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DIPLOMATS WORLD

The Only Diplomatic Magazine in Bangladesh

The Struggle for Independence: Bangladesh's Journey to Nationhood

7th March 1971- The Proclamation for Shaping a Land's Destiny

Inside The Mind of Genocide

Seminar on Regional geopolitical imperatives and importance of
local dynamics in Myanmar in resolving Rohingya crisis





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Diplomats cordially extend their greetings to all readers on the blessed occasion of Ramadan, a month that is widely regarded as a time for fasting, prayer, and introspection. It is an opportunity to reflect on our blessings and to extend a helping hand to those who are less fortunate. The holy month culminates in the joyous celebration of Eid al Fitr, which marks the end of the period of spiritual contemplation.

Diplomats take this opportunity to join in remembrance of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, whose visionary leadership led to the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign nation. The independence struggle began on the fateful night of March 25, 1971, when the Pakistani junta launched a violent attack against unarmed Bengali civilians. The subsequent nine months of the Liberation War ultimately led to Bangladesh's freedom and independence as a nation.

With deep respect, Diplomats also recall the millions of martyrs who made the ultimate sacrifice in the struggle for liberation. We pay homage to the foreign freedom fighters and all others who contributed selflessly to the cause of Bangladesh's right to self-determination and freedom.

On the eve of Bangladesh's Independence Day, the Prime Minister received a large number of congratulatory messages from world leaders who lauded Bangladesh's achievements as a rising economic power in South Asia. Among them, the Indian message highlighted Bangladesh's position as a strong pillar of India's neighborhood first policy. The message from the President of the United States, Joe Biden, emphasized Bangladesh's standing as a global player and its contributions to socio-economic development, regional and global peace. The President also pledged to support long-term solutions to the Rohingya refugee crisis, and to hold those responsible for atrocities accountable. Furthermore, as Bangladesh approaches its next election, he reminded the nation of the shared values of democracy, equality, respect for human rights, and free and fair elections. The President commended Bangladesh's commitment to protecting the most vulnerable, as evidenced by its status as the largest contributor to peacekeeping operations.

Recently, the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called upon the United Nations to recognize March 25 as International Genocide Day, given the overwhelming evidence of the atrocities committed by the Pakistani junta against unarmed Bengali civilians, including brutal forms of torture, murder, violence, and rape. It is notable that the UN has already recognized genocides committed in other countries such as Armenia, Bosnia, Cambodia, and Rwanda. Despite ample documentation of the Bangladesh genocide of 1971, Diplomats urge the UN to recognize the genocide in Bangladesh.

This month's issue offers a diverse range of thought-provoking articles on national and international issues, aimed at providing readers with insightful perspectives and stimulating discussions.

Shahed Akhtar

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

EXCELLENCE AT ITS FINEST

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THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE: BANGLADESH'S JOURNEY TO NATIONHOOD

-Abul Hasan Chowdhury

The month of March is a significant time in the history of Bangladesh. On March 26, 1971, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the country's independence, which led to a nine-month war of independence against the Pakistani occupation forces, culminating in the formation of the sovereign state of Bangladesh on December 16, 1971. March is also significant for the historic 7 March speech by Bangabandhu, recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

as part of the world's documentary heritage. The month of March is a mix of grief, inspiration, and dedication to the freedom of the country and its people.

The seed of discontentment was sown by the British colonists

who divided India and Pakistan before leaving the subcontinent in 1947. Forming a state with eastern and western parts, which had more than 1,000 miles of Indian territory between them, was never a smart idea. On top of that, they put the responsibility on the political leaders of West Pakistan to decide the fate of East Pakistan. That was the worst decision of the British colonial rulers.

The Bangladeshi people have always valued freedom, but the Pakistani tyrants and oppressors kept them suppressed with the power of their guns for 24 years. They



Honorable President and Prime Minister pay tribute to Liberation War martyrs

Declaration of independence

by East Pakistan

**FIGHTING
"HEAVY"**

A CLANDESTINE RADIO said last night that East Pakistan has been declared independent and that heavy fighting was going on between East and West Pakistani forces.

The radio also said that West Pakistan forces had begun hunting for the East Pakistan leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who went underground after fighting began.

The broadcast said the East Bengal Regiment, East Pakistan Rifles and entire police force had surrounded West Pakistani forces.



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the Awami League, declared independence for the people of East Pakistan (which later became Bangladesh)

deprived the people of all that they deserved and aspired to achieve. They wanted to speak their mother tongue, they wanted economic emancipation, they wanted a due share of the national wealth, and they wanted proportionate participation of their people in defence forces and civil administration. But they were treated as inferiors everywhere, rated as second-class citizens in their own land.

The Pakistani rulers always cared to consolidate army power along their border with India, but the border in the eastern part was always left unprotected. The attitude of hatred towards the Bangla language was shown by Urdu-speaking soldiers who manned the East Pakistan Rifles (EPR) gates. The national cricket and football teams had one or two players from West Pakistan, and they were always seen



sitting on the sidelines. The Pakistani rulers always acted in their interest, and their attitude of discrimination toward the Bengali-speaking people eventually led to the liberation war.

The Bangla-speaking people were always a majority in Pakistan. So, if at all, there had to be a state language, it should have been Bangla. But the utter disrespect to our mother tongue shown by the Pakistani rulers gave rise to anger among the people. Finally, the language movement forced them to accept Bangla as a state language. This language movement served a more important purpose: it created awareness among the people about their rights, which was instrumental in bringing them together under the umbrella of the Awami League. In the general elections of 1970, Sheikh Mujib won an unprecedented majority. But President Yahya Khan started concocting fables to avoid handing over power to our leader.

The struggle for independence began in March 1971 when the then Pakistani dictator postponed the scheduled 3 March session of the National Assembly. The Pakistani rulers were conspiring against the peaceful and legitimate movement of Bengali, leading to a deteriorating political situation and an increasing demand for freedom from Pakistan's misrule. On March 2, the first version of Bangladesh's national flag was hoisted on Dhaka University campus premises for the first time by the Dhaka



United they stood in the battle for freedom

University Central Students' Union (DUCSU).

The movement against the conspiracy of Pakistani rulers took a dramatic turn on March 7, 1971, which eventually became a red-letter day in the history of the long arduous freedom struggle of Bengalis. On this day, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered his epoch-making speech of independence at the Race Course Maidan, now Suhrawardy Udyan in Dhaka. In his 18-minute extempore speech, Bangabandhu called on the people to take preparations for armed struggle against the tyranny, exploitation, subjugation, and deprivation by the Pakistani military junta with whatever they possessed.

Bangabandhu's speech had a mesmerising and sparkling effect on the entire population of Bangladesh, and they became united under his capable and farsighted leadership to fight for liberating the motherland from the clutches of the Pakistani forces. He made a fervent call to the people from all walks of life

to take preparations for armed struggle against the tyranny, exploitation, subjugation, and deprivation by the Pakistani military junta with whatever they possessed and transforming every house into a fortress.

However, when the people became united to establish their democratic rights, the Pakistani occupation forces carried out the infamous 'Operation Searchlight' on sleeping

Bengalis on the night of March 25. It caused a loss of innumerable lives. Children were killed, and old men and women were massacred. It was genocide in the real sense of the term. On March 26th, 1971, Sheikh Mujib was arrested and taken to an undisclosed prison in Pakistan. But before that, as soon as the Pakistani occupation forces started genocide, Bangabandhu declared the independence of Bangladesh, instructing the people to put up strong resistance and fight against them until liberation was achieved.

A full-fledged war started, and Pakistani occupation forces deployed all their resources to subdue the resistance of the freedom fighters. Thousands of people were killed, houses were gutted, factories, schools, and colleges were burnt and damaged beyond use, and crops and domestic animals were taken away or spoiled. The struggle of the Bengali people gained momentum as a Bangladesh government was formed on 17 April 1971 in a



The spirit of Liberation Army



Contribution of Bangladeshi women to the Liberation War

remote area near Kushtia, which was popularly known as Mujibnagar. The occupation forces gradually became weak and demoralized, and the participation of Indian forces further quickened the achievement of victory.

The Pakistani forces finally surrendered to the joint forces of

India and the Mukti Bahini on 16 December 1971. A new nation was born, and the people of Bangladesh celebrated their freedom with joy and solemn promises to safeguard the victory of their newly founded sovereign country. Today, Bangladesh stands as a proud and independent nation, with a rich history and a vibrant



Women in Bangladesh actively participated in the Liberation War, both on the front lines and in support roles.

culture. The struggle for independence was not an easy one, but it was necessary for the Bengali people to secure their right to self-determination and uphold their cultural identity. The sacrifices made by the freedom fighters, who laid down their dear lives for the freedom of the country, should never be forgotten. Their legacy lives on, as the people of Bangladesh continue to build a prosperous nation that is free from poverty, hunger and corruption.

The month of March will always be remembered as a month of courage and dedication in the country's history. It symbolizes the spirit of the Bangladeshi people and their relentless struggle for freedom. The month has been marked by various events that have inspired the nation to overcome its challenges and move forward toward a brighter future. On this day, let us remember the three million people who lost their lives in the struggle for independence, and let us renew our promise to build a better Bangladesh for generations to come. The journey to nationhood was a difficult one, but the resilience and determination of the Bengali people proved to be stronger than any obstacle. As Bangladesh moves forward, let us continue to honor the sacrifices of the past and work towards a brighter future.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury

Fmr. State Minister
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
& Executive Advisor, Diplomats Publication

25 March Genocide Day 2023

The 25th of March is a significant date in the history of Bangladesh, as it marks the beginning of the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971.

On this day, the Pakistan Army launched a military operation, code-named "Operation Searchlight," to suppress the Bengali nationalist movement in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and to assert its control over the region.

