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DIPLOMATS

WORLD

The Only Diplomatic Magazine in Bangladesh

**Bangabandhu Tunnel: Driving Bangladesh's
Economic Renaissance**

Our Freedom-Fighter Diplomats

The Best Kept Secrets are Hidden in Plain Sight

Rooppur NPP: Safe and Stable





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Content



Bangabandhu Tunnel: Driving Bangladesh's Economic Renaissance

07



Our Freedom-Fighter Diplomats

12



The Best Kept Secrets are Hidden in Plain Sight

17



Rooppur NPP: Safe and Stable

22



Bangladesh-Kuwait Defense Cooperation

30



Navigating Challenges: Bangladesh's Response to the Current Global Situation

34



World Sight Day: Bangladesh Puts Eye Health on Spotlight at the UN

39



Sheikh Russel: Immortalized as an Undying Beacon of Hope, Inspiration & Legacy

44



Diplomats Flash Corner

48



Diplomat's world extends greetings to all its esteemed readers. The month of October has been an eventful month with a number of important national and international interests to readers.

This month President Putin joined the ceremony from Moscow through a video link with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina commissioning the Rooppur Nuclear power plant, making Bangladesh the 33rd Nation to join the nuclear club, a symbol of strong bilateral ties between Dhaka and Moscow. Bangladesh has established an independent Atomic Energy Regulatory Authority to ensure safety by maintaining close liaison with the IAEA.

Also this month, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated three mega projects, a world-class, third terminal of the Hazrat Shajalal International Airport Dhaka. The new Terminal will provide facilities for 37 aircrafts, 26 boarding bridges along with 115 check-in automated passport control. The Prime Minister also opened the Dhaka-Bhanga railway over Padma Bridge which is another milestone in the country's infrastructure development. The opening of the 82-kilometer railway track from Dhaka to Faridpur "Padma Bridge Rail Link Project", fulfills the long-cherished dream of the people of the country's southeastern district. Moreover, the commissioning of the 9.32 km Bangabandhu tunnel under the Karnaphuli river connecting two major towns, jointly financed by Bangladesh and China. A remarkable engineering feat that will increase trade between Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar.

This month an iconic film on the father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. "Mujib: Making of a Nation" was released throughout Bangladesh and India. It was well received by viewers all over Bangladesh and India, highlighting the liberation war and the victory of Bangladesh. The film was produced jointly by Bangladesh and India by acclaimed Indian film director Ahayam Benegal and renowned music director Shantanu Moitra.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina accompanied by Foreign Minister Dr. Abdul Momen visited Brussels later this month at the invitation of the European Commission President to attend the first Global Gateway Forum. This is the EU's response to mobilize funds for infrastructure projects in developing countries. During her stay, the Prime Minister met leaders and discussed matters of mutual interest. This will be a big support for Bangladesh's ongoing development projects. A loan support arrangement of 300 million Euros was signed for the renewable energy sector.

This issue of Diplomats encompasses a broad array of insightful features on critical national and international topics which will be of interest.

Shahed Akhtar

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



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BANGABANDHU TUNNEL: DRIVING BANGLADESH'S ECONOMIC RENAISSANCE

-Md. Abu Sadeq

On October 28, 2023, a historic moment unfolded in Bangladesh as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel (BSMRT), marking the launch of South Asia's first underwater expressway tunnel. This engineering marvel is set to usher in a new era in communication in Bangladesh, promising far-reaching impacts on the country's economy, connectivity, and industrial growth.

The Bangabandhu Tunnel, named in honor of Bangladesh's founding leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, is a remarkable infrastructure project situated at the mouth of the Karnaphuli River in Chattogram city. This 9.3-kilometer-long tunnel is a testament to modern

engineering and construction capabilities, representing the first large-diameter underwater tunnel undertaken by a Chinese company overseas. It was constructed under the stewardship of China Communications Construction Company (CCCC), setting new standards in tunnel engineering.

The project presented significant technical challenges, particularly concerning the complex geological structures surrounding the tunnel's location. To overcome these challenges, the project team adopted innovative solutions, including the use of the world's largest steel casing. This casing allowed specialized machinery to access the tunnel's interior, enabling the successful execution of the project. The Bangabandhu Tunnel was

designed to Chinese standards, constructed using Chinese equipment, and managed by Chinese enterprises, showcasing the culmination of China's expertise in tunnel construction overseas.

The significance of the Bangabandhu Tunnel extends beyond its engineering prowess. It is a pivotal component of the broader Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor and a key contributor to the Belt and Road Initiative. Its role in enhancing transportation conditions in Chattogram and driving economic development in Bangladesh cannot be overstated.

Beyond its engineering marvel, the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel holds the promise of unlocking



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel

Bangladesh's economic potential on a grand scale. The tunnel is expected to have a significant impact on several key economic sectors and further enhance the country's position in the region.

The tunnel seamlessly connects the Matarbari Deep Sea Port, Chattogram Port, Bay Terminal, and the Mirsarai Economic Zone. This strategic linkage of ports and economic zones has far-reaching implications. The Matarbari Deep Sea Port, currently under construction, and a seaport jetty at the Mirsharai economic zone area are set to be connected through the tunnel by 2025 and 2026,

respectively. As a result, thousands of factories on the north side of the tunnel have already attracted more investments. The under-construction Bay Terminal, situated next to the tunnel, is expected to open in 2025 and will handle as much goods as the Chattogram Port. The tunnel's contribution to streamlining port operations and reducing transportation costs is expected to have a profound impact on trade and commerce, both nationally and internationally.

The establishment of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib

Shilpa Nagar in Mirsharai, covering a vast expanse of 33,805 acres, is a significant development. This industrial zone, which is approximately 10 kilometers from the Dhaka-Chattogram highway and 65 kilometers from the port city, is set to be connected to the tunnel through a marine drive along the coast. This connection is expected to save both time and money, expediting industrialization in the area.

Data from the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) reveal that numerous companies have already leased land in this zone. These businesses have invested substantial amounts, creating jobs for tens of thousands of people. As more plots are allocated to investors in the zone, it is anticipated that full operations will result in the creation of over 1.5 million jobs. The economic growth associated with this industrial corridor will have a profound impact on the local and national economies.

The Bangabandhu Tunnel is not only a domestic game-changer but also a significant player in boosting international trade. The tunnel's role in improving the Asian Highway Network is expected to strengthen connectivity between Bangladesh and neighboring countries. It positions the country as a key player in the region's trade dynamics, facilitating the transit of goods not only within Bangladesh but also with India, Nepal, Myanmar, and beyond. Besides its economic significance, the tunnel is poised to boost tourism in the region. As connectivity improves, the scenic



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen also attended the inauguration ceremony of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel.



Bangabandhu Tunnel

beauty and cultural heritage of Southern Chattogram become more accessible to tourists. This development will have a positive impact on local businesses, employment, and overall regional development.

Experts stress the importance of the speedy implementation of the 230-kilometer marine drive project to maximize the tunnel's utilization. This project is considered crucial to unlock the full potential of the tunnel. Through the marine drive, the efficient use of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar, Matarbari Deep Sea Port, and the entire region from Mirsharai to Cox's Bazar is expected to develop as an economic corridor. While the tunnel's loan repayment is set to begin in 2025, it may not be possible to cover installments with its income alone in the initial years. The full benefits of the tunnel will be reaped when these industrial zones are fully operational.

The Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel is more than just an engineering marvel; it's a symbol of Bangladesh's vision for economic progress,

regional connectivity, and international trade. As it opens to the public, it represents a significant step toward transforming the nation's economic landscape and positioning Bangladesh as a key player in the region's economic development.

The tunnel is set to become a catalyst for industrial growth, particularly in Chattogram's southeastern region. By connecting key economic corridors on its two sides, such as the Dhaka-Chattogram and Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highways, it creates the foundation for what experts

describe as the country's largest industrial corridor, stretching from Mirsrai to Cox's Bazar. This growth is expected to attract local and foreign investments, leading to the establishment of numerous factories and industrial facilities in the region.

Prominent companies like Akij Group, Four H Group, Diamond Cement, S Alam Group, and Partex Group have already secured real estate for new factories, spanning various sectors, including power, petroleum, apparel, shipbuilding, fish processing, steel, cement, and oil refinery. The Unitex Group is investing in a chemical factory that will generate employment for 500 people. The Mostafa Hakim Group has launched a steel factory and an oxygen plant, employing around 2,000 workers. The tunnel's opening has led to a surge in interest from countries like Japan to invest in Chattogram, focusing on industries such as shipbuilding, chemicals, electronics, and furniture. This industrial growth is expected to boost local employment, trade, and overall economic prosperity.



The animated image shows the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel passing under the Karnaphuli River in Chattogram



The animated image shows the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel passing under the Karnaphuli River in Chattogram

The Bangabandhu Tunnel not only connects two regions of Bangladesh but also plays a crucial role in improving the Asian Highway Network and enhancing connectivity with neighboring countries. It facilitates seamless transit of goods between Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Myanmar. This improved connectivity is set to increase local and foreign investment in Chattogram, thereby driving trade and investments in the region. Moreover, it is expected to serve as a golden gateway for the country's industrialization.

The tunnel's impact extends to the real estate and housing sectors, as businesses and industries expand in Southern Chattogram. Approximately 100 companies have acquired real estate near the tunnel, with some already constructing factories

and others planning to embark on projects that will reshape South Chattogram. Multi-storied buildings and rental properties are becoming increasingly available, creating opportunities for the housing sector. CPDL, a housing sector company in Chattogram, is planning a satellite city under its subsidiary CPDL Neer, indicating a growing demand for housing in the region. Companies like the Albion Group are strategically positioning themselves to supply raw materials to industries in the South, further stimulating economic activities.

Business leaders and economists emphasize the need for the development of the Dhaka-Chattogram highway and high-load capacity roads. They recommend the construction of an eight-lane international-standard

Dhaka-Chattogram highway to fully realize the benefits of executed megaprojects like the Bangabandhu Tunnel. Cost-effective logistics and infrastructure projects are essential to maximize the tunnel's advantages, and experts recommend raising vehicle load limits to reduce logistics expenses. Stakeholders stress the importance of a comprehensive master plan for future urbanization in South Chattogram, covering Anwara and Karnaphuli upazilas. Such a master plan is deemed essential to maximize the impact of the new township in the South, which is expected to benefit from its proximity to the tunnel.

The Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel stands as a testament to modern engineering and international collaboration. It is set to play a pivotal role in transforming Chattogram into a logistics hub and driving economic growth across various sectors. With its potential to revolutionize the region's infrastructure, connectivity, and industrial landscape, this engineering marvel is indeed a beacon of progress for Bangladesh and a symbol of the country's commitment to economic development. As the tunnel opens to the public, it marks the beginning of a new era for Bangladesh's economic future.

