh so far on the impact of government-funded cash assistance to exporters on the economy, but it needs to be done. Because, Bangladesh is currently going to be developed as a middle-income country. If it becomes a middle-income country, on the one hand, Bangladesh will be deprived of the benefits of export from the World Trade Organization as a least developed country, on the other hand, anti-dumping and countervailing ban will be imposed on the export of goods with the same incentive! Therefore, more deliberate decisions need to be taken on export incentives and the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission can play the most effective role in this. One thing that needs to consider now. And that is, how much the relevant authorities, especially the Ministry of Commerce and Finance, accept the recommendations of the Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission on providing incentives for exports! And only time will tell.

Shah Md. Abu Raihan AlberuniMember
Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission

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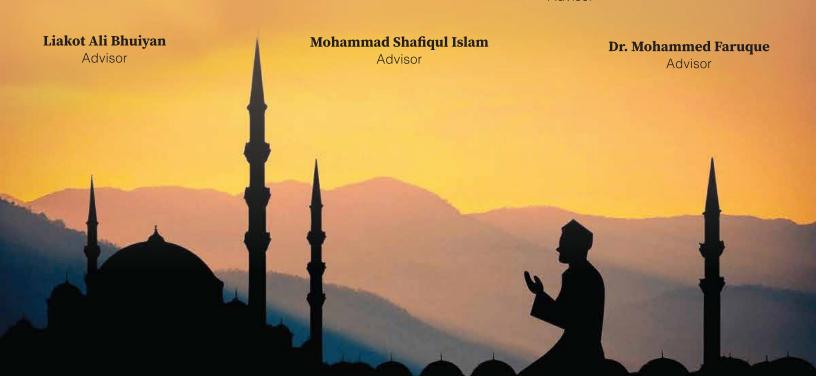
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ROHINGYA REFUGEE, DEMOGRAPHIC IMBALANCE AND SECURITY IMPLICATIONS

-Mohammad Abdur Razzak

exodus of Rohingyas from their ancestral abode and pushed them into Bangladesh. There has been little progress in the repatriation of refugees over the last five years. Myanmar's military regime, the mastermind behind the eviction and genocidal crimes against the Rohingyas, is at the helm of state affairs through the coup orchestrated on 1 February 2021.

Over the last five years since 2017, there has been little progress in the repatriation of refugees. Myanmar does not seem willing to take back its people any time soon. The junta has been gradually pushing the repatriation process into uncertainty. The delay will not bar the refugee population from growing. The primary casualty in the delay in any refugee repatriation has the risk of creating demographic imbalance in the area where refugees are



A Rohingya refugee man pulls a child as they walk to the shore after crossing the Bangladesh-Myanmar border by boat through the Bay of Bengal in Shah Porir Dwip

sheltered impacting the societal and security issues.

According to the Bangladesh Government and the UNHCR joint report of 31 March 2022, a total of 926,561 refugees are sheltered in different camps in Teknaf. The number of registered households is 194,766 and average family size is 4.8.

22,976 refugees have been

The remaining 903,585 refugees are in different camps in Teknaf upazila. Every year 35,000 babies are born in Rohingya camps. From this account, population

growth rate in refugee camps is

3.77.

According to Bangladesh census report 2011, Teknaf upazila had a population of 249,389 and 46,328 households in 2010. Population Growth Calculator online estimates Teknaf's population 291,199 in 2022 at 1.30% growth rate. At the same growth rate, Teknaf's population is estimated 331,348 in 2032.

At a 3.77% growth rate, the refugee population could reach about 1.30 million in 2032, four time higher than the population projected for Teknaf in 2032. The number of households will increase to 279,480 in 2032 forcing refugees to live in wider areas outside the camps. Increase in households will be about 49.50%. Therefore, at first instance, numerical imbalance between local and refugee population will continue to persist.