Approximately, 3 million Bengalis were killed during the liberation war 1971, and 50,000-200,000 (Est.) Bengalis were killed in "Operation Searchlight", on the dark night of 25 March

We solemnly remember the victims of the dark night of 25 March and the heinous Bengali Genocide in 1971

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SEMINAR ON REGIONAL GEOPOLITICAL IMPERATIVES AND IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL DYNAMICS IN MYANMAR IN RESOLVING ROHINGYA CRISIS

-Lt Gen (Retd.) Md. Mahfuzur Rahman

Speakers at a seminar laid emphasis on proper, sustainable and humanitarian rehabilitation of Rohingya refugees in the Rakhine state in the greater interest of regional peace, stability and prosperity as Bangladesh is overburdened with an influx of a large number of refugees.

The Diplomats, a prestigious magazine and a platform of diplomatic news organized the seminar titled 'Regional geopolitical imperative and importance of local dynamics in Myanmar in resolving Rohingya Crisis' at the Sheraton hotel at Banani, Dhaka, on Tuesday, 7th March'23.

Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed, Professor of Department of International Relations of University of Dhaka,

delivered the keynote speech at the seminar.

He said countries like India, China, and Japan should be engaged extensively in getting solution to the crisis to the Rohingyas that is not only putting economic burden on Bangladesh but also putting a security threat to the country.

Though no sign of progress has been in sight in recent years in repatriating Rohingya refugees in the Rakhine state, Bangladesh will have to pin hopes in resolving perennial crisis by engaging stakeholders in the world politics.

According to the UN, 656,000 refugees, mostly children and women, fled to Bangladesh

since August 25, 2017, when Myanmar forces launched a crackdown on the minority Muslim community. At least 9,000 Rohingyas were killed in Rakhine state from August 25 to September 24, according to Doctors without Borders.

Echoing with "Five-Point Consensus" and endorsed by the ASEAN leaders, Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Hazna Md Hasim has laid emphasis on peaceful, sustainable and effective solutions to the Rohingya crisis in the greater interest of regional stability.

Hazna Md Hasim said Malaysia has been also hosting a good number of Rohingya refugees since long.



Keynote Speaker Professor Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed was delivering his speech on the topic of the Seminar



A Panel Speaker delivered her speech online



A Panel Speaker delivered his speech online



A Panel Speaker delivered his speech online

The five steps the regime agreed to with the ASEAN leaders are: an immediate end to violence in the country; dialogue among all parties concerned; the appointment of a special envoy; provision of humanitarian assistance by ASEAN; and a visit by the bloc's special envoy to Myanmar to meet with all parties.

The High Commissioner added, Malaysian Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob said that ASEAN's "Five-Point Consensus" – which had called for an immediate end to violence, the appointment of a special envoy, and discussions involving all stakeholders – needed to be given "a new lease of life".

Since launching the ethnic cleansing in 2017, the Myanmar junta has shown no willingness to implement or cooperate with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)'s peace plan for Myanmar, known as the Five-Point Consensus, despite agreeing to it at a meeting with the leaders of the regional grouping's member states.

Malaysia has been leading calls for a tougher approach to Myanmar's military administration, and has also called for ASEAN to engage with the National Unity Government (NUG) established by the elected politicians the generals removed from power.

Dr. Bernd Spanier, Deputy Head of Delegation and Head of Political, Economic, Trade, Press and Information Section, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh said that Bangladesh is handling the

population of a small EU country like Luxembourg while giving shelter of Rohingya refugees. The population of Luxembourg stood at 665385 as of March 06, 2023. He praised the Bangladesh government forgiving shelter to Rohingya refugees that are putting pressure on Bangladesh's economy. Citing corona pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, and devastating earthquake in Turkey, Dr. Bernd Spanier cautioned that international support to the Rohingya refugees might gradually reduce in the coming days.

Condemning the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya refugees in the Rakhine state in 2017, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Bangladesh Issa Bin Youssef Al-Dahilan said that Rohingya refugees should be repatriated with citizenship and dignity in Myanmar. He also laid emphasis on the resolution of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in overcoming the crisis and getting back to the political solution. Issa Bin Youssef Al-Dahilan said that the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, or KSrelief, has been supporting Rohingya refugees since the beginning of the 2017 military crackdown in Myanmar which triggered their exodus to Bangladesh.

Established in 2015, the KSrelief is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's humanitarian arm dedicated to coordinating and delivering external humanitarian aid and international relief to crisis-afflicted communities. KSrelief has so far granted UNICEF more than US\$334 million to support humanitarian response for children in a number of countries, including



President (ARNA) Mr. Nurul Islam was addressing the audience as a Panel Speaker



A part of the diplomatic corps of different countries at the seminar, organized by Diplomat magazine



Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Bangladesh H.E. Essa Youssef Essa Al Duhailan addressed the Plight of Rohingya at Diplomat Magazine Seminar



Audience of the Seminar

Yemen, Djibouti, Burkina Faso, Lebanon, Somalia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) has adopted a resolution "on the situation of human rights of Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar" without a vote.

"We would like to see the increased role of the regional countries and the regional organisations in resolving the Rohingya crisis with enhanced urgency, before it turns into a regional security crisis," according to the statement of Bangladesh at the adoption of 3rd Committee Resolution on the situation of Rohingya in Myanmar.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the National Unity Government, Myanmar Ms. Zin Mar Aung and Vice President (3) of Chin National Front of Myanmar Chin State, Dr. Sui Khar attend the seminar online as panelists. Ms. Zin Mar Aung talk about their road map to democracy and how various ethnic groups in general

and Rohingyas in particular are planned to be integrated in social and political space in Myanmar. Dr. Sui Khar expressed their outlook on the importance of Rohingya repatriation for sustainable peace and stability in the neighborhood.

In the overall discussion, it was evident that for a sustainable Rohingya repatriation roping in of local dynamics and stakeholders in Myanmar would be of paramount importance

Former State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury said, "Since the 25th of August 2017, military attack on Rohingya in the Rakhine state of Myanmar, about 800,000 Rohingyas had to leap over into Bangladesh and sought sanctuary. This new interruption into Bangladesh when added to them by a now prevailing number of Rohingyas who had hunted safety prior to the exiting crunch has augmented the total number of Rohingyas in

Bangladesh to additional 1.1 million."

He also said "Bangladesh has exposed resilience and sympathy in covering such an enormous figure of distress people within her ground. The international community has extensively respected Bangladesh's gesticulation in sharing her limited resources for feeding and cooperating these disturbed people literally evicted from their motherland by their own militaries. These societies need justice and they need to go back to their motherland not only with self-worth and protection, but also with full rights. This is the only believable solution to this crisis. Bangladesh muscuarly wishes the world communities to come forward to accept every conceivable means to safeguard a permanent solution to this disaster," he added.

Former Principal Staff Officer of Armed Forces Division Lt Gen (Retd) Md Mahfuzur Rahman, Chairman of Arakan Rohingya National Alliance Mr. Nurul Islam, Director of London Tea Exchange and Co-Founder of London College of Marketing and Technology Mr. Misbah Chowdhury and Executive Editor of Diplomats Publication Mr. Nazinur Rahim also spoke on the occasion, stating different sides of the humanitarian crisis and its possible solutions.

Lt Gen (Retd.) Md. Mahfuzur Rahman, PhD
Former Principle Staff Officer
Armed Forces Division



ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA HOSTS MAGNIFICENT IFTAR PARTY IN DHAKA, SPREADING GOODWILL AND UNITY DURING RAMADAN KAREEM

His Excellency Essa Yousef Essa Alduhailain, the Ambassador of the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Dhaka, organized a lavish Iftar Mehfil to celebrate Ramadan Kareem at the embassy on 29th March evening.

The grand Iftar party was attended by diplomats from different countries, high officials, journalists, and local elites. The Saudi Arabian ambassador in Dhaka offered this Iftar party as a goodwill gesture to Muslim brethren during the holy month of Ramadan.

In accordance with the hospitable traditions of Saudi Arabian people, the ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Dhaka arranged a variety of sumptuous and succulent dishes to ensure the guests' satisfaction.





STRENGTHENING TIES: EXPLORING THE BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN BANGLADESH AND NEPAL AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

-AKM Sayedad Hossain

Country Background

Nepal, a country located in South Asia, shares borders with China to the north and India to the south, east, and west, with an area of 147,516 square kilometers and a population of approximately 30 million. The narrow stretch of about 22 kilometers of Siliguri Corridor separates Nepal from Bangladesh. Kathmandu, the capital city, is the largest metropolitan city of Nepal.

Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-cultural country. It is home to the sacred Pashupatinath temple, revered by Hindus around the world. Nepal is also the birthplace of Lord Buddha, the Light of Asia and a symbol of peace and compassion.

Bilateral Relations

The history of Nepal-Bangladesh relations can be traced back to times predating Bangladesh's Liberation War.

Nepal was the seventh country to recognize Bangladesh's

sovereignty and independence. The diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on 8 April 1972. The Bangladesh Government has always held Nepali leaders and people in high regard for their contributions to Bangladesh's Liberation War.



President of Bangladesh H.E. Mr. Md. Abdul Hamid and President of Nepal Rt. Hon. Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari in Kathmandu, on November 13, 2019

Ever since the establishment of the formal ties, the relations between the two countries have been characterized by cordiality, goodwill, mutual understanding, and shared values. This relationship has remained excellent both at the political and the grassroots levels.

Nepal and Bangladesh have been working closely in various regional and international forums



Prime Minister of Bangladesh H.E. Sheikh Hasina and Prime Minister of Nepal Rt. Hon. Mr. K P Sharma Oli on 31 August 2018

including SAARC, BIMSTEC, the United Nations, Non-aligned Movement, and Group of 77 and China.

50th Anniversary of Nepal-Bangladesh Diplomatic Relations

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations between Nepal and Bangladesh.

Various events have been organized throughout the year to celebrate the 50 years of the enduring friendship between Nepal and Bangladesh. On 8 April 2022, Presidents and Prime Ministers of Nepal and Bangladesh exchanged congratulatory messages to mark the special occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

On 12 March 2023, a seminar on ‘Celebrating 50 Years of Bangladesh-Nepal Friendship: Shared Vision of Peace, Progress and Prosperity’ was organized jointly by the Embassy of Nepal in Dhaka, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) in Dhaka.