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



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OUR FREEDOM-FIGHTER DIPLOMATS

-Syed Badrul Ahsan

It is time to recall the brave men who carried the torch for the future in 1971. Among those men who reassured us, despite all the uncertainty associated with a war we never sought but were burdened with by Pakistan, were K.M. Shehabuddin and Amjadul Haq. They were young, they were junior diplomats at the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi when the Pakistan occupation army launched its genocide in what was then East Pakistan. Neither they nor the seventy-five million people of Bangladesh knew at the time if



Freedom Fighter Diplomats (Top Right) A.H. Mahmood Ali, A.M.A. Muhit, M Hossain Ali and Syed Muazzam Ali

or when Bangladesh would become a free state. And yet Shehabuddin and Haq did the unimaginable: they repudiated Pakistan on 6 April 1971.

Go back in time. Your sense of history will inform you that when Shehabuddin and Haq revolted, the Mujibnagar government-in-exile had not yet taken shape. No one knew where Tajuddin Ahmad was at that point. There was simply no trace of Syed Nazrul Islam or Mansoor Ali or A.H.M Quamruzzaman. For that matter, the world did not know if Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had made his way out of Dhaka or had been abducted by the Pakistan army. At a time when reports of widespread atrocities in Bangladesh were filtering out to the outside world, it was quite possible that Bangabandhu was dead, at the hands of the Pakistan army.

Today, therefore, it is our moral responsibility to salute K.M. Shehabuddin and Amjadul Haq for the sheer bravery they demonstrated in early April 1971. Their act opened a window. They informed the world that Bangladesh, even as it waited for its sovereign parameters to take shape, was preparing to go on a diplomatic offensive. That battle was carried many miles further when Hossain Ali, Pakistan's deputy high commissioner in Calcutta, turned his back on Pakistan on 18 April, a day after the formation of the Mujibnagar government, and with 65 Bengali officers and employees of the

mission, switched allegiance to Bangladesh. Fifty-two years on, it is our singular pride to recall that seminal moment when Hossain Ali formally hoisted the Bangladesh flag in Calcutta and proceeded forth along the route set on 6 April by Shehabuddin and Amjadul Haq.

All these years after what was truly a momentous year for us, it is time to enlighten the young as it is time to remind those of our generation suffering from selective amnesia of the superhuman efforts expended by Bengali warriors on various fronts in highlighting the national struggle for freedom before the world. Bengali diplomats played a pivotal role in that struggle. You admire their sense of patriotism. More than that, you keep reminding yourself of the grave risks they put themselves and their families to by rejecting the state of Pakistan at a time when none of us was sure when freedom would dawn or if it



Freedom Fighter Diplomats (Top Right) K.M. Shehabuddin, Abu Rushd Matinuddin, Shah A.M.S Kibria and Mohiuddin Ahmed



A.S.A Muiz, friend of Diplomat Anwarul Karim Chowdhury received award in recognition of his indomitable courage to denounce genocide and strong commitment to democracy during our liberation War in 1971

would dawn at all. Their larger families were in the occupied land --- parents, siblings and others --- and could easily be put through horrible suffering by Pakistan's soldiers. Human frailties are natural. All too often, it is the probable consequences of our actions

which stay our hand. And we do not go forth into the region of the unknown.

But these brave Bengali diplomats plunged into the dark in their sheer belief that at the end of it all there surely was light somewhere. As Pakistan's



On behalf of Diplomat M Hossain Ali received award in recognition of his indomitable courage to denounce genocide and strong commitment to democracy during our liberation War in 1971

vice consul in New York, A.H. Mahmood Ali could have held himself back from going over to Bangladesh. He did not do that. On 25 April, he quit the Pakistan foreign service and allied himself with the Bangladesh cause. Do not forget that Ali, Shehabuddin, Haq and Hossain Ali were all young. Note too the idealism in them, the same that spurred A.M.A. Muhith, economic counsellor at Pakistan's embassy in Washington, into rebellion against Pakistan on 30 June. When men like Muhith spurned Pakistan, the world paid attention. And, yes, the world paid greater attention when, on 1 August, Mohiuddin Ahmed, then with the Pakistan high commission in London, delivered a riveting speech at Trafalgar Square to tell people around the world why Bangladesh was waging war to be free.

K.M. Shehabuddin, having performed well as Bangladesh's diplomat at various critical points on the globe, did a fine job of recording the history of our diplomatic struggle for freedom in 1971. If you have not gone through *There and Back Again: A Diplomat's Tale* (published by The University Press in 2006), it is time you did. For it speaks of the calculated dangers men like Abul Fateh, Pakistan's ambassador in Iraq, plunged into through their rejection of Pakistan. Fateh went over to Bangladesh on 21 August. Ten days earlier the Pakistani junta had placed Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on trial in camera before a military tribunal. M.M. Rezaul Karim, who would in January 1972 receive a free Bangabandhu in



Freedom Fighter Diplomats (Top Right) Enayet Karim, Amjadul Haq, Humayun Rashid Choudhury and Mustafizur Rahman

London, declared his solidarity with Bangladesh on 7 October.

One of the more momentous happenings in the fledgling country's diplomacy occurred on 4 August when Enayet Karim, Shah A.M.S. Kibria, Abu Rushd Matinuddin, Syed Muazzem Ali, Ataur Rahman Chowdhury, A.M. Sharful Alam and Sheikh Rustam Ali walked out of the Pakistan mission in Washington and joined the Bangladesh movement. S.A. Karim left Pakistan's UN mission and strode over to Bangladesh. On 14 September, K.K. Panni, ambassador to the Philippines, repudiated Pakistan. Pakistan's ambassador to Argentina, Abdul Momin, followed suit about a month later, on 11 October. On 3 October, Mustafizur Rahman deserted Pakistan's mission in Kathmandu; Humayun Rashid Chowdhury, based in Delhi, went over to the Bangladesh camp on 4 October. Waliur Rahman did so on 2 November.

These men blazed a trail . . . in all-encompassing darkness. ***

Syed Badrul Ahsan
Journalist , Author and Politics
and Diplomacy Analyst



INDONESIA CELEBRATES ITS 78TH INDEPENDENCE DAY IN DHAKA, STRENGTHENING TIES WITH BANGLADESH

The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Dhaka hosted a grand reception to celebrate its 78th Independence Day, with a focus on enhancing bilateral relations with Bangladesh. Ambassador Heru Hartanto Subolo emphasized the resilience and progress achieved during the 51 years of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Bangladesh. Notably, in a recent bilateral meeting between Presidents Joko Widodo and Mohammed Shahabuddin, the two nations agreed on concrete cooperation in the fields of Health, Energy, and Agriculture, signing three Memorandum of Understanding.

Guest of Honour H.E. Zahid Maleque, Minister of Health and Family Welfare of Bangladesh, expressed optimism about the bright prospects for cooperation, especially in healthcare sectors like setting up hospitals and vaccine manufacturing industries in Bangladesh. He applauded the Indonesian Embassy for arranging a colorful diplomatic reception.

During the event, Ambassador Heru presented H.E. Zahid Maleque with a special Indonesian traditional weapon, the "Keris," symbolizing hope for prosperity and glory. The reception also featured a delightful array of Indonesian traditional foods and live singing performances by Indonesian traditional dances.

In addition to the celebration, the Embassy organized an "Indonesian Products Showcase" to promote Indonesian export-oriented products, including consumables and miniature transport and military vehicles and equipment.





THE BEST KEPT SECRETS ARE HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

-Lord Marland

The Commonwealth, with its 56 member states and 2.5 billion citizens, plays host to some of the world's most dynamic emerging economies and is the source of a large chunk of the world's foreign direct investment.

Commonwealth member states enjoy 21% lower bilateral trading costs with one another – a quantitative benefit termed 'the Commonwealth Advantage' -, and already trade disproportionately more with one another. Despite all of this, the bloc is all-too-often overlooked by those too busy fixating on more traditional partnerships.

And this isn't just theory. The Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC), the organisation that I lead as Chairman, is putting these ideas into practice. CWEIC operates across the Commonwealth to strengthen trade and investment links between its fifty-six

member states. We work alongside 150 Strategic Partners in business and government to build connections and unlock investment opportunities.

The recent Commonwealth Trade and Investment Forum (CTIF), held this September in Dhaka,

showcased just how powerful the pull of the Commonwealth can be. Organised by CWEIC in partnership with the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, the Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the ZI Foundation, CTIF brought together more than 300 delegates from 30 Commonwealth countries for two days of meetings, panels, and networking. I also want



The Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the Commonwealth Trade & Investment Forum Bangladesh 2023, outlining Bangladesh's vision for economic growth and collaboration.



Sheikh Hasina, the Honourable Prime Minister, leads the discussion on expanding trade and investment horizons at the Commonwealth Trade & Investment Forum Bangladesh 2023

to pay particular thanks to Mr Zillur Hussain MBE, whose support in putting CTIF together was invaluable.

The proceedings were formally opened by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who highlighted her commitment to the Commonwealth, emphasising the need for greater investment to accelerate the country's economic progress.

Bangladesh is a fantastic example of the Commonwealth's potential – with an average growth rate of 6.4% over the past five years, it is projected to be one of the world's largest exporters in the decades to come and is on track to become a \$1 trillion economy by 2040.

Through its membership of the Commonwealth, Bangladesh can open up new markets for its garments in fast-growing Africa, while seeking investment from trusted partners like Britain, Singapore, and India.

I was also particularly delighted to receive such strong support from Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, who hosted a roundtable meeting with a delegation of African business leaders and ministers. This was not just a fantastic opportunity to highlight the potential for closer ties between Bangladesh and Africa; it was also an example of how the Commonwealth can draw together broad, diverse groups of

states with more in common than they might at first assume.

However, it wasn't just about forging new connections and showcasing the progress of one of the Commonwealth's most impressive economies; the Commonwealth business community is also key to facing up to the challenge of climate change, which is at the top of the agenda for many of the Commonwealth's vulnerable member states.

During the opening ceremony, we saw the presentation of the 'Commonwealth-Bangladesh Bangabandhu Green Investment Award', which rewards sustainable and environmentally friendly investments. The winner, Eco Brixs, based in Uganda, is just one example of how private sector innovation can help us to meet the challenge of transitioning towards a more sustainable economy.

The Forum also coincided with the launch of our new Hub Office



Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, M.P., the Honorable Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, highlights the country's diplomatic efforts to promote trade and investment in the forum



Salman Fazlur Rahman, Private Industry and Investment Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, presents strategies for boosting private sector engagement and investments in Bangladesh

in Dhaka, which we inaugurated with Salman F Rahman, the Prime Minister's Advisor for Private Industry and Investment. The launch of our Bangladesh Hub follows on from the launch of two new Hubs early this year, in Singapore and Cameroon, marking an expansion in our network of in-country Hubs which allow us to communicate so effectively with partners on the ground.

The work doesn't stop there. In November, CWEIC will host the Commonwealth Trade and Investment Summit in London, bringing together Heads of Government, senior Ministers and international business leaders from across our network for a two-day conference. The 2023 Summit programme will focus on the key economic challenges and opportunities facing the Commonwealth this year and identify areas in which the Commonwealth can help finance emerging markets, engage in sustainable business practices, and strengthen collaboration between the public and private sector.