Cox's Bazar, Ramu and Teknaf upazilas had a total population of 990,111 in 2010 census. At 1.30% growth rate, the population in three Upazilas is predicted at 1,131,696 in 2022 and 1,290,000 in 2032. Refugee population in camps in Teknaf, after refugee relocation to Bhashan Char, is 903,585 in 2022. At 3.77% growth rate, refugee population in the camps in Teknaf is predicted to reach 1,308,000 in 2032. A



Rohingya Women and children



Mohib Ullah

with the local population of Teknaf in 2032 and its adjoining upazilas, portends an omen of acute demographic imbalance which could create multifaceted social and geopolitical security problems.

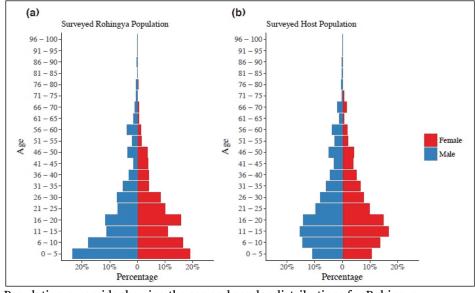
Besides numerical difference, demographic imbalance is also simmering by age group and sex ratio. According to the joint report on refugee population's age group - 51% (472,546) is children between 0 and 17 years, 45% (416,952) is adult between 18 and 59 years, older person (60+) is 4% (37,062) and person with disability is 1% (9,265). In the adult age group (18-59), 19.6% is male and 24.3% female. In this group, there are 43,559 more female than male population. The male-female ratio is 100:124. Whereas, overall male-female ratio in Teknaf's local population in 2010 was 100:101 and in the Cox's Bazar district the ratio was 100:104. In the refugee children's category (0-17 years), male-female ratio is 100:95. Highly disproportionate sex ratio

Anti-repatriation group under the banner of ARSA has been created and active in the refugee camps. The killing of Mohib Ullah, the Rohingya leader on 29 September 2021 was a violent act of the anti-repatriation group to terrorize refugees working for repatriation

in refugee population, an element of demographic imbalance, could be a catalyst to increasing social crime.

Security issues associated with refugee crisis are both perceived and real which encompass social and military dimension of insecurity. As the repatriation delays, refugee population grows and spreads into the adjoining areas. Rohingya population will not remain within the boundary of the camps.

The current adult male population (18-59) in the Rohingya refugee camps is 181,605. These adult population is seeking jobs. Number of job seekers from refugees are more than the number in the local population. Rohingyas offer cheaper labor than the locals. Competition to get job will be more as the number of adult population increases. Not finding a source of earning, many of them are engaged in drug trading/trafficking and other anti-social activities. Armed violence is another kind of crime in the camps. These vulnerabilities are prone to exploitation by cross border trouble makers. Alarmingly, the refugee population, with no future in sight are exposed to exploitation by both state and non-state actors.



Population pyramids showing the age and gender distributions for Rohingya households and host community households



Rohingya stretch their arms out to collect food items distributed by aid agencies near the Balukhali refugee camp

Anti-repatriation group under the banner of ARSA has been created and active in the refugee camps. The killing of Mohib Ullah, the Rohingya leader on 29 September 2021 was a violent act of the anti-repatriation group to terrorize refugees working for repatriation. Myanmar military will keep the ARSA story alive with purpose.

Any workable initiative to send refugees back to their home country will depend on international conscious and the

verdict of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which follows a lengthy judicial process. The security situation in Teknaf and its wider areas is most likely to take a complex turn on the issue of repatriation or the implementation of the ICJ's judgement, if the Gambia gets a favorable verdict. The Myanmar military regime, with backing of regional powers, will do whatever it takes to foil any initiative on refugee repatriation. It will not be surprising if more criminal gangs like ARSA are

organized to create chaos in the camps. This might force refugees to escape camps and seek shelter in the mainstream population creating a confrontational situation between local population and Rohingyas.

To conclude with a note of caution, the Myanmar regime tried to pull Bangladesh into a border conflict while perpetrating genocidal crime against Rohingya in 2017.

Commodore Md. Abdur Razzak (Retd), Security Analyst



Inaugural ceremony of Super-SpecialiZed Hospital, BSMMU

COUNTRY'S FIRST SUPER SPECIALIZED HOSPITAL AT BSMMU

-Prof. Dr. Md. Sharfuddin Ahmed

he construction work of the country's first Super Specialized Hospital under Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) is going in full swing. On 13th September 2018 (Thursday), Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the foundation stone of the super-specialized hospital which is located on the opposite side of the Intercontinental Hotel, Shahbagh, Dhaka.