The deliberations in the Seminar covered a range of matters of mutual interest, including trade and investment, energy cooperation, connectivity, cultural and educational cooperation, and people-to-people exchanges, among others.

Exchange of High-level Visits

The exchange of high-level visits has further strengthened the bilateral relations between Nepal and Bangladesh. Rt. Hon. President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari paid a State Visit to Bangladesh on 22-23 March 2021 to attend the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the golden jubilee of Bangladesh’s independence.

Likewise, H. E. Mr. Md. Abdul Hamid, President of

Bangladesh, paid an official goodwill visit to Nepal on 12 – 15 November 2019.

Prime Minister H.E. Sheikh Hasina visited Nepal on 30-31 August 2018 to attend the fourth BIMSTEC Summit held in Kathmandu. She also visited Nepal in November 2014 to attend the 18th SAARC Summit.

Trade, Investment and Connectivity

Over the years, Nepal and Bangladesh have been steadily building their economic and commercial ties, with ample potential for further expansion and diversification. The ongoing bilateral negotiations on preferential trading arrangements and investment protection hold promise for further expanding trade and investment between the two countries for their mutual benefit.

Bangladesh has provided transit facilities for Nepal’s third-country trade via Chittagong and Mongla ports, and the overland trade route via Kakarbhitta-Phulbari-Banglabandha has been operational since 1997.

The meetings of all bilateral mechanisms including the



Foreign Minister of Bangladesh H.E. Dr. Abdul A K Momen delivering his remarks as the Chief Guest



Ambassador of Nepal to Bangladesh H.E. Mr. Ghanshyam Bhandari calls on Prime Minister of Bangladesh H.E. Sheikh Hasina on 25 October 2022

foreign office consultations established at the Foreign Secretary level have been crucial to review all aspects of bilateral relations and explore further avenues of cooperation.

Connectivity, including airways, roads, waterways, and transmission lines, is critical to expanding trade and investment between the two countries. Currently, two airlines- Biman Bangladesh and Himalaya Airlines- operate 11 direct flights per week between Kathmandu and Dhaka. An enhanced connectivity will further materialize the prospects of economic cooperation.

Energy Cooperation

Energy cooperation is expected to play a significant role in strengthening the ties between Nepal and Bangladesh. With Bangladesh's growing energy needs for its rapidly expanding industries and Nepal's vast hydropower potential, there are enormous opportunities to

enhance energy cooperation between the two nations.

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Nepal and Bangladesh on Cooperation in the Field of Power Sector on 10 August 2018 was an important milestone in terms of energy cooperation between the two countries.

Power trade between Nepal and Bangladesh could be a 'win-win cooperation' for both countries, providing a much-needed

springboard to take the bilateral relationship to new heights. However, India's support and cooperation is crucial to materialize this energy cooperation between Nepal and Bangladesh.

Tourism Cooperation

As neighboring countries, there is a great potential for strengthening people-to-people contacts through tourism. Bangladesh is a significant source of tourists for Nepal, with 25,384 Bangladeshi tourists visiting Nepal in 2022.

Cultural Cooperation

Nepal and Bangladesh share a deep cultural connection, which is reflected in their efforts to strengthen cultural cooperation. In March 2021, they signed a Cultural Exchange Programme for 2022-2025.

To celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations between Nepal and Bangladesh, the Embassy of Nepal in Dhaka, in collaboration with the Bangladesh-Nepal Friendship Society and Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, organized a five-day-long Art and Culture Festival from 14-18 March 2023.



President of Nepal Rt. Hon. Bidya Devi Bhandari offers condolences to martyrs of Bangladesh at National Martyrs' Memorial in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Monday, 22 March 2021



Beautiful landscape of Nepal

Similarly, the Embassy of Nepal organized a painting competition among school students on 20 January 2023 at Central Saheed Minar in Dhaka.

Educational Cooperation

Under the Technical Cooperation Agreement signed between Nepal and Bangladesh in April 1976, 22 scholarships are

provided by Bangladesh each year to Nepali students in government medical colleges. Nepal also offers one scholarship seat annually to SAARC member states, including Bangladesh, under the SAARC Chair Fellowship and Scholarship Scheme. Currently, around 3,000 Nepali students are studying in Bangladesh, particularly in



Nepali artists performing during the Cultural Programme in Dhaka on 15 March 2023

medical, dental, and engineering fields.

Way Forward

The relationship between Nepal and Bangladesh has been growing stronger and more diverse in recent years, as evidenced by various initiatives and engagements elucidated above. With an emphasis on trade and investment, energy, tourism, culture, and education, the two countries are effortful to create a win-win situation, promoting mutual benefit and cooperation.

As we look to the future, there are many areas where the Nepal-Bangladesh relationship can further flourish. It is imperative that both countries work together to explore new avenues of cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, and connectivity, to further enhance their economic ties for the mutual benefit of their peoples. Moreover, fostering private sector involvement can be a key driver for Nepal to capitalize on the prospects presented by Bangladesh's increasing economic potential.

Overall, the Nepal-Bangladesh relationship is poised to grow and strengthen in the years to come, and it is up to the governments and peoples of both countries to seize the opportunities and foster greater cooperation and friendship.

AKM Sayedad Hossain
Associate Editor
Diplomats Publication

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MESSAGE



The friendship between Nepal and Bangladesh is built on a solid foundation of civilizational and cultural ties that date even before Bangladesh's Liberation War. Ever since the diplomatic relations were established on 8 April 1972, cooperation between the two countries has been growing in diverse areas of mutual interest.

As we celebrate the 50 years of friendship, we take pride in the steady evolution of our relationship based on the principles of cooperation, trust, and mutual respect. The enduring ties, stretching from the Himalayas to the shores of the Bay of Bengal and from the high hills to the fertile plains, continue to nourish and sustain our friendship.

Nepal and Bangladesh share similar opportunities and challenges and have always supported each other in the pursuit of development aspirations. As a close and friendly neighbor, Nepal is happy to witness the remarkable economic advancements made by Bangladesh in recent decades. We look forward to the continued collaboration to boost economic linkages between our two countries.

The recent developments in energy cooperation are encouraging. With Nepal's abundant hydropower potential and Bangladesh's growing energy needs, we have a unique opportunity to forge a mutually win-win enterprise. Also, an enhanced level of partnership in the fields of trade, investment, tourism, connectivity, education, cultural exchanges, and people-to-people contacts will be crucial for further consolidating the friendly ties between Nepal and Bangladesh.

As we look to next 50 years and beyond, it is imperative to diversify our areas of cooperation and devise a concrete action plan in line with the aspirations of our people. We must rise to our responsibility and build a robust partnership between our two countries. This will be critical in attaining our shared vision of peace, progress, and prosperity.

Ghanshyam Bhandari
Ambassador
Embassy of Nepal, Dhaka

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MILITARY DIPLOMATS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES PAY TRIBUTE TO THE FATHER OF THE NATION AT THE MAUSOLEUM AT TUNGIPARA, GOPALGONJ



The Annual Conducted Tour for Defence Attaches/Military Attaches of different countries in Bangladesh was conducted by External Affairs & Liaison Bureau (EALB) of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence on 26 February 2023. The Defence Attaches/Military Attaches showed their respect to the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and other martyrs of August 15, 1975 carnage and 30 lakh martyrs of Liberation War of 1971 by saluting, laying floral wreath and participating in munajat at the mausoleum of the Father of the Nation at Tungipara, Gopalganj.

Director General of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) Major General Hamidul Hoque, nswc, psc led the delegation of military diplomats. Later, the wives and children of military diplomats from seven countries paid tributes to Bangabandhu by placing floral wreaths at the mausoleum.

The military diplomats are - Brigadier Manmeet Singh Sabarwal of India, Brigadier General Soe Nyunt of Myanmar, Brigadier General Roshan Shumsher Rana of Nepal, Brigadier Ali Ejaz Rafi of Pakistan, Colonel Mahmoud M.J. Sharawnah of Palestine, Colonel Erdal Sahin of Turkey, Lieutenant Colonel John Dempsey of Australia and Squadron Leader Abhutosh Sharma of India.

The military diplomats later visited the mausoleum complex of Bangabandhu. Gopalganj Police Super Ayesha Siddiqa and Additional Deputy Commissioner Md Golam Kabir welcomed the delegation when they arrived in Gopalganj.



7TH MARCH 1971- THE PROCLAMATION FOR SHAPING A LAND'S DESTINY

-Barrister S M Saifullah Rahman

“**T**he struggle now is the struggle for our emancipation; the struggle now is the struggle for our independence. Joy Bangla”- These words are sure to echo the lands of Bangladesh till the end of time for it is safe to say that these were the magical words moulding the birth of this golden land; shaping a destiny for its people, to finally break free from oppression and an unspoken slavery. An extempore speech, in absence of any form of prior written script, born from an unmatched charismatic leadership of the Father of the Nation, sparked fires of rebellion against decades of oppression for millions of people, who have all

been subjected to unspeakable torment and irreparable loss. The greatest Bengali of the millennium, Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, presented a legendary display of one of the greatest leadership the world has ever seen, voicing the words residing in the heart of millions and laid down an unbeaten symphony of great liberation. The speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 7th March, 1971, in the historic Ramna Race Course Maidan, (now known as Suhrawardy Udyan), remains an iconic symbol of Bengali nationalism and resistance against oppression fuelled by the

passion of earning democracy, nationalism, religious freedom and bringing forth a change that none before him and none after him can ever bring forward.