Next year, we will host the biannual Commonwealth Business Forum in Samoa, which will run alongside the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. Following on from the success of CBF 2022 in Kigali, the Forum is the high-point of our calendar, and will serve as the ultimate rallying-point for the Commonwealth business community. With climate change no doubt high on the agenda, particularly given that

this year's CHOGM will take place in a small island state, we'll no doubt be focusing on the role that the private sector can play in a changing global landscape.

These two landmark events, alongside a busy calendar of missions, visits, and forums, are living proof of global interest in the Commonwealth's potential.

The lesson here is twofold. First, countries – including Britain – should look to the Commonwealth as a platform for trade and investment, which will only grow in importance in the years to come. Partners like Bangladesh, long overlooked, are due for reconsideration.

Second, those looking to define the Commonwealth's modern purpose need look no further. Much ink has been spilled about what now unites the Commonwealth, but CWEIC's example – already working in practice – shows that the tradition of free enterprise is a



Lord Marland, Chairman of the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC), shares his insights on enhancing trade and investment opportunities at the forum



Distinguished panelists engage in vibrant discussions at the Commonwealth Trade & Investment Forum Bangladesh 2023, shaping the future of economic cooperation

powerful binding agent for this expansive bloc.

As the emerging economies of Africa and Asia continue to grow in importance, membership of the Commonwealth will only become more valuable. Already, countries are queuing up to join, with two new members admitted as recently as 2022 – they see membership of the Commonwealth as a way to access the Anglophone world of commerce and investment,

opening up new markets in all manner of places. They also recognise that in a world of rising protectionism, the Commonwealth is one of the only blocs which still recognises the value of grassroots economic development through trade, commerce, and investment.

Seizing on these opportunities now, laying the groundwork for a diverse and growing range of partners, could be a boon for

cash-strapped Britain. It can also provide an additional boost to the rapid development of emerging economies, opening up new markets and enabling them to forge new partnerships.

The question is not whether the Commonwealth will grow in importance in the years to come, but whether politicians and officials can keep up with the work that the private sector is already doing to supercharge this great global network.

Lord Marland
Chairman

Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council (CWEIC)



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ROOPPUR NPP: SAFE AND STABLE

-H.E. Mr Alexander Mantytskiy

It is no secret that Rooppur NPP is the epitome of the friendly relations between Russia and Bangladesh. Our ties are deeply rooted in history. Russia (then the Soviet Union) became one of the first countries to recognize Bangladesh as an independent country. Since then our states have always maintained good and trusted relations as a secure foundation for further cooperation – including that in the nuclear field.

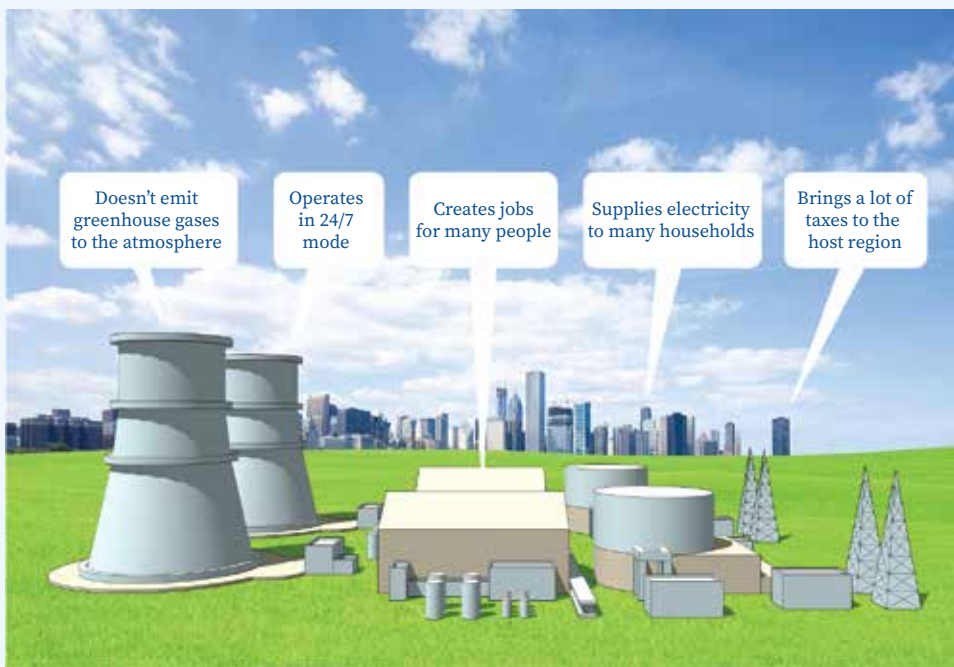
In order to create its own nuclear industry, it was necessary for Bangladesh to find a partner with vast

knowledge, practical knowhow and proven expertise in the field. There were other important issues like financial arrangements, selecting a fitting and safe technology, skilled manpower training, management of radioactive waste and spent fuel. Russia eagerly extended its friendly hand and offered Bangladesh a well-balanced and comprehensive solution.

Eventually, this cooperation came to fruition. Within only seven years since the start of construction works, a truly outstanding progress in the nuclear sphere has been made.

As stated by the Rosatom State Corporation Director General Alexey Likhachev during his recent visit to Bangladesh, “the construction works on the first unit of Rooppur NPP are almost over, so we expect the unit to start pilot operation by the next year’s end. The work on the second unit is in full swing too – concrete works on the inner containment dome are finished, main circular pipeline has been welded ahead of schedule”.

Safety has always been our utmost priority, right down the line. The flagship VVER-1200 reactors will stand in the heart of Rooppur NPP power units.



The Benefits of a Nuclear Power Plant

These reactors have proved their efficiency and reliability during operation at the reference Russian power plants. Today five such reactors are in place – four of them in Russia and one in the Republic of Belarus. Active construction of such reactors is also underway in Hungary, Egypt, Türkiye, China and, of course, Bangladesh.

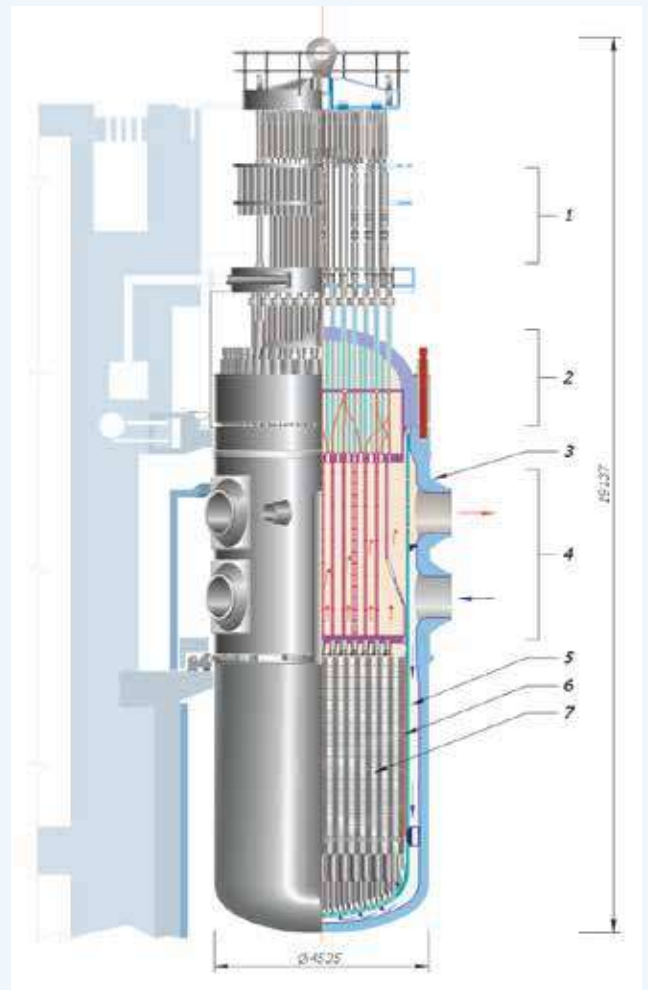
VVER-1200 are generation III+ reactors, which comply with the latest post-Fukushima safety norms. That means, they have active and passive protection systems, which make NPP proof against both external and internal impacts. All modern Russian nuclear VVER-type reactors have the dome system (which is called containment) for the protection against extreme stress. Containment consists of an external wall of reinforced concrete and an internal protection dome – the latter ensures air-tightness and can endure the outside pressure caused by a 30 kPa explosion. In

order to withstand it the containment is constructed with the use of a special ‘pre-tensioned concrete’ – the metal rods are tightly strained inside the concrete cover so that the structure is more stable during earthquakes, for example.

One of the special technical protection feature of such type of reactors is a molten core catcher (or simply a ‘core catcher’). This device is a 144-ton metal bell-shaped container, which in case of emergency keeps the molten core inside and does not let it go beyond the leak-proof walls of the reactor building. The core catcher is filled with special material that

helps the molten core lose some of the accumulated heat. The chemical processes emerging during such interaction create the conditions for the corium to stay and cool down. The device exhibits supreme safety features, e.g. the increased earthquake, hydrodynamic and crashworthy resistance.

All in all, one of the remarkable features of the modern VVER-type reactors is a truly unique safety system – a storage pool for spent nuclear fuel inside the leak-proof containment, filters on the exit areas of the inter-containment ventilated space, the molten core catcher and the unrivaled heat removal system. All these technical solutions allow us to consider the



Reactor VVER-1200 of Russian Design

VVER-1200 as the reactors of III+ generation.