At the inauguration, the Prime Minister said "I would like to request all the teachers, doctors, officials, nurses, and employees of the university that you dedicate yourselves to providing health care services to the people. If so, the university will be able to reach its desired destination."

She said to everyone engaged in BSMMU "You will have to further enhance concentration on research, take effective measures so that people can be kept away from diseases. You will have to enhance public awareness on health. We, on the part of our government, will keep extending all assistance to you."

Earlier on 2nd February, 2016 construction of a super-specialized hospital at BSMMU was approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC).

This hospital will open a new horizon in Bangladesh's medical sector. Not only the rich people, the lower- and middle-class families of the country will get a greater scope to receive special treatment here.

The PM also said, she formed a separate fund providing BD Taka 10 crore when the BSMMU was established and will provide more BD Taka 10 crore from the PM's relief fund so that lower-income patients can receive better treatment by availing support from the interest received from that fund.

South Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Lee Jang-Keun visited the construction site of the new specialized hospital under Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) and said it will serve as a symbol of the close relationship between Bangladesh and Korea.

"This Hospital will be the first specialized hospital in Bangladesh for the treatment of critical patients and serve as a symbol of our close relationship and ever-strengthening friendship," he said.



Inaugural ceremony of Super-Specialised Hospital, BSMMU

During his visit to the site, Ambassador Lee said it is the largest project in the medical area with Korea's support, reports UNB.

The work is well in progress despite the impact of COVID-19 and is expected to be inaugurated soon, said the Ambassador. South Korean companies, Hyundai Development Company (HDC), Sunjin Engineering and Samsung C&T are involved in the implementation of the project.

The new hospital will feature the largest medical service system in Bangladesh. The project goes beyond the mere construction of the building.

Doctors and nurses of the BSMMU have been invited to Korea for medical education and training. Hospital managers have also visited Korea to participate in training in hospital operation and management.

The health sector has long been one of the priority areas of South Korea's ODA to Bangladesh with

an aim to help provide quality healthcare services to Bangladesh people, said the South Korean Embassy in Dhaka.

Korea invited so far more than 250 Bangladesh medical professionals to Korea and provided education and training in various areas of medical expertise.

Ambassador Lee said, "South Korea continues to commit to improving healthcare service in Bangladesh through various ODA projects so that Bangladesh

people can enjoy quality healthcare service and health life."

In 2017, the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh received a loan from the **Export-Import Bank of South** Korea from the resources of the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) of the Republic of Korea. The total amount was 1366 Crore BDT for the Establishment of a Multi-disciplinary and Super-Specialized Hospital at BSMMU.

There will be beautiful gardens around the hospital, sunken gardens, rooftop gardens, and other environment-friendly facilities. The Super Specialized Hospital will be a full-fledged research center.

At the inauguration, the Prime Minister also opened the new structures constructed under the Centre of Excellence Project at BSMMU. The structures include a convention center north side of the Intercontinental Hotel, a Doctor's dormitory, and the diagnostics and oncology building on the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.



Presentation on Feedback session in South Korea for "Establishment of Super-Specialized Hospital under BSMMU with respected dynamic VC Prof. Dr. Md. Sharfuddin Ahmed



Receiving certificate after successful completion of the 90 days specialized training in gynaecological Robotic surgery & minimall invasive advance laparoscopy from Eulji University Medical Centre, South Korea

In the last 10 years, the health sector of Bangladesh has received many accolades, international recognition and awards. The list of achievements and successes in the health sector is very long. But among these, reduction of infant mortality, reduction of maternal mortality, reduction of population, increase in life expectancy, improvement of child health, control of Corona epidemic and vaccination etc. have prevailed. These achievements include the expansion of immunization programs, the widespread use of ORS, the widespread expansion of family planning, and a variety of activities, including tuberculosis medication programs.

Bangladesh's disaster response and epidemic response capabilities have greatly increased. There have been no epidemics in the country since the catastrophic storms like Sidr in 2008 or Ayla in 2009.