It is imperative to understand the long history of pain and struggle which the people of this nation has seen throughout history. This Indian subcontinent saw a prolonged history of oppression, including various forms of discrimination and violence based on religion, caste, gender, and ethnicity. Chained to an unspoken slavery under the British colonial rule. The people expected its liberation when India gained freedom in 1945, only to be soon divided in 1947,



The historic 7th March Speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

into a division based primarily on religious lines, ending with the creation of two new independent nations: India, with its vast Hindu majority, and Pakistan, a remnant nation of Muslim majority. This idea of partition gained ground after the 1940 Lahore Resolution, which demanded the creation of an independent Muslim state in the north-western and north-eastern regions of British India. The British government passed the Indian Independence Act in 1947, which divided British India into two separate dominions of India and Pakistan. This division was a result of various political, social, and religious factors that had been brewing for decades and while pen and paper stated freedom for the Bengalis, yet true freedom remained a myth and a rather failed dream. Therefore, instead of new found liberation, this division only further led to widespread violence and displacement, with millions of people uprooted from their homes and forced to migrate to the newly created countries. Communal violence ran rampant, causing the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, with millions injured and

displaced. What was to be enjoyed as a moment of liberation after decades of oppression, rather remained a deeply traumatic event in the pages of history for the Bengali people.

The legacy of such inhuman oppression continued to shape politics and society in Pakistan following this partition. The Bengalis now settled in a nation called East Pakistan, remained in a shadow of submission and unspoken oppression from a regime controlled and usurped by West Pakistan. Tales of betrayal stained a promise of

equity and fairness between the two counterparts of Pakistan, and instead of being a nation equally governed by the two states, it was rather a persistent attempt of imperialism by West Pakistan to control and subdue East Pakistan into an unspoken slavery, by whatever means, no matter how brutal and vicious the methods deemed necessary. The widespread failure of this post-colonial nation to develop an inclusive democratic society began frustrating the people of East Pakistan, and cultivated a deep-rooted sentiment of nationalism and liberation amongst the Bengalis.

Imperialism of West Pakistan only grew in the 1950s with one of the first struggles of liberation from oppression ignited from the great Language Movement. This was a political and social movement that began in 1948, when the Government of Pakistan declared that Urdu would be the sole national language of Pakistan. This decision was met with strong protests from the Bengali-speaking population of East Pakistan, who saw it as an



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announcing the six points in Lahore on 5 February 1966

attempt to marginalize their language and culture. The movement gained momentum in 1952, when on 21 February, students and activists organized a peaceful protest in Dhaka to demand recognition of Bengali as a national language only for them to be mercilessly killed when police opened fire on the protesters, killing several of them.

However, the movement did not end there. The continued marginalization of

the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which represented the interests of the western provinces of Pakistan. The Awami League, led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, campaigned on a platform of greater autonomy for East Pakistan and won the majority of seats in the National Assembly. This result of the election were seen as a major setback for the military government and its expectation of continuing dominance on the people of East Pakistan, and had

bloodshed, the people of East Pakistan were in desperate need of a great leader to guide them into the radiance of independence. And in this moment of great crisis, and to revitalise hope into the souls of people suffering intolerable oppression, came a man of incomparable leadership ability, and with his captivating voice, delivered a sermon of liberation for almost 19 minutes, that lit up the hearts of Bengalis to break free from slavery, oppression and illegal imperialism.



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with his beloved parents Sheikh Lutfar Rahman and Sheikh Sayera Khatun

Bengali-speaking people and their language led to the rise of Bengali nationalism. The general election of 1970 was a landmark event leading up to Bangladesh's glorious liberation. It was expected by the people to be the first free and fair election held in the country since its independence in 1947, held under the military rule of General Yahya Khan, who had taken over the government in a coup d'état in March 1969. The election was contested by two major political parties: the Awami League, which represented the Bengali population of East Pakistan, and

hopes to use the election to legitimize its illegal rule. This election and the West Pakistan's reluctance to hand over power to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in other words to the people of East Pakistan, aimed to expose the deep political and cultural corruption of the West Pakistan regime.

Therefore, instead of handing over the power and regime, the West Pakistani-dominated government and military, continued crackdown on the East Bengali people to suppress any movement. Beaten, battered and brutalized with endless

"My dear brothers, I have come before you today with a heavy heart. The people of East Pakistan have been betrayed. Our rights have been trampled upon. Our voices have been silenced. But today, I say to you, enough is enough. We have waited long enough for justice. We have waited long enough for equality. We have waited long enough for our voices to be heard. And now, I say to you, the time has come to take our destiny into our own hands. We must fight for our freedom. We must fight for our rights. We must fight for our independence."

The voice of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is sure to touch the heart and cause sheer goose bumps to every patriotic person living today, whichever nation they may be from, since the power and charisma in the speech has the ability to light up endless love for its nation. In the speech, the Father of the Nation, reminded the Bengali people of their defiant bravery, indomitable spirit and their rich glory. He reminded the people that despite



Bangabandhu with his family members

there being heavy obstacles and perilous challenges, the people must be resilient in their struggle to secure their freedom. He significantly delivered that- "let us never forget that our cause is just, our struggle is righteous, and our victory is inevitable."

He famously declared, "This time the struggle is for our freedom. This time the struggle is for our independence." While the then Pakistani government tried its best to stop broadcasting of the speech and erase it from history,

yet the legendary speech could not be illegally subdued and contained. Today, not only Bangladesh and its people but the entire international community, including the United Nations, recognized the significance of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's speech and its impact on the struggle for independence in Bangladesh. The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution on December 16, 1971, recognizing Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign state, thereby

acknowledging the legitimacy of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's vision and leadership. The international community at large, stood in awe at the magnitude of significance that this speech had held and recognized & remembered this iconic speech as a mesmerising icon for any patriotic people. The historic 7th March, 1971 speech of the Father of the Nation. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been included in the Memory of the World International Register, a list of world's important documentary heritage maintained by UNESCO. The Director General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, announced the decision on 30 October 2017, at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. The Memory of the World International Register is a list of documents having global significance. The creation of this International Register is to ensure preservation of documentary heritage bearing immense significance and forms part of documentary heritage of the world at large.

Barrister S M Saifullah Rahman

LLM, International Banking & Law, UWE Bristol, UK
& Associate Editor, Diplomats Publication



DIPLOMATS NIGHT

Diplomatic relationships are crucial for any country to prosper, and Bangladesh has been successful in developing and maintaining positive ties with various countries across the globe. Diplomats, the only diplomatic magazine in Bangladesh, has recognized the efforts of different countries' ambassadors who have contributed significantly to strengthening the diplomatic ties between their respective countries and Bangladesh.



Diplomats world magazine recently celebrated the 50th diplomatic relationship milestone with several countries, and the ambassadors of those nations were given recognition for their efforts. These ambassadors have worked tirelessly to bridge the gap between Bangladesh and their countries, facilitating the exchange of culture, trade, and investment opportunities.



Diplomats Journey

Diplomats started its journey in 2018 as the first and only publication of diplomatic news in Bangladesh with the aim of highlighting the progress of democratization and economic developments in Bangladesh. The Founding Editor of Diplomats Magazine was Emeritus Professor and Hon'ble Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen. He also served for seven years as the Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Nazinur Rahim, Founding Director of Ireland Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (IBCCI), is the co-founder of **Diplomats**. Since its inception, Mr. Rahim has been working as the Publisher and Executive Editor. He is also involved in IT, Software development & digital transformation business in home and abroad. Currently Mr. Shahed Akhtar, Fmr. Ambassador & Secretary, GoB is the Editor of Diplomats and Mr. Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Fmr. State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, GoB is the Executive Advisor of **Diplomats**.

The **Diplomats** is available in print as well as online subscriptions. Currently, it has between 25,000 and 30,000 regular subscribers via online through Email, WhatsApp and Facebook, and more than 3,500 regular subscribers of the printed version. **Diplomats** is the only publication of its kind in Bangladesh. The main objective of this publication is to promote Bangladesh among foreign diplomats, expatriates and foreign nationals at home and abroad. At the same time, **Diplomats** is working tirelessly to present Bangladesh's image to the world very positively.

From the arrays of activities of **Diplomats**, few of the followings are notable-

Diplomats presented **Set-Top Box** to all the Missions abroad with the aim of enabling the viewers to watch Bangla TV channels abroad. The initiative was taken to promote Bangladesh's art, culture and various development activities. The set-top boxes are expected to enable showcasing Bangladesh in every corner of the world.

The first **Genocide Corner** has been setup at the Bangladesh Foreign Service Academy with the help of **Diplomats Publication** in order to present the glorious history of Bangladesh's War of liberation and at the same time, the horrific atrocities carried out by the occupation forces during the war in 1971.

So far, as many as nine seminars have been organized by **Diplomats** in many different countries, including Italy, France and United Kingdom. In these seminars Bangladesh's progress and achievements have been highlighted. Honorable Minister, Foreign Diplomats and senior officials from various international organizations participated in these seminars.

At present, **Diplomats Publication** is being sent to all the foreign missions of Bangladesh around the world. At the same time, all the Foreign Embassies, International organizations, Banks, media, Member of Parliament and key decision makers in Bangladesh are receiving copies of **Diplomats publication** on regular basis.



INSIDE THE MIND OF GENOCIDE

-Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed

There are certain misconceptions in Bangladesh concerning the word 'genocide,' particularly relating to its meaning. In Bangla, the word got somewhat lost in translation when the word 'gonohatya' was used to convey its meaning. This is because the word 'gonohatya' if re-translated into English, would mean 'mass killing.' Mass killing can undoubtedly be an act of genocide, but not all mass killings amount to genocide. More importantly, genocide can occur without 'gonohatya' or 'mass killing.' Even without any 'killing,' there can be a 'genocide'! This brings us to the internationally codified and legally sanctioned meaning of

the word 'genocide'. As Article II of the *1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide* makes it clear that 'genocide' includes "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group" and that such 'acts' would include:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its

physical destruction in whole or in part;

(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and

(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

A question can certainly be raised, what makes one group of human beings destroy another group of human beings intentionally 'in whole or in part'? There is, of course, no easy answer to this. But before we search for a response, let us take a quick look at the deadliest major atrocities in human history.