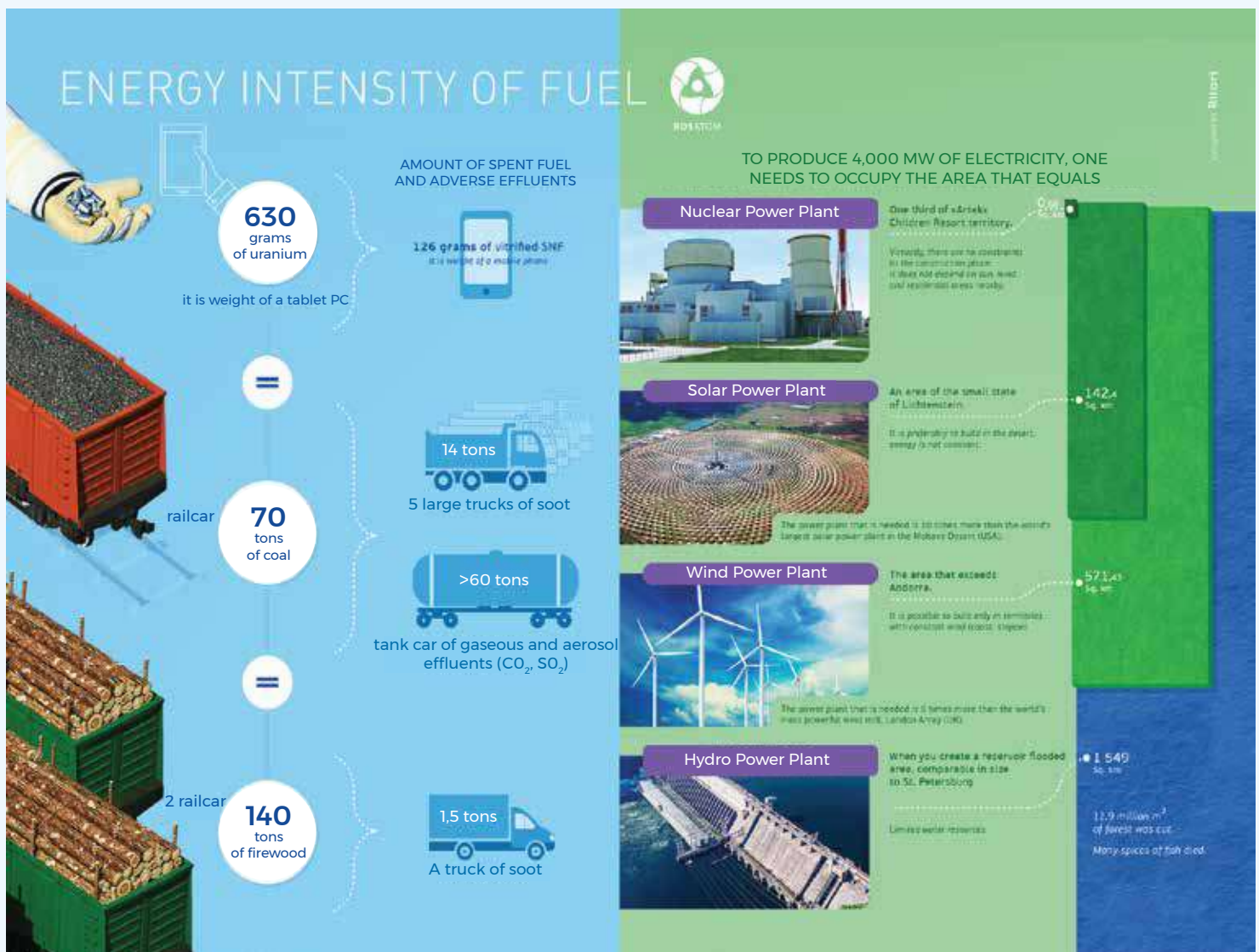
In this context, it is noteworthy that the nuclear fuel for VVER-type reactors has its own safety system. In fact, it literally is the safety system in itself. Each uranium pellet is made of enriched uranium cooked in a special high temperature kiln – as a result, the pellet receives a protective ceramic cover. After that, all pellets are packed in airtight zirconium rods, which serve as the second layer of protection. Then all the rods are organized into fuel assemblies and placed inside the reactor – the third protective layer.

This exact type of fuel was delivered to the first nuclear power plant in Bangladesh on October 5, 2023. The solemn Graduation Ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President Vladimir Putin, Minister Yeafesh Osman and Rosatom Director General Aleksei Likhachev. The dream of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was coming true right before their eyes.

Media scarcely mentioned the fact that this particular batch of fuel for Rooppur NPP is a modernized one. Its lifespan has been increased from 12 up to 18

months, which is definitely going to contribute to the energy security of Bangladesh. Thus, it can be called a double achievement.

Moreover, around 1000 Bangladeshi specialists have been trained in Rosatom Technical Academy or other higher educational institutions and now are ready to start operating at the Rooppur NPP. As the Russian President noted during his speech at the Graduation Ceremony, “Russia is not merely building an NPP, we are supporting Bangladesh in establishing a brand new sector of economy”. Rooppur NPP helps



Energy Intensity of the Fuel Used in VVER-type Reactors



Russian Cargo Aircraft Carrying Fuel Assemblies for the Rooppur NPP



Aleksei Likhachev and Yeafesh Osman Officially Marking the Moment of Bangladesh Becoming a Nuclear Country

to create thousands of workplaces for local people, dozens of Bangladeshi companies provide their services and materials for the construction works – apart from the electricity itself. According to Minister Yeafesh Osman, Rooppur NPP will become an impetus for the growth of the Northern regions increasing country's GDP at 2%. As we can see, the Rooppur NPP is going to provide safety and security in many ways.

All in all, in spite of the increased geopolitical instability, Russia is committed to further cooperation with Bangladesh in the field of peaceful atom. Keeping in mind the ongoing energy crisis, the atomic energy is a sustainable solution for Bangladesh, and Russia is ready to provide the full spectrum of nuclear technologies. Constructive cooperation between our two countries undoubtedly meets the interests of people in Russia and Bangladesh and contributes to regional stability and security. It is evident that the Rooppur NPP Project will ensure a brighter – and safer – future of the Bangladeshi people.

H.E. Mr Alexander Mantytskiy
Ambassador
Russia to Bangladesh

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PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN'S MESSAGE ON 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

At the National Day Reception, Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh H.E. Ramis Şen read out the message of H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye, issued on the occasion of 29 October Republic Day.

President Erdoğan expressed gratitude for the nation's heroes and 2,200-year-old state tradition. President Erdoğan highlighted the achievements of the past 22 years, strengthening democracy, investing in various fields, and ensuring the unity of the people and the Republic. He emphasized Türkiye's role as the protector of the helpless worldwide and their determination to realize the Century of Türkiye.





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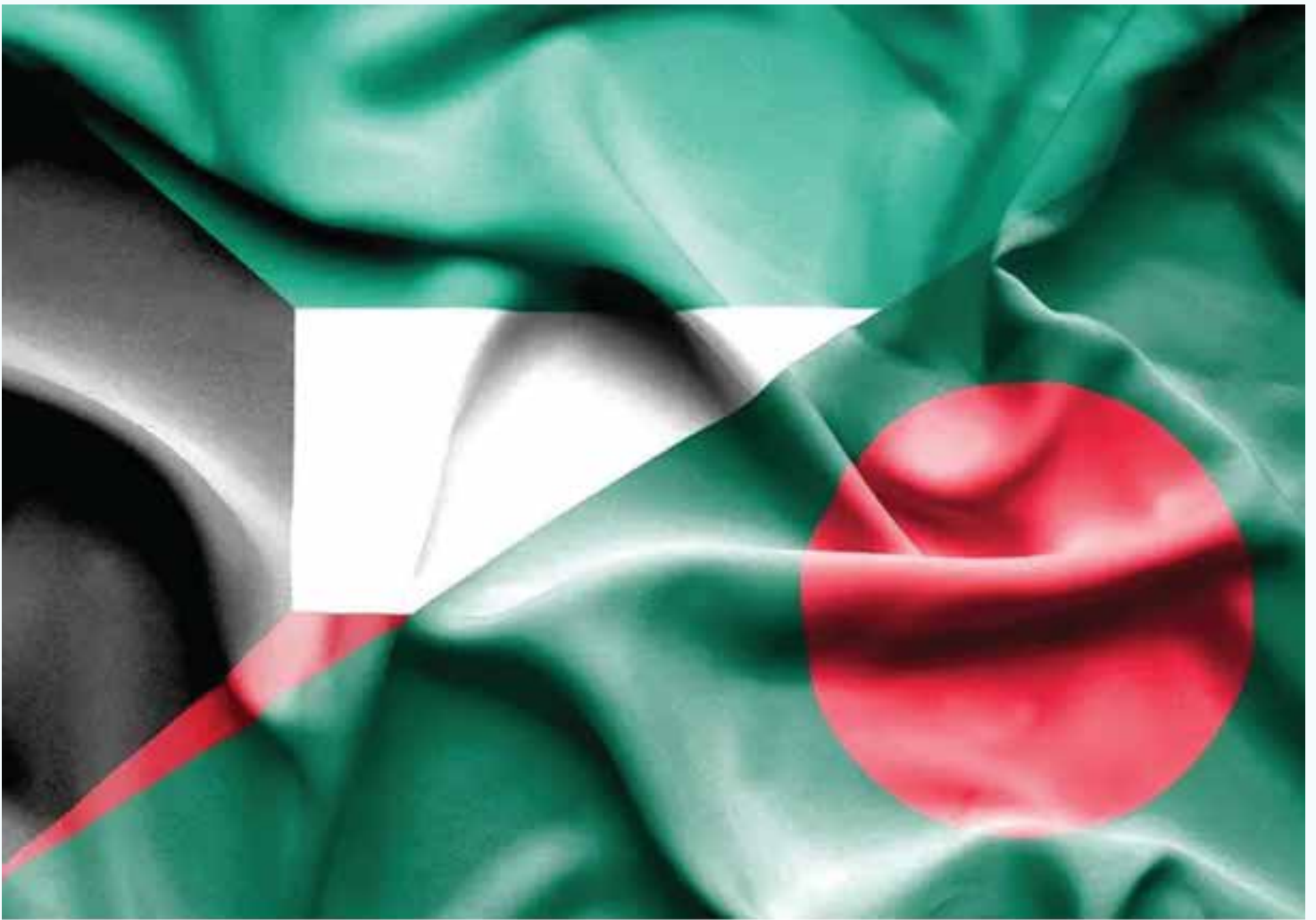
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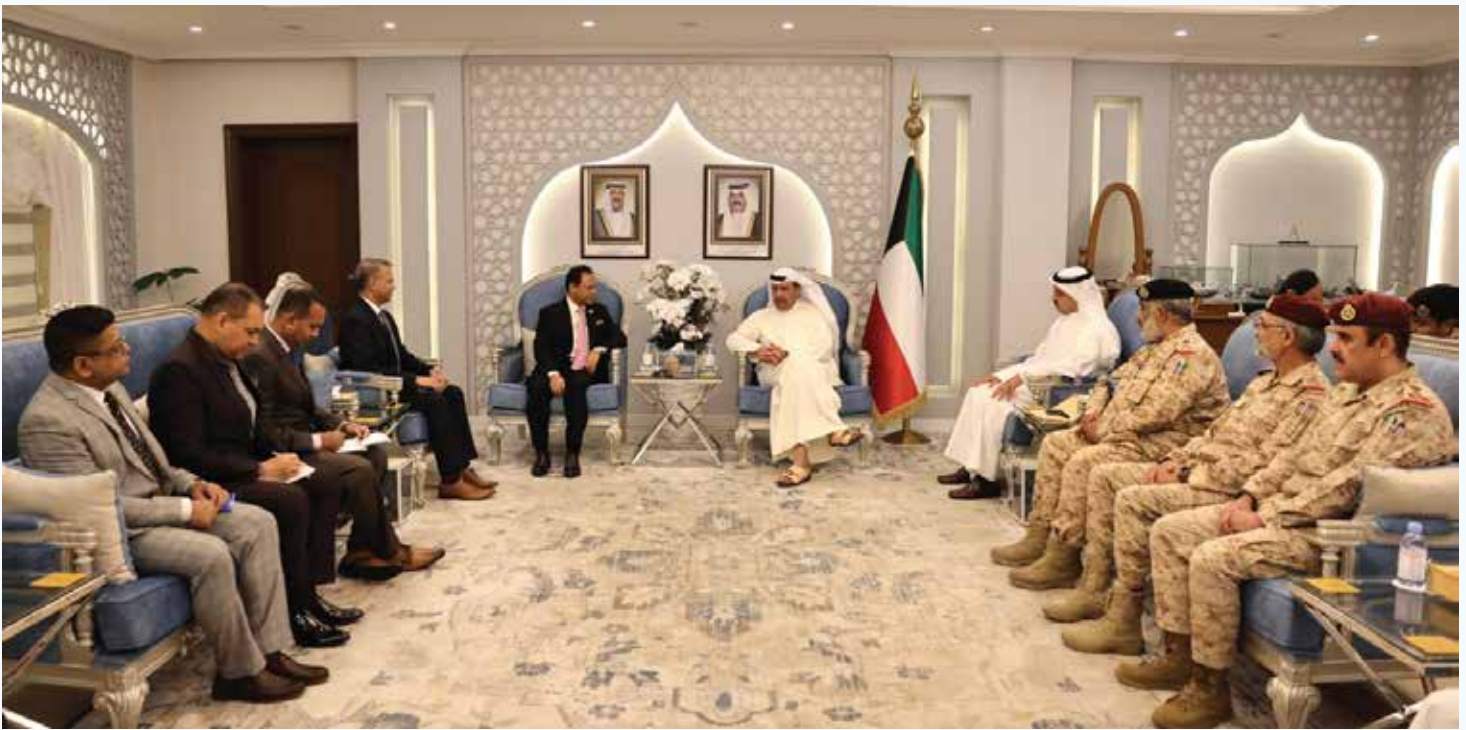