Occasionally, IEDCR, a government organization in Bangladesh, has successfully tackled the threat of inter-country epidemics including swine flu, bird flu, stork and Nipah virus. Although the global epidemic of Corona has plagued the developed world since 2020, Bangladesh is a shining exception. The far-sighted plan of the present government of Bangladesh has brought a lot of

control over the number of deaths and injuries.

The application of information technology in the health sector in Bangladesh has created a number of innovative examples and has been able to spread widely.

One of our achievements in the last 14 years has been the addition of community clinics at the lowest level in the health infrastructure of Bangladesh. Although various programs in the health sector of Bangladesh

have been running continuously during the tenure of various political governments, the decision of the BNP government to make the addition of community clinics non-negotiable was a very hasty decision of the BNP government. The present government is running community clinics in the form of most important projects and is doing well by forming health care trusts.

In Bangladesh, even in remote areas, medicines reach the government channels and are distributed. Most of these drugs are related to infectious diseases.

If the government can't afford it, it can only provide free hypertension or diabetes medicine to the poorest of the poor, from community clinics and urban health centers. This will ensure proper treatment of the poor and destitute and will also help in alleviating poverty. Most importantly, it will bring social justice and equality.

Still, we are optimistic. After all, the Hon'ble Prime Minister has spoken at the United Nations about the implementation of universal health care; In order to implement SDG, universal health protection must be



Haemodialysis Department

implemented. Bangladesh will go a long way in implementing universal health care in the next few years if it can be properly reflected in various operational plans in the forthcoming health sector programs and if the unwritten leaders of the health sector donors do not interfere. Universal health care is the key to the future

We often say that political commitment is the key to

health sector in Bangladesh.



During Robotic surgery training in Eulji Medical University

development. Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina has a political commitment, goodwill, and

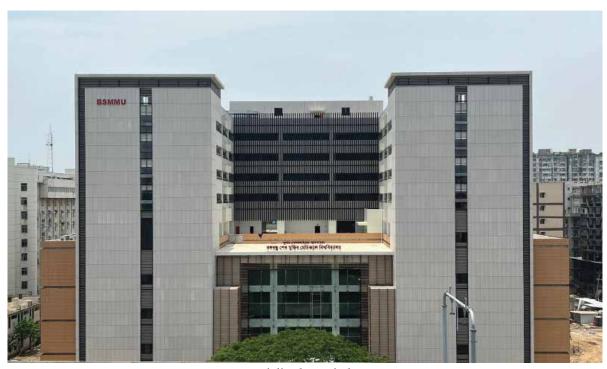
determination to develop the health sector.

The people of Bangladesh have already seen our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has implemented such enormous projects for our socio-economic development which include Padma Bridge, Karnaphuli Tunnel, Metro Railways, Airport Extensions etc. Such a

project in our health sector is Super-Specialized Hospital, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

Prof. Dr. Md. Sharfuddin Ahmed

Vice-Chancellor Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University



Super Specialized Hospital, BSMMU



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DAMSEL OF THE SEA: KUAKATA

-AKM Sayedad Hossain

uakata is one of the places **M** which offer unique view of the rising and setting of the Sun over the waters of the Bay of Bengal. That makes Kuakata one of the most attractive tourists' destinations in Bangladesh.

Kuakata, locally known as the Damsel of the Sea, the green expanse of unparalleled beauty; Located in Kalapara Upazila, Patuakhali district. Kuakata beach is a sandy expanse 18 kilometres (11 mi) long and 3 kilometres (1.9 mi) wide. It is about 320 kilometres (200 mi) south of Dhaka, the capital, and about 70 kilometres (43 mi) from the district headquarters. Kuakata is the only beach in

South Asia where you can stand and watch the sunrise and sunset. Undoubtedly, it is a diurnal sight to behold.

Kuakata is a place of pilgrimage for Hindu and Buddhist communities. Innumerable devotees arrive here at the festivals of 'Rush Purnima' and 'Maghi Purnima'. On these occasions the pilgrims take holy baths at the bay and participate in the traditional fairs. Here 100-year-old Buddhist temple where the statue of Goutam Buddha and two 200-year-old wells are located.