Table 1
21 deadliest atrocities in human history

01	Second World War (1939–45)	66,000,000
02	Chinggis Khan (1206–27)	40,000,000
03	Chinese Civil War I (1949–76)	40,000,000
04	Famines in British India (18th–20th c.)	27,000,000
05	Fall of the Ming Dynasty (1635–62)	25,000,000
06	Taiping Rebellion (1850–64)	20,000,000
07	Russian Civil War I (1928–53)	20,000,000
08	Mideast Slave Trade (7th–19th c.)	18,500,000
09	Timur (1370–1405)	17,000,000
10	Atlantic Slave Trade (1452–1807)	16,000,000
11	Conquest of the Americas (after 1492)	15,000,000
12	First World War (1914–18)	15,000,000
13	An Lushan Rebellion (755–63)	13,000,000
14	Xin Dynasty (9–24)	10,000,000
15	Congo Free State (1885–1908)	10,000,000
16	Russian Civil War II (1918–20)	9,000,000
17	Thirty Years War (1618–48)	7,500,000
18	Fall of the Yuan Dynasty (ca 1340–70)	7,500,000
19	Fall of the Western Roman Empire (395–455)	7,000,000
20	Chinese Civil War II (1927–37, 1945–49)	7,000,000
21	Mahdi Revolt (1881–98)	5,500,000

Source: Edited from, Matthew White, *Atrocitology: Humanity's 100 Deadliest Achievements* (London: Canongate, 2011), p. 529.

A cursory look at Table 1 will show that the deadliest atrocities were of all kinds, expansionist, colonial, ideological, economic, and rebellious, including religious. However, the deadliest atrocities were 'secular' and not 'religious.' The predominantly secular conflict in the 20th century, that is, the Second World War, has been, until now, the deadliest atrocity in human history. In six years, 66 million

people were killed, including 26.6 million Russians and 6 million Jews; in three nights in Dresden, 25,000 were killed. Of course, the horrifying atomic explosion over Hiroshima and Nagasaki killed more than 220,000 Japanese. Indeed, on average annually, 11 million people were killed in the Second World War, incidentally and to a large extent in the name of 'nation.' However, conflicts

related to 'ethnicity,' 'race,' and 'religion' were equally significant. Not surprisingly, Alexander Laban Hinton argued:

[Genocide] is intimately linked to modernity.... Race, ethnicity, nation, and religion are favoured categories in modern discourse.... If the concept of genocide is a twentieth-century invention, the types of destructive behaviors it references go far back in history.... (Alexander Laban Hinton, ed., *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, California University Press, 2002, p. 4.)

Four things otherwise remain critical in modernity, an understanding of which will allow us to know why critics find modernity problematic, even contributing to genocide.

Firstly, linearity or holding to a linear view of progress. This is best reflected in the triadic formulation of history - ancient, medieval, and modern. James Mill (1773-1836) was tasked with writing the first 'official' *History of British India* (1817). Mill never laid a foot on Indian soil but had no problem in penning down the history of a faraway place practically by going to the British libraries. Imbibed with the idea of 'progress,' and since the knowledge of the triadic formulation of history in the European context was fresh in his mind, Mill reformulated the history of colonial India into ancient, medieval, and modern, and referred to the ancient period as 'Hindu,' the medieval period as 'Muslim,' and finally the modern period as 'British.' This not only ended up making 'sweeping generalizations' on the



Dismembered head of an intellectual killed on 14 December 1971 at Rayer Bazar, Dhaka. Photo: Rashid Talukdar

history (or, should we say, histories?) of the Indian sub-continent but also laid the foundation of what later came to be known as the 'two-nation theory,' with 'Hindus' and 'Muslims' attaining the status of 'nation' in the like of the British (see, Romila Thapar, *The Public Intellectual in India*, New Delhi, 2015), which ultimately led to the genocidal partition of colonial India in 1947. It is estimated that nearly 2 million people were killed, 75,000 to 100,000 women were kidnapped and raped, and more than 14 million people were displaced and crossed borders between India and Pakistan. The arrival of the 'modern' in colonial times proved deadly for South Asia!

Secondly, perfectionism. When it comes to reproducing divinity on earth or making human activities mirror the perfection of the divine, few can match the discourse of modernity. Indeed, not only the Calvinists and Puritans, Mahatma Gandhi and many Islamic clerics and politicians campaigned for the 'Kingdom of God' - Ramarajya or

Khilāfa - on earth. This quest for perfectionism or mastering the world has been pursued relentlessly with little regard or attention to what such pursuit can do to humans, particularly to those who believe and work passionately to realize this quest. As it would be the case, each group or community,

indeed, in the name of nation, ethnicity, race, or religion, remains fully convinced, albeit somewhat frighteningly, that they are the 'chosen people' and the rest suffers from a deficit or are misled and therefore must be disowned. The modernist goals put the 'other' between a rock and a hard place. Acquiescence or extermination are the two possible options. Indeed, as the 'Other,' the Armenians, the Bengalis, the Jews, the Rwandans, the Cambodians, the Ahmadiyyas, the Bosnians, the Rohingyas, and many more, had become victims of such idealized essence of modernity reproduced passionately in the name of perfectionism or puritanism.

Thirdly, centrism. Modernity advocates a centric or arch-ist view of the world, with the West as the centre. Nirad C. Chaudhuri outlined this well when critiquing the colonized Bengalis



Vultures on remains of slain Bengali at the bank of the Brahmaputra river in Mymensingh, Bangladesh. October, 1971. Photo: Naib Uddin Ahmed

for blindly following the life and living of the colonial power: “[The] real cultural role of the Bengalis...is to assimilate, by slow degrees, the ways of Europe, till at last, civilization in India becomes the provincial edition of the civilization of Europe...” Centrism otherwise led to the marginalization of the non-West, and the reproduction of what later came to be known as the 'centre-periphery' relationship. Mass atrocities in wars outside the arch or the West, whether in Vietnam, Palestine, Iraq, or Afghanistan, in the name of containing communism or Islamic militancy and safeguarding democratic and liberal values, for instance, became a norm in the modernist quest, impacting upon not only the West but also the non-West.

Lastly, singularity. The construction of the nation-state, whether in terms of language, religion, race, or ethnicity, is the epitome of it. In fact, in this quest, religious fundamentalism remains identical to secular fundamentalism, both championing the cause of a singular interpretation of things. Indeed, with its passion for linearity, perfectionism, and centrism, modernity reproduces what could be referred to as the archetypes of singularity, fear, and



One of the estimated 400,000 birangona (brave women), who were raped during the war, 1971. Photo: Naib Uddin Ahmed

intolerance in the minds of humans. The genocidal killing of millions of people in the name of nation, ethnicity, race, and religion during World War II, as indicated earlier, bears testimony to this.

Human experience with violence, trauma, or genocide, once it gets registered in the



Bengali Refugees, Salt Lake Camp, Calcutta, 1971. Photo: Raghu Rai/ Muktijuddho e-Archive Trust

brain, as Carl Gustav Jung argued (see, David Tacey, ed., *The Jung Reader*, London, 2012), there is no guarantee that it would vanish on its own. Traces would remain, and a newer generation of people could 'inherit' the experience from their ancestors. Therefore, there is a need for constant vigilance or re-education so that the archetypes of singularity, fear, and intolerance, for instance, do not get 'inherited' and 're-arise' spontaneously. The drafters of the UNESCO Constitution were quite aware of this, making it clear that "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." Addressing the psyche otherwise remains crucial in stopping future acts of genocide. But then, with the global dissemination of modernity, which is obsessed with linearity, perfectionism, and centrism, one could easily see that far from creating 'defenses of peace,' it is engaged in reproducing the archetypes of singularity, fear, and intolerance or structures of genocide and mass violence in the minds of humans! Transforming the mind of the *homo sapiens* - the thinking being - would be required if we were to stop genocide. Let us keep our dreams alive by working relentlessly toward that end!

Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed

Professor of International Relations & Director, Centre for Genocide Studies, University of Dhaka

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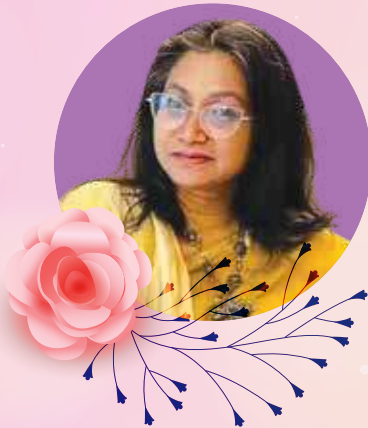
Women are the light of the world without women world will be dark. Wishing all a happy Women's Day.

Lutfun Nahar Taposhi
Creative Editor

We must continue to fight for gender equality, for the right to education and work, and for women's reproductive rights. We must also stand up against violence and discrimination towards women, and support women who are still facing inequality and injustice.



Dr. Rehana Akhter
Assistant Editor



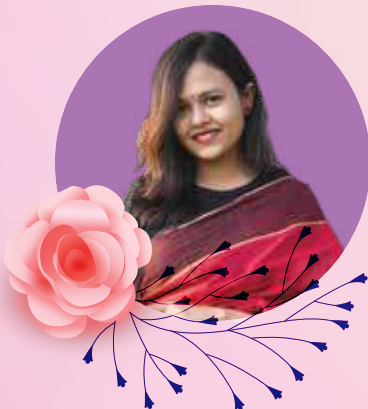
Women's day celebration falls short of the gestures they deserve on everyday basis. We honour the token celebration, but we would genuinely be honoured if men stand by us in all the spheres of our lives.

Ayesha S Chowdhury
Contributing Editor

Women are never weak because God has made them strong in every sense. Warm wishes on Women's Day to all the women.



Sheikh Nazia Hasan
Coordinator



International Women's Day is a reminder of the work that still needs to be done. We must continue to fight for gender equality, to break down the barriers that still hold women back, and to create a world where every woman and girl can fulfill her potential and live a life free from discrimination and violence.