BANGLADESH-KUWAIT DEFENSE COOPERATION

-Brigadier General Md Hasan Uz Zaman

The People and Government of Bangladesh will remain ever grateful to Kuwait for being the first gulf country to recognize Bangladesh in 1973 after the independence of Bangladesh in 1971. Both the country established diplomatic relation in 1974. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, with the passage of time relation between the two friendly countries has reached to a new height with the visionary leadership of both the country.

Bangladesh sincerely acknowledges the immense contribution of the state of Kuwait in nation building efforts through different bilateral



Chief of Army Staff, Bangladesh Army General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed is seen with Defence Minister H.E Sheikh Ahmed Fahad during his visit to Kuwait

relation and in particular by hosting large number of Bangladeshi expats and financial support through Kuwait Fund. Bangladesh as a trusted friend, stood firm in the need of time. Bangladesh joined in Coalition Force against the invasion by Iraq in 1990. Since 1991 till to date, Bangladesh Armed Forces in collaboration of Kuwait Armed Forces have been actively engaged in “Operation Kuwait Punorgothon” (OKP).

To save lives and properties of brotherly Kuwaiti people, members of Bangladesh Army made sincere and extensive search-clearance-demolition operations against the menace of vastly and densely scattered mines and explosives from Kuwaiti soil. Presently, being divided in 11 contingents, skilled personnel of Bangladesh Armed Forces had been providing technical and vocational expertise in the fields of

engineering, medical, communication, security, administration etc to rebuild Kuwait for the past 32 years.

So far 96 Bangladesh Armed Forces personnel sacrificed their lives while serving in Kuwait. Bangladesh Army supported friendly country Kuwait to fight against deadly

pandemic COVID-19 by sending a medical team comprising 30 Doctors and 70 ICU Assistants who played admirable role in controlling the COVID -19 situation in Kuwait for 10 months. Bangladesh gracefully appreciates friendly country Kuwait specially His Highness Amir, His Highness Crown Prince and His Excellency



Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas, with the Chief of Army Staff of Bangladesh Army and his delegation



Chief of Army Staff, Bangladesh Army is seen in discussions with the Acting Chief of General Staff, Kuwait Armed Forces

Defense Ministers for hosting Bangladeshi contingent for more than three decades.

The time-tested relation between the Armed Forces is very special and unique in nature. To strengthen existing military

relation, on the invitation of Acting Chief of General Staff of Kuwait Armed Forces, Chief of Army Staff (CAS) of Bangladesh Army, General S M Shafiuddin Ahmed, SBP (BAR), OSP, ndu, psc, PhD visited Kuwait from 31 July to 03 August 2023. Recent

visit of CAS, Bangladesh Army has opened new areas of defense cooperation to boost up existing defense engagements. General Shafi met with Defense Minister, Acting Chief of General Staff and high officials of Ministry of Defense (MOD), Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Kuwait National Guard (KNG). During the meetings, all of them have shown keen interest to employ more skilled manpower in near future. Consequently, two Kuwaiti delegation comprising members from MOD and Kuwait Armed Forces already visited Bangladesh in August and September. Another high-level delegation from MOI scheduled to visit in last week of November 2023.

The Delegation will visit few factories under Bangladesh



Chief of Army Staff, Bangladesh Army met with Assistant Undersecretary General, Ministry of Defence, Kuwait

Armed Forces to explore future cooperation. Along with Minister, Senior officers of MOD, MOI and KNG have been invited to visit Bangladesh. The visit of KNG is likely to be held in near future. On the other hand, a team from Defense Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC), Bangladesh has visited Kuwait in September 2023 as a part of their Overseas Study Tour. KNG and Bangladesh Army is likely to engage in cooperation in the fields of training, exercise and

exchange of experts. Both the Armed Forces are also actively considering to open new arenas of cooperation in logistic field.

The recent visit of CAS, Bangladesh Army to Kuwait was very successful and mutually beneficial for both sides. Kuwait recognizes professional attitudes of Bangladesh Armed Forces personnel for their dedication, hard work, courage, brilliance and skill. The defense cooperation between

Bangladesh and Kuwait has got a further momentum with this visit and more avenues has opened up. Contribution and excellent efforts of BMC will continue to make rewarding relation between the two countries. Government of Bangladesh is committed to further strengthening bilateral relations in defence sector in future with brotherly and friendly country, the state of Kuwait.

Brigadier General Md Hasan Uz Zaman, ndu, afwc, psc, MPhil
Defence Attaché (DA)
Bangladesh Embassy in Kuwait



NAVIGATING CHALLENGES: BANGLADESH'S RESPONSE TO THE CURRENT GLOBAL SITUATION

-AKM Sayedad Hossain

In a world marked by constant change and global upheaval, Bangladesh stands at a pivotal juncture in its diplomatic history. With the task of representing a nation often known for its resilience and dynamism, the diplomats of Bangladesh are faced with a unique set of challenges that require innovative solutions. Diplomats World Magazine, the only diplomatic magazine in Bangladesh, took a momentous step to delve into this subject by hosting a seminar titled "Navigating Challenges: Bangladesh's Response to the Current Global Situation" on the 29th of October 2023. This event served as a platform for the exchange of ideas and insights, shedding light on how the country is tackling the evolving global landscape.

The core concept of Diplomats World Magazine revolves around the promotion and branding of Bangladesh, both at home and

abroad, through the lens of foreign diplomats, foreign nationals, and expatriates. The magazine's founding editor, Emeritus Professor, and Honorable Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the diplomatic arena. Notably, Dr. Momen has also served as the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations for seven years, further enhancing his credibility as a leading voice in international affairs.

In light of the magazine's dedication to advancing Bangladesh's interests on the world stage, the seminar served as a fitting platform for an in-depth exploration of the nation's response to the ongoing global situation. Bangladesh's diplomatic community and stakeholders came together to discuss the challenges,

strategies, and opportunities in a rapidly evolving international landscape.

This article delves into the key takeaways from the seminar and examine how Bangladesh, under the guidance of Dr. Momen and its diplomatic corps, is navigating the complexities of the current global scenario. It will shed light on the nation's proactive approach, its diplomatic endeavors, and its vision for a stronger, more influential role on the global stage. As the world grapples with a multitude of issues, from the ongoing pandemic to climate change and economic fluctuations, Bangladesh's response offers valuable insights for nations worldwide, making it a significant subject of international interest.

The world is a stage in constant flux, where nations must deftly navigate an ever-changing geopolitical landscape. At this



Former State Minister Abul Hasan Chowdhury eloquently shares Bangladesh's strategic response to global challenges at the seminar, 'Navigating Challenges: Bangladesh's Response to the Current Global Situation'



Lt Gen Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman contributes his valuable perspectives on Bangladesh's response to global challenges, emphasizing national security and resilience



Dr. Mohammed Faruque, Advisor of Diplomats addressed the audience



Ambassador Shahed Akhtar, the Editor of Diplomats, moderates the discussion on Bangladesh's role in tackling the current global situation

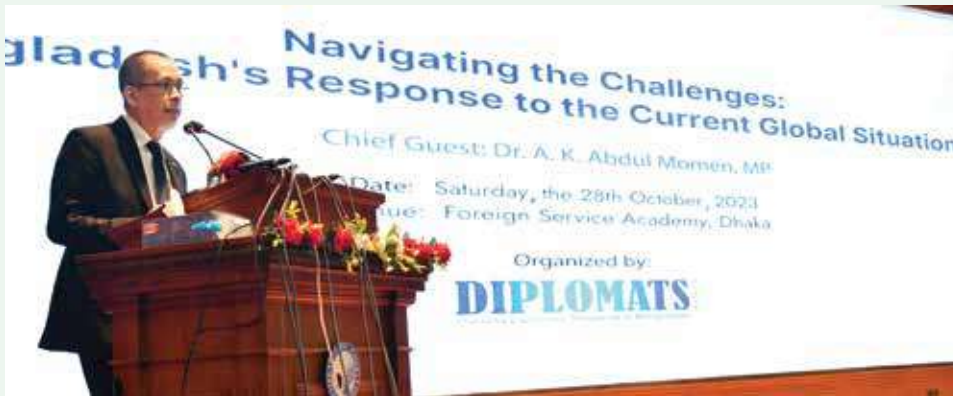
crucial juncture in history, Bangladesh, renowned for its resilience and dynamism, finds itself confronted with a unique set of challenges that demand innovative solutions. To shed light on how Bangladesh is addressing these challenges and to facilitate an exchange of ideas, Diplomats World Magazine, the only diplomatic magazine in the country, recently hosted a seminar titled "Navigating Challenges: Bangladesh's Response to the Current Global Situation." The event, held on the 29th of October 2023, brought together an array of distinguished speakers, diplomats, and foreign policy experts.

The seminar served as a significant platform for an in-depth exploration of Bangladesh's response to the challenges posed by the evolving global landscape. Distinguished figures, including former State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea H.E. PARK Young Sik, Brunei High Commissioner to Bangladesh H.E. Haji Haris bin Haji Othman, High Commission of the Republic of Singapore - Bangladesh Charge d'Affaires and Counsellor Ms Sheela Pillai, Editor of Diplomats Ambassador Shahed Akhtar, and Lt Gen Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman, among others, shared their insights and expertise.