Kuakata has a lot of places to go. The main attraction of Kuakata

is the sea beach. About 18 km long and a 3 km wide beach has a beautiful combination everywhere with dazzling scenic beauty. This place is blessed with protected forest through which numerous spell-binding lakes flow. Coconut trees near the beach, a large mangrove forest in Fatra, opposite the Eco Park and Andhra Manik estuary under the National Park, increase the beauty of Kuakata. Further, the Shutki Palli, red crab Island and Gangamati beach are also popular in Kuakata.

Sagar Kannya (Damsel of the Sea) is a rare scenic beauty spot on the southernmost tip of



Kuakata sea beach

Bangladesh. At Kuakata, a combination of the picturesque beauty, sandy beach, blue sky, huge expanse of water of the Bay and evergreen forest is a touristic delight.

(Located in the Patuakhali district, Kuakata has a wide sandy beach from where one can see both the sunrise and sunset.)

Places to Visit in Kuakata:

Shutki Palli: The location of Jele (Fisherman) Palli is at the western end of Kuakata beach. The dry season lasts from November to March. The fish is caught from the sea and dried

Sunset at Kuakata

can spend time watching the busy activities of fishermen.

on the beach. If you want, you



And one can buy different types of dried fish at an affordable price.

Crab Island: Crab Island or

Kakra Dwip is situated towards the eastern side of Kuakata beach. Thousands of red crabs roam the secluded beach. During the travel season, from October to March, speedboats are

here. To travel from Kuakata to Fatra forest, one has to rent an engine boat.

available from Kuakata Beach to

Jungle of Gangamati: Kuakata beach has come to an end up to the Gangamati canal on the east side. And from this place, the forest of Gangamati started. In addition to different species of plants, different species of birds, forest roosters, monkeys, etc. can be seen in this forest. To many, this forest is known as

Fatra Forest: The Fatra Forest, starts from the opposite side of

the river on the western bank. This forest has almost all the features of Sundarbans. Forest

roosters, monkeys, wild pigs, and various birds are found

Crab Island.

Gojmati forest.

Kuakata Well (Kua): The well that bears witness to the history behind the naming of Kuakata still exists. The well is situated at Keranipara, the residence of Rakhine. As soon as you enter this place, you will see the ancient well. It is said that after being expelled from the motherland in 1784, the Rakhines came to Rangabali Island on the shores of the Bay



Fish being dried in open Sun

of Bengal and took refuge. As the salt water of the sea was unsuitable for use, they dug wells for freshwater here and the place gradually became known as Kua-kata.

Seema Buddhist Temple:

The Seema Buddhist
Temple is located just in
front of the ancient well of
Kuakata. The wooden
temple was demolished a
few years ago. In this
temple, there is an ancient
Buddhist statue made of
octahedron weighing
about 36 manes.

Keranipara: The abode of the Rakhine, is just a short walk along the road to Seema Buddhist Temple. Rakhine women are very skilled in weaving cloth and the winter sheets.

Things to Do In Kuakata Travel:

Kuakata beach is quite clean. Due to its geographical location, it is the best place to watch the sunrise from the bend of Gangamati Char at the eastern end of Kuakata Beach and the estuary of three rivers besides the lemon forest on the west coast of Kuakata.

Early in the morning, one can go to Gangamati Char by motorcycle to see the sunrise. Local motorcyclists guides take the tourists to the spot. If it is fixed in advance, the guides call the tourists and wake them up

immediately after the Fajr Azan (prayer call). Every morning, thousands of tourists come there to watch the sunrise.



Crah

Enjoy Sunrise at Kuakata, Gangamati Char: In the afternoon, watch the sunset at the mouth of three rivers next to the lemon forest. In the

confluence of these three rivers at Andhar Manik Payra and Shiva Baria, you can see a lot of white oysters, oyster beaches, Rakhine lemons (named after the lemon forest).

Tourists set out in the morning (after 10 a.m.) to visit Kuakata's Zhaubon, Red Crab Island, and secluded beaches. At that time, red crabs came out in flocks to busk in the sun.
Before and after taking pictures with crab nests, their artwork on the beach and red crabs, Kaura Char and Gangamati Char tourists return to Kuakata.