Afifa Mahjabeen
Graphic Designer



WHERE THERE IS A WOMAN, THERE IS MAGIC

-Ayesha S Chowdhury

International Women's Day was celebrated in Bangladesh and all over the world with grandeur on 8th May. The theme of IWD'2023 is #EmbraceEquity; it aims to draw attention to women's achievements and the fight for gender equity.

The value and potential of all the girls and women is infinite. Though in the societal norm, women are still striving to understand their roles in day-to-day affairs. Times are changing too. Women are more expressive nowadays. Families old and new are treating their girl child better than before. Thanks to the paradigm shift of the new world order during and post-Covid era. The celebration that began on the 28th February of 1909, in New

York City, organized by the socialist party of America. There have been claims that the day commemorating a protest



As head of the Woman's National Committee of the Socialist Party of America (SPA), Theresa Malkiel established an annual National Woman's Day which was the precursor to International Women's Day

by women garment workers in New York on March 8, 1857, but researchers have decided this to be a myth intended to detach

International Women's Day from its socialist origin. The focal point in the women's rights movement was to bring attention to issues such as gender inequality, lack of reproductive health rights, violence and abuse against women.

Being a woman is never easy. But, modern women in today's context are dealing with complexities unthinkable. The incredible things women have contributed to our society are there for everyone to see. Now, their footsteps are everywhere. Even after all the saga's of women's lib, that is



A march through Petrograd on March 8, 1917, the inaugural year for International Women's Day.

braving all the oddities and gracefully setting their feet in all the men's spheres. Recently one of our endeared film Makers Mr. Amitabh Reza Chowdhury has projected this spirit of modern women, be it poor or rich, in his movie Rikshaw Girl, where a daring teenage girl chose to be a Rikshaw puller, which has been completely a man's domain till now. The brave girl disguised herself as a young man and tried to earn out of sheer necessity and to help the family. This dramatization has

the movement to combat discrimination and to gain full legal, economic, vocational, educational and social rights and opportunities for women, equal to those of men; have the basic rights and opportunities come to women as smoothly as they should have? History states the rise of the demand of equal rights had been treated like obstacles for centuries and even after their achieving great heights in their career and contribution to all the spheres of society, be it politics, business, technology or raising children and family, women still are not out of the clasps of male chauvinism and have been continued facing various issues on day-to-day practice.

debates that have been paralyzing and baffling the social analysts for ages, at a snail's pace. In the current economic meltdowns, men of the houses are not always able to provide for the families. In the grass root levels, we can see all the women working to earn their own sustenance. They are

portrayed the real scenario of poor women in our society. Like this, women of the low-income group are coming up with all types of earning ideas to support their families. Different govt. sectors, private sectors, voluntary, non-voluntary and charitable organizations are offering trainings, small loans



A group of French demonstrators marching under the banner of the Movement for the Liberation of Women (MLF) on International Women's day, 1981

Women in Bangladesh are rising above all the



Sheikh Hasina, the only female leader among the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) 57 member countries. She's regarded as one of the leading female political figures for women's empowerment.

and other facilities for women entrepreneurs.

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina took an initiative to open up Joyita foundation, especially to encourage, assist and provide trainings for small entrepreneurs. She put emphasis on enhancing the capacity of the grass root-level women



Begum Sufia Kamal was a Bangladeshi poet, feminist leader, and political activist. She led feminist activism and was a president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad

entrepreneurs and improve the foundations organisational strength. Sheikh Hasina also said women entrepreneurs should be groomed as skilled ones, so that they could engage in multipurpose entrepreneurship. The main aim of Joyita foundation is to eradicate poverty and make women self-reliant, so that they could live in society with greater dignity. Also, BSCIC, SME foundation, WVA are providing assistance to all the women who, instead of hiding indoor, are breaking glass ceilings to find out their place amongst a male dominated society. There are numerous online platforms, from where women are finding out their niche for startup businesses and thus getting financial freedom for themselves and their families.

If we look at the educated and privilege sections, the growth curve is rising exponentially. We see strong voices and hands of Bangladeshi women steering the wheels and changing the future. Bangladeshi women are playing their roles as the Prime Minister, opposition leader, Speaker of the parliament, Editors of the top Newspapers, Judges, Pilots, Engineers, Heads of organizations, Top bankers, Policy makers, Professors, Teachers, Ambassadors, Singers, Critics, Entrepreneurs, in tech scenes, sports and cultural arenas, everywhere women are making their marks with their organisational capacities, knowledge, multitasking and subtle communication skills. Which, without the support of their families and partners would not

be possible at all. So, the struggle for equal rights are getting a direction in our society too, though slowly!

Women's day is now celebrated worldwide for more than a century with due fervour. UN started observing the day since 1975. In Bangladesh, we follow suit through various programmes and celebrations. Through contribution in the economy and other areas of society and career, women are progressing better than the states of our few neighbouring countries, they are still taking a back seat in comparison with the



Begum Rokeya is widely regarded as a pioneer of women's liberation in South Asia. She is considered as the pioneer feminist of Bengal

women of developed countries. Though the index of gender equity is higher than Pakistan, India and Afghanistan, we still have not achieved full equity. From a survey of BBS (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics), Violence against women survey, 2011', we see the picture that 87% of married women are victim to domestic violence, 65% are tortured by their husband, 36% fell victim to sexual abuse, 82% mental and



Bangladeshi girls are breaking gender stereotypes

53% fell victim to financial abuse by their husbands. The brutality against women are ever increasing, even though there are very strict laws against rape, throwing acid, social menace like dowry and child marriage etc. Even after all the insecurities and differences in terms of social, cultural-psychological aspects, like getting same daily wages in

lower income group, equal facilities at work place, participation of women in economic growth is still rising in our country.

The question of gender equity is not only related to the advancement of women, it is a promise to the development of the world without gender

discrimination. The greatest obstacle in our society is to hold on to the old ideas and culture that tend to belittle the roles of women. We strongly believe, with further participation and development in education of women, overall perspective will be changed very soon. Until then, the struggle and fight must go on with patience!

Ayesha S Chowdhury
Contributing Editor
Diplomats Publication



ব্যাংকিং সেবা এখন আপনার আঙিনায়...

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PRINCESS PA IN VIENNA – THROUGH THE LENS OF A FELLOW DIPLOMAT

-Sun Thathong

I first became involved in Princess Pa's work when I joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2009. I was assigned to be part of a team campaigning for the "Bangkok Rules on the treatment of women prisoners and offenders" to be adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It was to be a culmination of a project Princess Pa was professed to be passionate about. I recall being up until three in the morning in Brazil, defending the inclusion of a paragraph on these draft Bangkok Rules in the outcome

document of the Twelfth Crime Congress in 2010. This would later pave the way for the successful adoption of the rules later that year in New York. At that time, I learned a great deal about her personal motivations and efforts behind the initiative. Her sense of justice made a strong first impression on me.

A year after the Bangkok Rules were adopted, I took leave to pursue a law doctorate in the United Kingdom. It was not until I returned and was posted to Austria in 2018 that I

re-encountered Princess Pa's work. But this time, it was the fruits of her labour in her capacity as a Vienna-based ambassador during 2012 – 2014.

Two years is considered a relatively short time for a posting, but it was enough time for her to leave a lasting imprint. And throughout my four years in Vienna, I came to admire her as a model lawyer-diplomat, whose passion for justice and the rule of law served Thailand's interests in many significant ways. From a practitioner's perspective, I have found this to be deeply inspiring.

Princess' Road to Vienna

Before arriving in Vienna, I had often wondered how, at such a young age, Princess Pa would handle the job of being Ambassador of Thailand to Austria, Slovakia and Slovenia, and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the UN and other Vienna-based international organisations. How would she handle looking after more than 6,000 Thai people in three countries and simultaneously representing Thailand in several international organisations? To say that the job was demanding is an understatement and some would say it should have required decades of experience in diplomacy.

In my view, having a law doctorate from Cornell, a distinguished career as a Thai lawyer-prosecutor, and prior experience working at the Thai Permanent Mission to the UN in New York, actually prepared her in more ways than one when compared with other fellow, career diplomats.



Princess Bajrakitiyabha at the 12th session of the Human Rights Council, September 2009, Geneva, Source: Jeff Hoffman, UN

skills some time before coming to Vienna. This explains why, despite her relatively short tenure as Thai Ambassador and Permanent Representative in Vienna, she was able to make such remarkable contributions, advancing Thailand's national interests and multilateral diplomacy.

matters, Princess Pa served as chair of its annual session from 2011 to 2012. For the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, a UN body dealing with drug-related matters, she served as second vice-chair of its 2013 annual session and as first vice-chair the following year. For the International Atomic Energy Agency, an organisation that seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, she served as vice-president of the 2013 annual session of the Agency's General Conference. She also served as vice-chair of the inaugural session (2012) of the General Assembly of the International Anti-Corruption Academy, an institution that promotes anti-corruption education.

Then I realised one very important factor. Being born a public figure, Princess Pa naturally underwent 'diplomatic training' since birth. Moreover, as a member of the Royal Family, service to her people and compassion for their trials and tribulations was in her blood. The UN had already recognised her skills in diplomacy when it named her UN Women National Ambassador to Thailand in 2008. The successful adoption of the Bangkok Rules back in 2010 was also in part the result of her appreciation of and skills in multilateral diplomacy.

Princess Pa had already mastered a diplomat's essential

Leading the leaders

A permanent representative's main task is to represent their country and promote its interests at international negotiations. Some may take on extra, voluntary roles in conducting meetings and chairing decision-making bodies of these organisations. I was astonished to learn that, while she was in Vienna, Princess Pa personally took on a long list of these voluntary leadership positions in several fora.

For the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, a UN body dealing with crime prevention and criminal justice

I had seen other Thai permanent representatives performing similar roles and have been part of the team serving them, but I never heard of a single permanent representative taking on such a long list of roles over such a short period of time. Indeed, being elected to these positions, one after another, was testament not only to the trust that the Viennese diplomatic circles placed in Princess Pa, but also to her incredible work ethic and competence. In discharging the above positions, she helped build bridges, resolve tensions and advance common goals. In doing so, she raised not only Thailand's profile, but also the profile of the organisations themselves.