As the Chief Guest of the seminar, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen addressed the audience, expressing his views on the current state of international affairs. He touched on the use of democracy and human rights as tools by certain powerful countries to exert pressure on



Ambassador PARK Young Sik from the Republic of Korea offers insights on international cooperation in the face of global issues at the seminar



High Commissioner Haji Haris bin Haji Othman of Brunei discusses Bangladesh's resilient stance in turbulent times during the seminar

nations to further their narrow national interests. This selective approach, he noted, has contributed to eroding trust and solidarity among nations, creating one of the most critical crises of our time.

Foreign Minister Momen emphasized that, while Bangladesh values freedom of the media and free speech, it refrains from taking action against propaganda machines, as it believes in the wisdom and discernment of its people.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has raised pertinent concerns at a seminar without explicitly naming any countries. He decried the exploitation of democracy and human rights as tools to advance narrow national interests by powerful nations. He

emphasized the erosion of trust and solidarity among nations due to this selective approach. Notably, certain Bangladeshis living abroad, sometimes supported by external groups, have played a role in propagating this agenda.

Momen applauded Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for setting a robust example of Bangladesh's commitment to democracy and human rights. Under her leadership, successive governments have ended impunity, strengthened democratic institutions, combated terrorism and extremism, and prioritized the well-being of the people.

He highlighted the Election Commission's ongoing efforts to ensure the credibility and

efficiency of elections, including measures such as photo-based voter ID cards and transparent ballot boxes.

Momen stressed Bangladesh's commitment to its foreign policy principles and the importance of strengthening capacity to address global economic concerns and achieve its development goals, including becoming a developed nation by 2041.

The Foreign Minister also addressed the pressing issue of repatriating Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs). He underscored Bangladesh's significant role as a first responder, providing temporary shelter and essential humanitarian support to Rohingyas. However, with the cost increasing and international assistance decreasing, Bangladesh seeks a sustainable solution to repatriate these displaced individuals to prevent potential security risks and regional instability.

Momen called upon the international community to share the responsibility for resolving this crisis and easing the burden on Bangladesh, emphasizing the need for equitable global solidarity and support in meeting humanitarian and accountability challenges.

The Minister highlighted the commitment of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to promoting democracy and human rights, asserting that successive governments have ended the culture of impunity,



Ms. Sheela Pillai, the Charge d'Affaires and Counsellor from the High Commission of the Republic of Singapore, highlights collaborative efforts in the seminar addressing global challenges



Distinguished panelists engage in vibrant discussions at the Commonwealth Trade & Investment Forum Bangladesh 2023, shaping the future of economic cooperation

strengthened democratic institutions, and ensured economic and social well-being for the people.

In his insightful speech, Lt Gen Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman, a retired military professional, delved into a range of global conflict situations and their security

implications. He highlighted key areas of tension, including the Ukraine-Russia conflict, the Israel-Palestine issue in the volatile Middle East, and geopolitical dynamics in the South China Sea. He also examined the rise of militant groups and power rivalries involving countries like NATO, Russia, China, and Iran.

The speech underscored the limits of autonomy for small states in geopolitics and offered valuable lessons. It warned against taking significant risks based on promises from larger powers and suggested that small states could engage in "militant diplomacy" to balance competing interests. It also emphasized the importance of developing a cohesive society, strong institutions, good governance, and a culture of accountability. Furthermore, Lt Gen Rahman stressed the significance of building a credible deterrence force to navigate through global and regional challenges effectively. Small states, including Bangladesh, can influence the choices of hegemonic powers by bolstering these aspects of their national strength.

In a world marked by complexity and challenges, the seminar provided a platform for Bangladesh to express its diplomatic resolve and commitment to navigate these challenges while upholding its principles of democracy and human rights. As the nation stands at this pivotal juncture in history, its response to the ever-shifting global landscape holds valuable lessons for countries worldwide, making it a subject of international interest.

AKM Sayedad Hossain
Associate Editor
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WORLD SIGHT DAY: BANGLADESH PUTS EYE HEALTH ON SPOTLIGHT AT THE UN

-Dr. M. Monwar Hossain, PhD

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) serves as an ideal platform for discussing and addressing global challenges, from poverty and climate change to sustainable development. However, in recent years, it has emerged as a crucial platform for addressing global health issues and advocating meaningful action.

Lately, Bangladesh has leveraged its position at the UN to draw attention to the importance of public health issues. Among these, eye health gained prominence, with Bangladesh

taking a leadership role in drawing international attention to this critical matter.

Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the UN in New York has been co-leading the agenda on eye health with the Missions of Antigua and Barbuda and Ireland since 2018. It has actively participated in discussions on universal health coverage and sustainable development, emphasizing the critical role of eye health in achieving these goals.

Bangladesh's representatives have not only highlighted the progress made within the

country but have also called for greater international cooperation to tackle eye health challenges on a global scale.

In a significant move, Bangladesh facilitated the first-ever resolution on eye health at the UNGA titled, 'Vision for Everyone: Accelerating Action to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals' which was adopted unanimously on 23 July 2021 with co-sponsoring by 115 countries.

The significance of eye health
Eye health is a fundamental component of overall well-being



Bangladesh Puts eye health on spotlight after UN

and socioeconomic development. Vision impairment is a universal challenge that most people will experience in their lifetime. Avoidable vision impairment or blindness can be both a cause and a consequence of entrenched inequalities. Impaired vision can limit access to education, employment, and economic opportunities, perpetuating cycles of poverty in many regions of the world. More than 2 billion

people around the globe are either suffering from blindness or lower vision and 1.1 billion people have vision impairment that are avoidable through cost-effective treatment and prevention. Unfortunately, 90% of them live in low-income settings where access to quality eye care is scarce.

World Sight Day is a stark reminder of the importance of

eye care. This year's theme- Love Your Eyes at Work- focuses on the importance of eye care at workplaces. The hope is that the awareness activities on this day will empower the workforce by enabling them to understand their health rights, as well as educating employers, governments and other stakeholders worldwide about the importance of sight.

Bangladesh's commitment to eye health

Avoidable blindness is one of the major public health problems in Bangladesh too. About 1% of people aged over 40 years are blind and millions more are suffering from refractive errors and low vision. Among them, 80% are cataract victims which is avoidable and treatable through simple and cost-effective surgical intervention.

Bangladesh has long been at the forefront of addressing eye



Patient eye examining by the Doctor

YOUR EYES AT WORK

health challenges. It launched the national program for the prevention of visual impairment and blindness in 1980. A nationwide program was undertaken involving GO-NGO-private partnership for the prevention and control of blindness with special emphasis given for the control of childhood blindness. Later, as a signatory to the global initiative, 'Vision 2020', Bangladesh formulated a National Eye Care Program (NECP). As a result of its early action, the country has made remarkable progress in reducing blindness and visual impairment.

To further strengthen the ongoing efforts, the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina decided to integrate primary eye care in the portfolio of primary health care services by setting up community vision centres. It has so far established 135 community vision centers to cater free-of-cost eye care for the poor and marginalized people. The centers are equipped with basic eye care ability having trained nurses for this job supported by teleconsultation with ophthalmologists. These efforts have improved the quality of life

for millions of underserved populations through the provision of comprehensive eye care services.

Bangladesh's leadership at the UN

Bangladesh joined the UN Friends of Vision group formed on World Sight Day in 2018 and became a co-chair of the group. UN Friends of Vision continued to educate countries on the links between Vision and the SDGs and drive the integration of primary eye care into universal

health coverage. At Bangladesh's behest, the group organized, for the first time, a free eye screening camp at the UN secretariat for the delegates and the staff of the UN on World Sight Day, 2019. The camp was a huge success with an attendance of over 400 staff and delegates. It has been continuing since then on the occasion of the World Sight Day, except in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19 disruption.

Despite the fact that vision impairment and blindness is pervasive, the maldistribution of resources across the world and within borders, means that the experience of living with vision loss does, in fact, discriminate. This is a grim picture that calls for transformative action. And a first ever UN resolution on vision care finally dawned.

By championing this resolution, Bangladesh underscores the critical importance of a good vision for achieving sustainable development and socioeconomic progress. Bangladesh's



Fighting Blindness in Bangladesh



Vision technician examining a Patient

leadership in promoting eye health at the UNGA has yielded several important outcomes:

1. Increased global awareness: Bangladesh's efforts have contributed to raising global awareness about the importance of eye health and highlighted the urgency of addressing eye health as a global priority.
2. Resource mobilization: The initiative has encouraged IFIs and donors to allocate targeted finances toward addressing eye health for LMICs. It also urges the member states to mobilize domestic resources to contribute to global efforts to reach, by 2030, at least 1.1 billion people who have a vision impairment and currently do not have access to the eye care services that they

need.

3. Policy Advocacy: Bangladesh's advocacy has led to policy initiatives that aim to integrate eye health into broader healthcare and development agendas, e.g. reporting the status of eye care in country-led evaluation at the UN to assess progress towards achieving SDGs.

4. Knowledge and technology Sharing: It calls for capacity building by sharing knowledge on successful models and best practices. It encourages countries to replicate achievements in the field of eye health, particularly by transferring technology in eye care and assistive devices.

5. Collective action: This initiative paves the way for

collective action to build an international campaign on eye health towards the fulfilment of the SDGs and to leave no one behind by 2030.

The UNGA has proven to be an effective platform for Bangladesh to lead the charge on public health issues. Bangladesh's leadership of the Vision Care resolution is a pivotal step in putting the spotlight on eye health at the highest international level. Leveraging its experiences, successes, and commitments, Bangladesh has not only improved eye health within its borders but has also contributed to the global effort to combat preventable blindness and visual impairment. As the world continues to grapple with healthcare challenges, the actions taken by Bangladesh serve as a shining example of how a dedicated nation can make a significant global impact and guide others to prioritize and accelerate actions for the vision health as a vital component of the SDGs.

To celebrate Bangladesh's success, let us pledge on the 'World Sight Day' to learn best practices on distance from screens, take a break to exercise long and near distance vision, and maintain health and safety in dangerous environments where eyes can be damaged.

Dr. M. Monwar Hossain, PhD

Bangladesh Ambassador to Myanmar
Facilitator and lead negotiator of Vision Care resolution at the UN
Former Deputy PR of Bangladesh to the UN, New York



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SHEIKH RUSSEL: IMMORTALIZED AS AN UNDYING BEACON OF HOPE, INSPIRATION & LEGACY

-Barrister S M Saifullah Rahman

Sheikh Russel, the beloved and revered youngest son of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh, left an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of the Bangladeshi people. Though his life was tragically cut short at the tender age of 10, his legacy endures as a symbol of hope, inspiration, and unwavering commitment to the values of service, justice, and progress. In this article, we delve into the life, achievements, and enduring legacy of Sheikh Russel.