Kuakata Rakhine Village: You can enjoy Rakhine looms and textiles in the Rakhine village of Kuakata. In the middle of the city of Kuakata is the well of Kuakata. It is basically located in a Buddhist monastery. It will be nice to enter there in exchange

for a ticket and take a photo/selfie and walk around the Buddhist temple, along the elivated staircase. Kuakata's well is located in this Buddhist monastery. There are a number of markets next to Kua and Bihar, where one can find clothes, oyster products, pickle shops. However, to buy dried fish, tourists must go to the beach-side dry fish market or some distance away in

the dry village.

Kuakata Hilsa Park: Hilsa Park is a restaurant cum mini-museum in the city. Sculptures of various



Kuakata Well



Seema Buddhist Temple Keranipara



Fatra forest

species of animals including tiger, lion, deer, crocodile, deer, tortoise, giraffe have been replaced in the park. Next to the main gate of the park, there is a photo gallery of various professionals from Kuakata and the diverse life and livelihood of Rakhine.

Fatra forest next to Kuakata:

The real name of the Fatra forest next to Kuakata is Tengragiri which looks a lot like the Sundarbans. It is not at all safe to enter the forest without the help of a guide or a boatman.

Besides, many people rush to enjoy the waves of the sea during the rainy season. As there is no quicksand, tourists go to the beach at both times of the tide. There is also a difference in the salinity of water, half the time of the year there is salt and half the time there is fresh water in the sea of Kuakata.

Kuakata is the only beach to see the sunrise and sunset, considering that it is the most attractive beach in Bangladesh. Kuakata is really unique in the combination of forest and sea.

Visit Kuakata before the Tourist rush!

AKM Sayedad Hossain

Secretary, Bangladesh Export Forum & Associate Editor, Diplomats Publication

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"As a testament to your strength and courage, you are in our prayers"

Economist, Diplomat, Freedom fighter, Former Finance minister, Ruling Awami League's advisory council member Abul Maal Abdul Muhith.

Abul Maal Abdul Muhith was born on 25 January 1934 at his home in Sylhet's Dhopadighirpar to Abu Ahmad Abdul Hafiz and Syeda Sahar Banu Chowdhury. His father was a veteran lawyer and politician of Sylhet.

AMA Muhith earned his bachelor's (Honors) degree in English literature in 1954 from Dhaka University, securing first class. He earned his master's degree in the same subject the next year. In 1955, he became the vice president (VP) of the Salimullah Hall students' union.

After joining Pakistan Civil Service (CSP) in 1956, he served in different departments of East Pakistan, Central Pakistan, and then Bangladesh. He was appointed as the secretary of planning in 1972 and secretary of the external resource department of the Finance and Planning Ministry in 1977.

He studied at Oxford University in 1957–1958 and completed a master of public administration at Harvard University in 1964.

He is one of the major architects behind elevating Bangladesh to the level of a developing country.

AMA Muhith was finance and planning minister in 1982-83 during the Ershad regime. He was elected ESCAP member at that time. Muhith joined Awami League in 2001. He was elected member of parliament from Sylhet-1 constituency in 2008. As finance minister of the Awami League government, he presented the budget in parliament for 10 years at a stretch. It was during his tenure that the size of the budget expanded. He even set a precedent by voluntarily relinquishing the office of finance minister in the eighties.

AMA Muhith also played a glorious role in Bangladesh's liberation war. In 1971 he had been serving at the Pakistan embassy in the US when he declared his allegiance to Bangladesh. He mobilized support abroad for the Bangladesh Liberation War. That is why in 2016 he was accorded the highest civil honor the of state, Swadinata Padak.

He has authored 40 books, in English and Bangla.

He was a well-wisher of the Diplomats magazine. The veteran leader breathed his last on 30th April, 2022. He was associated with the Diplomats till his last breath and this humble and generous person shall always be with the Diplomats family. The Diplomats team is deeply saddened by his demise.

"You have our deepest condolences as you grieve this passing"



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