Influencing the global agenda

Princess Pa also sought to widen Thailand's influence in other ways. One was to make Thailand better known as a hub of



Princess Bajrakitiyabha addressing the UN General Assembly's High-Level Meeting on the Rule of Law, 24 September 2012, New York. Source: UN



Princess Bajrakitiyabha chairing the 21st session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna, 23 – 27 April 2012. Source: UNODC

the UN General Assembly’s annual session in New York, she moderated a high-level panel discussion on gender-related killings of women and girls. She also met with the Deputy UN Secretary General to discuss issues related to the rule of law and sustainable development. Outside

Commission on Narcotic Drugs adopted five resolutions proposed or co-proposed by Thailand on matters such as alternative development and prevention of drug abuse. During the same period, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice adopted eight resolutions proposed or co-proposed by Thailand on matters such as elimination of violence against children, treatment of prisoners, and criminal justice.

international meetings. At the first session of the General Assembly of the International Anti-Corruption Academy in 2012, she conveyed Thailand’s offer to host the Assembly’s second session in Thailand the following year, an invitation that the Assembly gladly accepted. Then in 2014, Thailand hosted two UN meetings chaired by Princess Pa herself – a preparatory meeting for the 13th Crime Congress and an expert group meeting to develop draft model strategies and practical measures on the elimination of violence against children.

the UN, she delivered speeches at meetings of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), where Thailand is a partner country, to share Thailand’s experiences in promoting the rule of law, sustainable development, and women’s empowerment.

This high number does not in itself indicate unprecedented achievements, given that it is common for Thailand to propose and co-sponsor a few (or more) resolutions at Vienna-based international organisations each year. It does show, however, that under Princess Pa’s ambassadorship, Thailand continued to be proactive and perform well in Vienna. It is also worth noting that it was during Princess Pa’s ambassadorship in Vienna that Thailand finally ratified the UN Convention

Achieving concrete outcomes

In less than two years, more than ten resolutions proposed or co-proposed by Thailand were successfully adopted by Vienna-based UN bodies. During 2013-2014, the

Princess Bajrakitiyabha at the ECOSOC panel discussion on crime prevention in the context of post-2015 development agenda, 22 July 2013, Geneva Source: Jean-Marc Ferre. UN

Another manner in which Princess Pa widened Thailand’s influence was through actively engaging with relevant actors in promoting Thailand’s causes. In 2013, Princess Pa joined a panel discussion on crime prevention in the context of the post-2015 development agenda at an ECOSOC meeting in Geneva. Later in 2013, on the margins of



Princess Bajrakitiyabha met with the UN Secretary-General during the UN General Assembly’s Thematic Debate on ‘Drugs and Crime as a Threat to Development,’ 26 June 2012, New York. Source: UN



Princess Bajrakitiyabha at the ECOSOC panel discussion on crime prevention in the context of post-2015 development agenda, 22 July 2013, Geneva
Source: Jean-Marc Ferre. UN

against Transnational Organized Crime and its anti-human trafficking protocol, having been their signatory for more than a decade.

It would be misleading to conclude that Princess Pa

initiated and accomplished all the above tasks by herself. The crucial supporting roles of her staff who helped to propose agendas, draft speeches, and lobby for support should not be overlooked. But it would also be naïve not to acknowledge the

unique persuasive power that Princess Pa had over her counterparts, both domestic and foreign.

An inspiration for all

Princess Pa left Vienna and returned to the Thai Attorney General's Office in October 2014. She has since then taken on even more roles such as the UNODC Goodwill Ambassador for the Rule of Law in Southeast Asia, and carried on with her royal duties and personal passions. On reflection, I cannot help but think of Prince Wan Waithayakon – one of Thailand's greatest diplomats and Princess Pa's own first cousin thrice removed – who presided over the UN General Assembly in 1956. They are known for having a similar grace, compassion, and competence. But while Princess Pa has stepped off the path of a career diplomat for now, she has already cemented her place as a role model for the new generation of diplomats, and remains a symbol of empathy and justice and a source of inspiration for all.

Sun Thathong is a Thai lawyer-diplomat, currently serving as Counsellor at the Department of Treaties and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. He previously served as First Secretary at the Royal Thai Embassy and Permanent Mission of Thailand in Vienna (2018-2022).

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BANGLADESH'S READINESS FOR \$100B APPAREL EXPORT

-Abdullah Al Nayeem

In the emerging economy of Bangladesh, the Apparel industry is performing the key role which is unprecedented. Beside the remittance, RMG industry growth since 80's became blessing for this nation. According to the most recent study by HSBC global research, Bangladesh is set to make the highest jump in the ranks of world's economies in 2030, moving up from 42nd to 26th despite all the possible challenges. This research result aligns with the target & timeline set by BGMEA which is \$100 billion apparel export which will accommodate total 6 million jobs by 2030.

Experts believe, the current global crisis not only put Bangladesh in the face of challenges, it rather opens up numbers of opportunities as well. There are reconciliation of many "ifs and buts," such as ongoing geo-political crisis, uninterrupted supply chain, no long term global recession, government policy support, and free flow of energy and power. However, if this growth trend can be sustained by at least 15% annually, then this goal of \$100 billion can be reached even in the current state of the world economy. This development can be possible by taking some significant initiatives where all

stake holders should involve themselves proportionately.

From the government initiatives, undoubtedly the present government supports the industry which is remarkable than any past time and is continuing to set example during the pandemic time till now. While the entire competitor countries were struggling, Bangladesh is demonstrating resilience of the industry with more stability. This service across the global industry is branding itself with Bangladesh RMG industry as one of the sustainable investment destination. Government surely



Highlights of 2023 industry expansion

transparency are no longer an option. It is now mandatory and they want to focus more on the environment and sustainability.” To mention, BGMEA is working to implement a final roadmap by three separate research institutes regarding the \$100 billion target.

continues with the momentum as it is aligned with their political manifesto & vision too, which include the development of the country's infrastructure such as Padma Bridge, Matarbari deep seaport, 3rd terminal at the Hazrat Shahjalal international airport, Payra port, Dhaka-Chattogram 4-lane highway, Karnaphuli tunnel, Dhaka elevated expressway, BRT from Airport to Gazipur, Rampal power plant, Matarbari power plant, Metro rail, which have a direct impact on the further growth of the industry.

textiles, high-value products & exploration of new markets. Besides, productivity & efficiency increase needs to work out by total industry. Moreover, the country's backward linkage sector is self-sufficient now and is expanding along with new investments such as new \$3 billion from textile & \$600 million from garment factory investments will create 100,000 & 120,000 jobs respectively by 2023. Mr. Hasan also added that “circularity, recycling and

LEED-certified green factories-The transformation of our RMG sector have been well documented & there is massive improvement as per the numbers of research done by ILO, ACCORD, ALLIANCE & RSC. Bangladesh boasts over 190 LEED certified factories which is half of total in the entire world. Program like the Sustainable



In regards to BGMEA initiatives, this platform also represents factory entrepreneurs where Faruque Hassan (president of the BGMEA) has expressed his belief & strategy as the global market is growing at 5%-7% every year, so along with basic export items, they need to focus on man-made fibers, technical



SWOT of RMG industry

Apparel Forum (SAF) needs to arrange more & in 2023, 4th edition of SAF brings together clothing manufacturers, government officials and policy makers, professionals in green finance, human rights specialists, green production and technology experts, fashion sustainability and sourcing teams and NGOs working in fashion supply chains. The event will include a range of plenaries, seminars, green growth exhibitions and informal networking opportunities. Every year, Bangladesh's RMG sector continues to defy expectations and improve. It is also imperative that the relevant authorities do their best to engage with the buyers on fair pricing considering new minimum wage for workers, which also have been demanded. Bangladesh should no longer be thought of as the poster child for exploitative labor practices, shoddy factory and work conditions and overall poor quality of products. Yet, despite its obvious transformation, it is

disappointing that still international counterparts don't acknowledge it appropriately. However, it is heartening to hear Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union (EU) to Bangladesh Charles Whiteley applauding the green transformation of the readymade garment (RMG) sector of Bangladesh.

Responsible sourcing from buyers and retailers-

Despite global crisis, it's important to have the open communication in both ends to manage the situation in most ethical way. In partnership to sustain the business it's high time to get & give feedback through cooperation. In order to negotiate & communicate better with partners it's important for Bangladesh to develop the manpower through required educational program such as Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP) & skill development training as per international standard.

New ray of hope as shifting orders from China- Gradually, China is phasing out of the apparel industry and due to the trade war, western buyers & retailer are showing reluctance to place orders there. These orders are likely to be around 10% of total placement, which will surely help Bangladesh to sustain growth & this will continue considering the global geo politics.

Non-traditional market expansion- Bangladesh is also emphasizing increasing exports to Asia, South America, Oceania and other new markets. In July-February of fiscal year 2022-23, Bangladesh's apparel export to non-traditional market also grew by over 32% and reached over \$6 billion. Among the non-traditional markets, our export to the major markets such as Japan, Australia, India and South Korea were \$ 1.07billion, \$ 767.75 million, \$ 753.92 million and \$ 387.63 million. Some of the markets are very close to Bangladesh, which will help to



Photo Courtesy: 4th Sustainable Apparel Forum



Non-traditional market expansion

reduce lead time and freight costs will be less and the price will be competitive.