Early Life and Education
Sheikh Russel was born on



Sheikh Russel with his father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

October 18, 1964, into a family deeply immersed in the political and social fabric of Bangladesh. His father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, played a pivotal role in the country's struggle for independence and served as its first Prime Minister. From the very beginning, young Russel was

exposed to the values of democracy, justice, and public service.

As a student, he showed promise as a bright and inquisitive student. His school teachers remember him for his humility, kindness, and eagerness to learn. In his early years, Sheikh Russel

displayed a strong sense of social responsibility, undoubtedly influenced by his father's dedication to the welfare of the Bangladeshi people. Russel was known for his warm-heartedness and a natural ability to connect with people from all walks of life. He was deeply committed to his community and frequently engaged in various social and political activities, including relief efforts during natural disasters and campaigns for social justice.

Influence of His Father's Legacy
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's influence on Sheikh Russel was profound. As a father and a statesman, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's unwavering commitment to the principles of democracy, justice, and the welfare of the people left a lasting impact on his son. Russel grew up in an environment that



Sheikh Russel with his mother and sisters

prioritized these values, and became an integral part of his character.

The Vision and Aspirations of Sheikh Russel

As Sheikh Russel transitioned from his formative years into adolescence, he developed a vision for his own future and the future of Bangladesh. He aspired to make a meaningful difference in the lives of his fellow countrymen, following in his father's footsteps.

Tragically, Sheikh Russel's life was cruelly ended at the age of 10 during the military coup of August 15, 1975. This dark day in Bangladesh's history led to the assassination of his father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and most of his family members, including his mother, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib.

Legacy and Commemoration

Despite the immense tragedy of the 1975 coup, Sheikh Russel's legacy lives on as a symbol of hope and inspiration for the Bangladeshi people. His untimely passing marked a significant loss for the nation. The people remember him as an innocent child with an immense potential to change the course of history.

The iconic image of Sheikh Russel, with his heartwarming smile, has become an emblematic representation of hope and promise. His image adorns public spaces, and his name graces schools, institutions, and sports facilities across the country. These commemorative gestures aim to keep his spirit alive in the hearts and minds of the

Bangladeshi people. The government of Bangladesh has taken several initiatives to honor the memory of Sheikh Russel, including the establishment of the Sheikh Russel Digital University. This university was founded with the goal of providing quality education and innovative

foster a spirit of healthy competition, unity, and sportsmanship.

Sheikh Russel's Legacy in the Hearts of Bangladeshis
Sheikh Russel's legacy extends far beyond the physical monuments and institutions dedicated to his memory. He



Sheikh Russel

digital learning opportunities to the youth of the nation. It serves as a testament to the importance of education in shaping the future of Bangladesh, a cause Sheikh Russel held dear. In the memory of Sheikh Russel, the Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra (Russel Sports Club) was established in Dhaka. The club focuses on promoting sports and physical fitness among the youth of Bangladesh. The sports complex and activities organized by the club aim to

lives on in the hearts of the Bangladeshi people, who continue to be inspired by his innocence, compassion, and potential. His short life serves as a poignant reminder that even the youngest among us can have a profound impact on their community and country.

As Bangladesh progresses and confronts new challenges, the spirit of Sheikh Russel remains an enduring source of motivation for the people. The values he embodied, the dreams



Sheikh Russel

he nurtured, and the hope he represented continue to inspire Bangladeshis to strive for a brighter, more inclusive future. His legacy is a testament to the idea that the impact of a young icon can transcend time and

space, fueling a nation's aspirations and collective spirit.

The Eternal Symbol of Hope

In a world marked by turbulence and change, Sheikh Russel remains a symbol of

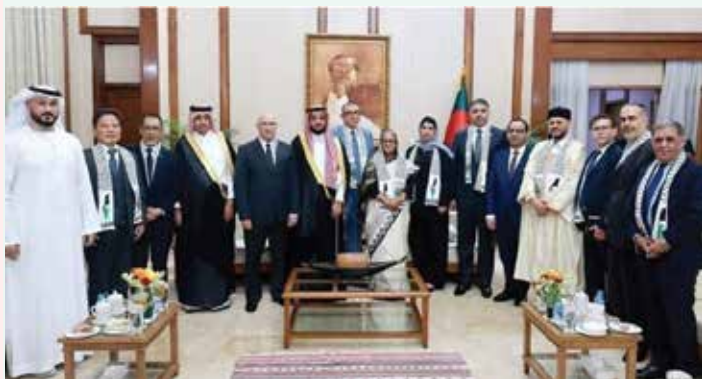
hope and inspiration. His image, captured in the innocence of youth and the promise of a better future, is a source of strength for the Bangladeshi people. It reminds them of the need to preserve and uphold the values of justice, democracy, and service to humanity.

Sheikh Russel's legacy is a testament to the fact that the impact of a young icon can transcend generations. He continues to symbolize the hope and resilience of a nation that has faced countless challenges and triumphed over adversity. In Sheikh Russel, the people of Bangladesh find not only a beloved son but also a guiding light, showing them the path to a brighter and more promising future.

Barrister S M Saifullah Rahman

Associate Editor,
Diplomats Publication

BANGABANDHU'S LEGACY: BANGLADESH STANDS WITH PALESTINIANS, SAYS PRIME MINISTER



Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urges Muslim Ummah to make a united effort to solve the Palestinian crisis. Bangladesh will continue its support for Palestinians like past following the policy of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, says the Prime Minister. At this time Sheikh Hasina also said that a special prayer will be held on 20th October, for Palestinians in mosques across the country after the Jumma prayer. Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina spoke this evening at the meeting with the ambassadors of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) members of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Indonesia, Egypt, Oman, Qatar, Palestine, Morocco, Algeria, Libya and Brunei.

BANGLADESH AIR FORCE DELEGATION'S HISTORIC VISIT TO DIMAPUR STRENGTHENS DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH INDIA



A 20 member Bangladesh Air Force delegation visited Dimapur, India on 31 October 2023. The delegation comprising 13 officers and 07 airmen was led by Gp Capt Tanvir Marzan, psc. The delegation was seen off by AVM Hasan Mahmood Khan, OSP, GUP, nswc, psc, ACAS(Plans), BAF from BAF Base Bangabandhu.

Bangladesh Air Force was formed on 28 September, 1971 at Dimapur under the command of AVM (then Gp Capt) AK Khandekar, with the flying code unit codenamed "Kilo Flight" commanded by late AVM(then Sqn Ldr) Sultan Mahmud. The unit comprised of 09 pilots and 58 technicians.

The visit is a part of the ongoing cooperation between the Indian and Bangladesh Air Force and aims to assist BAF personnel to connect with their roots and to further enhance the defence cooperation between our two countries.

CHINESE AMBASSADOR ATTENDS SPECTACULAR 5TH "AMBASSADOR CUP" WUSHU DEMONSTRATION IN DHAKA



The 5th "Ambassador Cup" Wushu Demonstration, a collaborative effort by the Chinese Embassy in Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Wushu Federation, came to a thrilling close at Dhaka's Shaheed

Suhrawardi Indoor Stadium on October 21st. The event's award ceremony witnessed the distinguished presence of several notable figures, including H.E. Yao Wen, Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh; Yue Liwen, Cultural Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in Bangladesh; Abdus Sobhan Golap, President of the Bangladesh Wushu Federation; and prominent members from the federation.

This year's "Ambassador Cup" featured three distinct events, namely the all-around, combined, and bare hand, captivating the participation of an impressive 300 athletes from 25 Bangladeshi Wushu associations.

HISTORIC COLLABORATION: PHILIPPINES AND ICAO SIGN GAME-CHANGING AVIATION AGREEMENT



17 October 2023 Philippine Ambassador H.E. Leo Tito L. Ausan, Jr. witnessed the signing ceremony of the Management Services Agreement (MSA) between the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP), represented by Director General Capt. Manuel Antonio Tamayo and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), represented by Secretary General Juan Carlos Salazar.

The agreement aims to establish a framework of collaboration between CAAP and ICAO that will enable CAAP to achieve higher strategic and compliance outcomes and allow Filipinos and all aviation stakeholders to expect more progress in the Philippine aviation sector in the coming years.

The signing was held at the 58th Conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation of the Asia Pacific Region happening at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Dhaka.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE, FROM THE HIGH COMMISSION OF MALAYSIA IN DHAKA

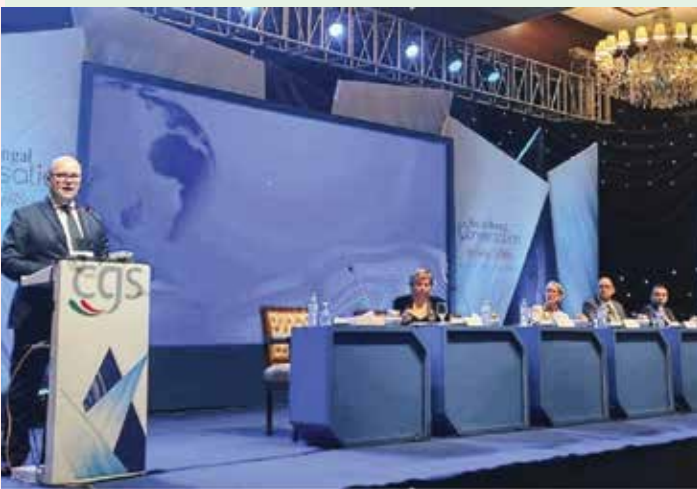


H.E. Haznah Md Hashim High Commissioner of Malaysia to Bangladesh, along with other OIC Ambassadors, reiterated support and solidarity with the people of Palestine during a joint call on the Ambassador of Palestine in Dhaka on 12 October 2023.

Earlier that day, in a show of solidarity, Malaysian MPs from both government and opposition have contributed to the Humanitarian Trust Fund for the People of Palestine to support the Palestinian cause.

The contribution from the fund, managed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, was handed over at the Malaysian Parliament by Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Malaysia, H.E. Dato' Seri Diraja Dr. Zambry Abd Kadir to the Palestinian Ambassador to Malaysia.

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION JOINS BAY OF BENGAL CONVERSATION FOR INDO-PACIFIC SOLUTIONS



The Australian High Commission was delighted to be a partner of the Bay of Bengal Conversation, which was an opportunity to discuss how to address shared challenges in the Indo-Pacific.

In his speech, Australian High Commissioner Jeremy Bruer said Australia wanted the Indo-Pacific to be an open, stable, prosperous and inclusive region, one in which sovereignty and international law are respected.

Australia is working with partners, such as Bangladesh, to help ensure the Indo-Pacific remains open, stable, prosperous and inclusive.

JAPAN'S AMBASSADOR VISITS ROHINGYA CAMP, INAUGURATES SHELTER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN COX'S BAZAR



The Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh, IWAMA Kiminori, paid a visit to the Rohingya camp in Cox's Bazar, participating in the inauguration ceremony of "The Project for improved shelters at Nayapara Refugee Camp."