The future of AI in apparel industry- The recent significant implementation on Artificial Intelligence will have foreseeing impact on RMG industry as well in different aspects such as fashion manufacturing, 24/7 supply chain, inventory, inspection, warehouse management, fitting consistency. Especially AI is having a significant impact in the design process. With AI algorithms predicting trends and analyzing customer preferences, fashion businesses can create designs that are more likely to be popular with their target market and reduce the risk of producing designs that would be marked

down. This is particularly exciting, as it opens up new opportunities for businesses to create innovative and market-driven designs. AI is also changing the way fashion businesses market their products. With AI-powered marketing tools, businesses can analyze data to determine the best marketing strategies, target the right customers, and maximize the impact of their advertising. This not only saves time and money but also helps businesses get ahead of the competition by identifying new trends and emerging markets. This is an exciting development for the fashion industry, as it means businesses can now reach new customers and generate more sales. Beside these AI-powered wearable

devices becoming fashion trends. In future AI could result in smarter fabrics, clothes for sports and performance where clothes can be more reactive to the body to sense when the body is hot or sweating & need more airflow. However, despite these benefits there are also challenges to consider when it comes to AI in apparel such as effects on human workforce.

It is testament to each and every person involved with the sector that it continues to be the single most significant export sector for Bangladesh, accounting for over four fifths of the country's total exports & believe all the stake holders will participate to support the target of \$100 billion apparel export.

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NEWLY APPOINTED TURKISH AND FILIPINO AMBASSADORS PRESENT CREDENTIALS AND PAY HOMAGE TO BANGABANDHU AT MEMORIAL MUSEUM



On 21 March 2023, the newly appointed Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh, Ramis Sen, and the newly appointed Ambassador of the Philippines, Leo Tito El Asan Jr., presented their credentials to President Md. Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban. They were greeted by a smart contingent of the Presidential Guard Regiment upon their arrival in the afternoon. The Turkish Ambassador presented

his credentials first, followed by the Ambassador of the Philippines. After presenting their credentials, both ambassadors paid tribute to the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, by placing wreaths at his portrait in the memorial museum located at 32 (Old) Dhanmondi in the capital.

DIPLOMATIC CORPS PAY HOMAGE TO LIBERATION WAR MARTYRS BY PLACING FLOWER WREATH AT THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL, SAVAR ON 26 MARCH 2023, MARKING THE 53RD INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL DAY OF BANGLADESH.



On March 26, 2023, the diplomatic corps in Bangladesh paid their respects to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing flower wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar. This event marked the 53rd Independence and National Day of Bangladesh, which commemorates the country's declaration of independence from Pakistan on March 26, 1971.

The National Memorial in Savar is a significant landmark in Bangladesh as it serves as a tribute to the millions of people who sacrificed their lives for the independence of the country. It is a symbol of

national pride and serves as a reminder of the country's rich history and the sacrifices made by the martyrs to achieve independence.

The diplomatic corps, which includes ambassadors and representatives from various countries, participated in this event as a show of solidarity with Bangladesh and to pay their respects to the martyrs. The act of placing flower wreaths at the National Memorial is a common practice during the Independence and National Day of Bangladesh, which is a significant event for the country and its people.

Overall, the event was a solemn occasion that highlighted the importance of the Liberation War and the sacrifices made by the martyrs. It also showed the support and solidarity of the diplomatic community towards Bangladesh and its people.

BRUNEI ENVOY VISITED PATUAKHALI TO SEE THE PROGRESS OF AGRICULTURE.



The United Nations is promoting this success of Bangladesh in agriculture as an example for the world. This organization has brought Bangladesh among the top 11 food producing countries. In the fiscal year 2019-20, Bangladesh produced a record 3.89 million tonnes of rice in the country, surpassing Indonesia to become the third among the top 10 rice producing countries. Moreover, Bangladesh ranks second in jute production, third in vegetable production, third in fish production, seventh in mango production and seventh in potato production. H.E. Haji Haris bin Osman, High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam assigned to Bangladesh to see the unprecedented success in the field of agriculture, visited various agricultural farms in Patuakhali district on March 10, 2023. When he arrived at Patuakhali Circuit House in that morning, Deputy Commissioner Md. Shariful Islam, Md. Saidul Islam, Superintendent of Police Patuakhali, Mayor of Patuakhali Municipality Mohiuddin Ahmed welcomed, at this time the well-equipped team of the district police showed him a guard of honor, later in the afternoon he observed the cultivation method and production of improved varieties of watermelons in the land at Kalgachia of Galachipa upazila.

BELGIUM AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH MEETS WITH HON'BLE STATE MINISTER, DISCUSSES STRENGTHENING BILATERAL RELATIONS AND EXPLORING BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN AGRIBUSINESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE SECTORS



His Excellency Mr. Didier Vander Hasselt, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to Bangladesh with residence in New Delhi, called on Hon'ble State Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Md. Shahriar Alam, MP at the latter's office on 29th March 2023. The Hon'ble State Minister recalled with gratitude Belgium's recognition of Bangladesh as an independent state in February 1972 and expressed satisfaction at the ever-growing bilateral relations between the two friendly countries. He thanked the Belgian Ambassador for leading a regional trade mission to Bangladesh to explore business opportunities and sought Belgium's supports in developing agribusiness facilities in Bangladesh, particularly in storage, transport, and processing fields. Highly appreciating Bangladesh's rapid socio-economic growth, the Ambassador of Belgium touched upon the very fruitful visit of Her Majesty the Queen Mathilde of the Belgians to Bangladesh in February this year. He also observed that enormous trade and investment opportunities exist between the two countries, particularly in agribusiness, renewable energy, port and road transport infrastructure, dredging, logistics, water purification, etc. sectors. He briefed the Hon'ble State Minister about the very fruitful business seminar on 'Innovative Business Opportunities from Belgium' and B2B sessions between the visiting Belgian and local business delegations hosted last afternoon in a local hotel in Dhaka.

The two sides also discussed various other bilateral and international issues of mutual interest, including regular bilateral consultations, trade facilitation measures, consular cooperation, migration and mobility, Bangladesh-EU cooperation, Belgium's EU Presidency in 2024, cooperation on elections in different international fora, etc.

BANGLADESH AND ESTONIA SIGN MOU FOR BILATERAL POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS



On the 27th of March, Bangladesh and Estonia signed a Memorandum of Understanding for holding Bilateral Political Consultations. The MoU was signed by the Foreign Secretary (Senior Secretary) of Bangladesh, Masud Bin Momen and the Ambassador of Estonia to Bangladesh, H.E. Katrin Kivi. The signing of the MoU is a testament to the commitment of both countries to strengthen and enhance the ties and explore new avenues for cooperation.

The MoU on bilateral political consultation will enable both countries to regularly consult on matters of mutual interest, including political, economic, cultural, and ICT issues. This will not only strengthen the bilateral ties between the two countries but will also explore opportunities for trade and investment, share best practices in various fields and promote cultural exchanges between the peoples of Bangladesh and Estonia.

BRUNEI HIGH COMMISSIONER RECEIVED THE PRESTIGIOUS AWARD



Haji Haris bin Othman, the High Commissioner of Brunei to Bangladesh, has received the Best Diplomat's Award from ATN Bangla "Unnoyone Bangladesh program". The prestigious award is given to diplomats who have made significant

contributions to strengthening bilateral relations between Bangladesh and their respective countries. This is not the first time the award has been bestowed upon a foreign diplomat in Bangladesh. In 2021, the Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh received the same honor for his outstanding contributions to the promotion of economic cooperation and cultural exchange between the two countries. The award ceremony for Haji Haris bin Othman was held in Dhaka and attended by various dignitaries, including government officials and foreign diplomats. During the ceremony, the High Commissioner expressed his gratitude for the recognition and reaffirmed his commitment to further enhance the existing ties between Brunei and Bangladesh.

UK HIGH COMMISSIONER IN BANGLADESH H.E. ROBERT CHATTERTON DICKSON AND UK MINISTER FOR THE INDO-PACIFIC AT FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH & DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, ANNE-MARIE TREVELYAN, VISITED THE ROHINGYA REFUGEE CAMP



UK high commissioner in Bangladesh H.E. Robert Chatterton Dickson and UK Minister for the Indo-Pacific at Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, visited the fire-affected Rohingya refugee camp which caught massive fire on 5 March.

Within one week of the fire, IOM - UN Migration provided emergency shelter support services, water supply & other basic humanitarian support to more than 2,600 fire-affected families.

ASEAN MINI BAZAAR MAKES SPRING MERRIER IN GULSHAN 2



To uplift and highlight the spirit of spring in Dhaka, the ASEAN Dhaka Committee (ADC) and ASEAN Ladies Association (ALA) have organized “ASEAN Mini Bazaar” at the premises of the Embassy of Indonesia on Sunday, 19 March 2023 from 10.00 am – 04.00 pm. The event wishes to promote ASEAN’s culture and gastronomy to the public and diplomatic communities in Dhaka. Even as it enhances vibrant engagement amongst members of the diplomatic corps community, and in the families, most especially ASEAN countries accredited in Dhaka.

Several ASEAN embassies participated in the Bazaar, among others, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam, displaying and selling various signature goods, such as handicrafts, traditional clothes and fabrics, scarfs, and beauty products. Not only that, the Bazaar also offered delicious traditional cuisine from each country with very affordable prices, including the famous Indonesian coffee that was accessible for anyone because it was ‘Pay as You Like!’.

The event started at 10.30 am and opened with Mdm. Fahmina Zabeen as Chief of Guest, the President of the Foreign Officers Spouse Association (FOSA) of MOFA Bangladesh. The event also attended by Head of Missions (HoM) of ASEAN countries accredited to Dhaka, including the current chairman of the HoM ASEAN Dhaka Committee (ADC), His Excellency Mr. Leo Tito L. Ausan Jr., Ambassador of Philippine to Bangladesh.

Indonesian Ambassador to Bangladesh and Nepal, His Excellency Mr. Heru Hartanto Subolo and Mdm Sinta Ekawati Subolo as the host warmly welcomed and indulged around 300 visitors, who were gathered at the Lobby of the Indonesian Embassy which fittingly served as the Bazaar’s venue. Visitors of the bazaar enjoyed spring vibes, among others culture performances; dance of (tbc) by Indonesian dancers. The bazaar culminated with the beautiful and lively rendition of Poco-Poco and Maumere dancing together.

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