This essential project, realized through Japan's grant aid scheme in collaboration with UNHCR, focuses on the construction and rehabilitation of shelters and the improvement and development of land for evacuation in the camps, with a primary aim of safeguarding the Rohingya population in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char.

During the ceremony, Ambassador Iwama emphasized the significance of providing aid to vulnerable refugee households by enhancing and upgrading shelters. He expressed his hopes for creating a safe living environment for the displaced population and contributing to mitigating social vulnerabilities in Bangladesh. Ambassador Iwama also took the time to tour the shelters and various facilities within the camp.

TURKEY'S EMBASSY HOSTS SPECTACULAR EBURU ART EXHIBITION WITH RENOWNED ARTIST İLKER SELIMLER



In a splendid showcase of Turkey's rich cultural heritage, the Embassy of Turkey in Bangladesh welcomed distinguished guests to an exclusive Ebru art exhibition. The event, held in honor of Turkey's national day on October 29th, featured a live demonstration by the celebrated Ebru artist Mr. İlker Selimler.

One of the evening's highlights was the presence of Mr. İlker Selimler, a renowned Ebru artist from Turkey. Mr. Selimler, a master in the art of Ebru, is celebrated for not only his incredible skill but also his dedication to passing on his knowledge to younger generations through educational programs. He has further shared the beauty of Ebru art with the world by exhibiting his works in various countries, contributing to the global appreciation of this cherished Turkish tradition.

The Ebru art exhibition at the Embassy of Turkey in Bangladesh was a resounding success, bridging cultural divides and showcasing the enduring beauty of this traditional Turkish craft. It was an evening filled with creativity, heritage, and artistic inspiration, underscoring the timeless connection between Turkey and Bangladesh.

LORD JITESH GADHIA, CHAIR OF BRITISH ASIAN TRUST PAID A COURTESY CALL ON HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER SHEIKH HASINA



Lord Jitesh Gadhia, Chair of British Asian Trust paid a courtesy call on Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her hotel suite in London. During the call, Lord Gadhia apprised Hon'ble Prime Minister about the British Asian Trust's activities in Bangladesh, particularly in mental health and climate change. He informed that under the Trust a Climate Innovation Fund is being operationalized in Bangladesh to support sustainable agriculture,

food security, water security and livelihoods of climate vulnerable populations. Hon'ble Prime Minister apprised Lord Gadhia about her government's climate change adaptation projects such as artificial mangrove forestation, climate-smart agriculture, climate-smart housing in coastal areas and flood-prone areas for the landless people, and innovative adaptation programmes under Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (2022-2041) and National Adaption Plan (2023-2050). Lord Gadhia lauded Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's leadership and observed that her participation at the COP28 would be very instrumental in global climate action. Expressing grave concern for the climate vulnerable countries, Hon'ble Prime Minister indicated that Bangladesh would emphasize the implementation of the fund for loss and damage at the COP28.

Hon'ble Foreign Minister Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, MP, Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office Mr. Mohammad Salahuddin, Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK H.E. Ms. Saida Muna Tasneem, among others, were present.

NEW UNHCR COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE PRESENTS CREDENTIALS TO FOREIGN MINISTER



The new UNHCR country representative to Bangladesh, Ms. Sumbul Rizvi, presented her credentials to Foreign Minister Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen. The Foreign Minister welcomed her and

assured government support for her role. He acknowledged UNHCR's ongoing humanitarian efforts for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and the host community.

Dr. Momen emphasized the numerous challenges faced by Bangladesh in hosting over 1.2 million Rohingya refugees and the lack of progress in repatriating them to Myanmar over the past six years. He expressed concerns about the prolonged stay of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, citing potential security threats to the region and beyond. He called on UNHCR and other UN agencies in Myanmar to work with the Myanmar government to create conditions for safe return in Rakhine.

OMANI DELEGATION CALLS ON FOREIGN SECRETARY



A high-level delegation from Oman, led by Ambassador Dr. Sulaiman Saud Al Jabri, Head of Legal Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visited Bangladesh from October 11 to 14, 2023. The delegation included representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labor, and Ministry of Interior of Oman. During their visit, they met with the Senior Secretary of Foreign Affairs, where Ambassador Jabri expressed Oman's interest in signing the two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to strengthen cooperation in manpower, protect Bangladeshi workers, and combat illegal migration and trafficking.

INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER HONORS WORLD WAR II MARTYRS AT MAYNAMATI COMMONWEALTH WAR CEMETERY IN CUMILLA



During his visit to Cumilla, High Commissioner Pranay Verma visited the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Maynamati on 3 October 2023 and laid a floral wreath as an homage to the martyred soldiers of World War II.

The Maynamati War Cemetery in Cumilla district of Bangladesh was constructed and is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It is the final resting place of 736 soldiers who died during World War II, including 178 soldiers from the undivided India.

UNIQUE HOTEL AND RESORTS PLC RECEIVES GOLD AWARD IN SERVICE SECTOR AT THE 23RD ICAB NATIONAL AWARD FOR BEST PRESENTED ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Unique Hotel and Resorts PLC, the owner of The Westin Dhaka, Sheraton Dhaka, and HANSA – a Premium Residence, has received the prestigious Gold Award in the Service Sector category at the 23rd ICAB National Award for Best Presented Annual Report 2022. The award was presented by the Honorable Commerce Minister of Bangladesh during a ceremony held on October 30, 2023.

The ICAB National Award for Best Presented Annual Report is a highly respected recognition for excellence in corporate reporting practices in Bangladesh. It acknowledges organizations that exhibit transparency, accountability, and adherence to international reporting standards in their annual reports.

INTRODUCING AMBASSADOR AUSAN LEO TITO JR.'S POEM



In a poignant moment of reflection and admiration, His Excellency Ausan Leo Tito Jr., the Philippine Ambassador to Bangladesh, found himself deeply moved during a visit to the Bangladesh Liberation War Museum on the morning of October 27, 2023. Inspired by the unwavering spirit of Bangladesh's heroes and martyrs who fought for freedom, Ambassador Ausan penned a heartfelt poem that beautifully encapsulates the essence of this visit. His verses pay tribute to the enduring flame of freedom, ignited by the sacrifices of the noble, and the museum's role in preserving this precious history.

The Flame of Freedom,
May the flame of freedom lit,
By your noble heroes and martyrs,
Remain ablaze forever,
Through the good management of your museum,
Joi shundar Bangla!!!....
After all, the telling of the narrative of
your great country,
As orchestrated by Bangabandhu,
Shiek Mujibur Rahman.
Is the business of living museum curators,
And neither of the dead, nor their,
miscreant slayers!!..

AMBASSADOR DR. MD. MONWAR HOSSAIN PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS ON 06 SEPTEMBER 2023 IN NAY PYI TAW



Bangladesh Ambassador to Myanmar H. E. Dr. Md. Monwar Hossain presented his credentials to the Chairman of the State Administration Council (SAC) and Prime Minister of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing in a grandiose Ceremony on Wednesday, 06 September 2023. The Chairman of the SAC and the Ambassador discussed issues of bilateral relations, including repatriation of displaced persons of Myanmar, trade, connectivity, traditional and non-traditional security cooperation, namely drug and human trafficking, arms smuggling, defence cooperation and people-to-people contact.

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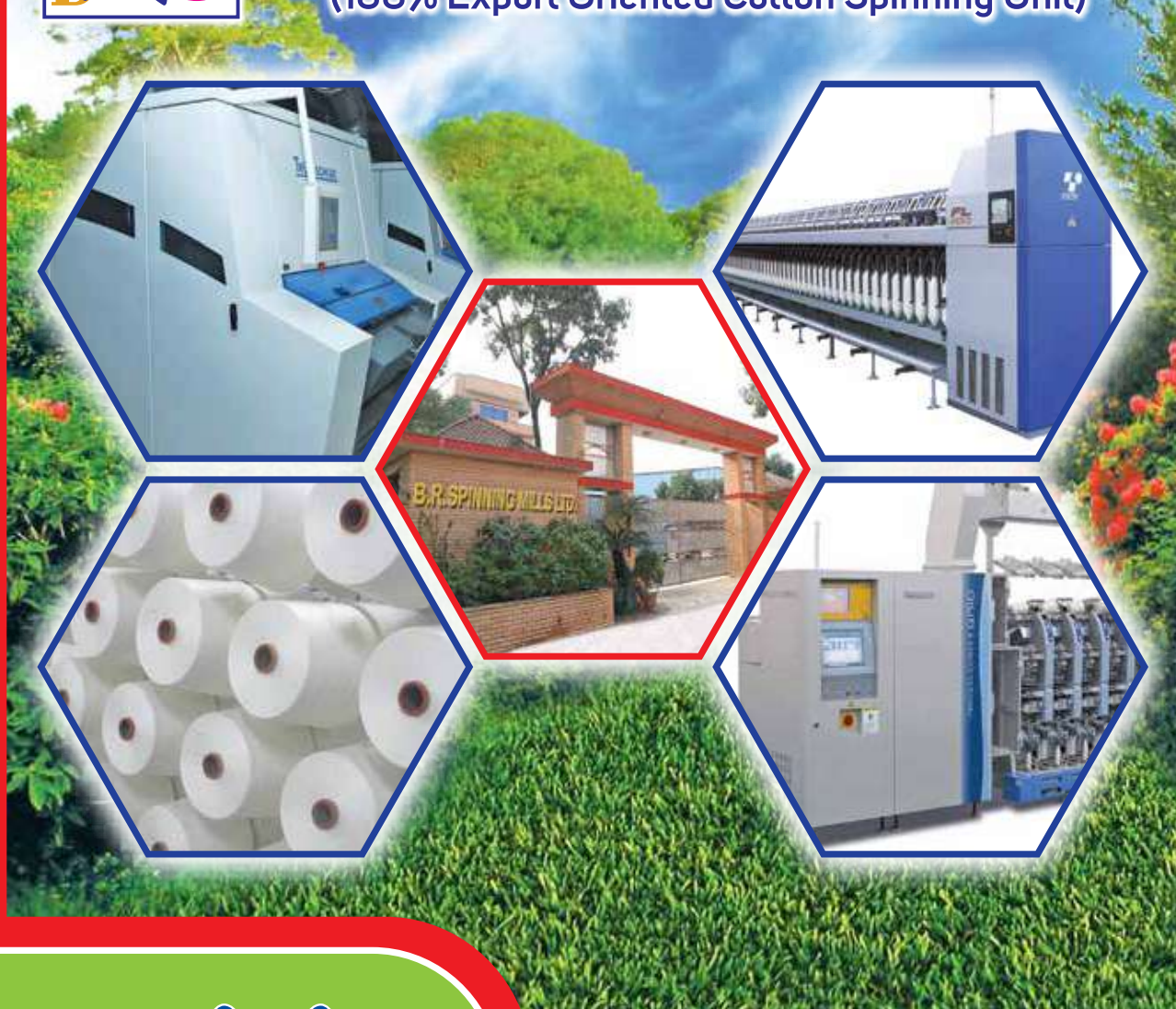
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