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The Diplomats team extends heartfelt Eid-Al-Adha greetings to all our valued readers. This significant event marks the conclusion of the Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca, observed by Muslims globally, and commemorates Prophet Ibrahim's symbolic sacrifice of his son.

On a significant diplomatic front, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina recently attended the oath-taking ceremony for Prime Minister Modi's third term in office. The new Indian government, formed with the support of 14 regional parties allied with the BJP, has welcomed Prime Minister Hasina as the first state guest of Modi's third term. This visit underscores the deepening ties between Bangladesh and India, evidenced by their ten meetings over the past year, highlighting a robust and dynamic relationship.

Bangladesh occupies a strategic position in India's 'Neighborhood First' Policy, Act East Policy, Vision SAGAR, and Indo-Pacific Vision. The recent visit has paved the way for a visionary roadmap for future cooperation, benefiting the youth of both countries through agreements in areas such as the Green Partnership, Digital Partnership, Blue Economy, and Space. The launch of the India-Bangladesh "Maitri Satellite" symbolizes the new heights this partnership can achieve, with continued emphasis on Connectivity, Commerce, and Collaboration.

The restoration of pre-1965 connectivity over the past decade has enabled new initiatives in digital and energy connectivity, significantly boosting both economies. In water resource management, both sides have been cooperating on flood management and early warning systems. Technical discussions are set to begin for the renewal of the 1996 Ganga Water Treaty, and a technical team will visit Bangladesh to discuss the conservation and management of the Teesta.

Both sides held comprehensive discussions on defence production and the modernization of armed forces. Both countries are committed to enhancing cooperation on counter-terrorism, countering radicalism, and peaceful border management. On the Indian Ocean front, shared perspectives align with Bangladesh's decision to join the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, ensuring continued cooperation in regional and international forums, including BIMSTEC.

Prime Minister Modi has lauded Sheikh Hasina's leadership in steering "Sonar Bangla" towards prosperity. As Bangladesh transitions to a developing country by 2026, India's commitment to a stable, prosperous, and progressive Bangladesh remains unwavering. Together, the vision of 'Smart Bangladesh 2041' and Viksit Bharat 2047 will be realized, forging a path of shared growth and mutual success.

In domestic affairs, the Budget for FY 2024-25 was presented to the Sangshad by Finance Minister Abul Hasan Mahmood Ali. The new budget is 11.6 percent larger than the revised budget for FY 2024 and addresses immediate needs and challenges, including inflation and dwindling foreign exchange reserves, and debt burden.

This issue of Diplomats encompasses a broad array of insightful features on critical national and international topics, offering a comprehensive look at current affairs and future prospects. We hope our readers find the content both engaging and informative.

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FOREIGN POLICY OF BANGLADESH: A DREAM IN PROGRESS

Dr. A.K Abdul Momen, MP

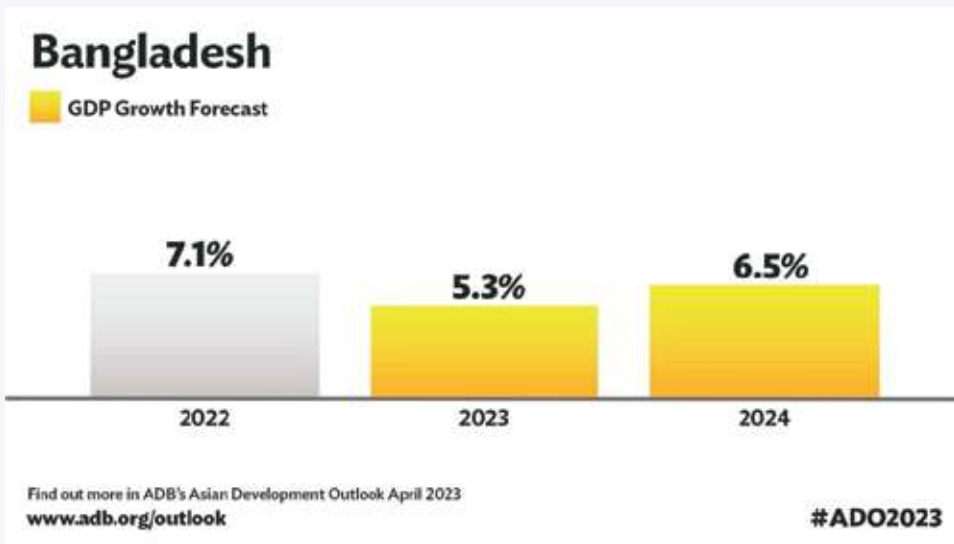
Bangladesh's foreign policy, based on "Friendship to all, malice to none" as coined by the nation's founder, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, is anchored in its constitution's Article 25, emphasizing national sovereignty, peaceful dispute resolution, and support for oppressed populations globally. This ethos drove Bangladesh's early diplomatic efforts, securing global recognition and UN membership by 1974. Presently, under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the focus remains on peaceful international dispute resolution, mirroring the consistent foreign policy over nearly five decades.

Bangabandhu envisioned Bangladesh as the 'Switzerland of the East' in the sense that Bangladesh would act as the "safe space" or the "refuge" in the deeply divided globe.

Bangabandhu believed that without peace and stability, no country can develop or prosper and therefore he wanted Bangladesh to be an 'Island of Peace'. Therefore, Bangabandhu agreed to join the OIC Summit held in Lahore in February 1974 at the request of the high-power delegation led by Kuwait and Algeria - provided that Pakistan accepted the sovereignty of Bangladesh. His address at the UNGA in 1974 called for the sharing of technology and resources on a global scale, so that the human race could begin to enjoy at least the minimal conditions of a decent life- which is the central focus of Bangladesh's Foreign Policy (as an extension of its own domestic priorities).

Till now Bangladesh's foreign policy centres on the sharing of resources in a symbiotic and

synergistic manner to create a better future for all of humanity avoiding confrontations and provocations. Despite the position of neutralities, Bangladesh extends its great heart to ease the sufferings of the persecuted people across the world. Our unwavering support to the cause of Palestine and peace in the Middle East is part of its effort to stand by the side of the oppressed. Bangabandhu supported the end of apartheid in South Africa and the end of the Vietnam War to secure both the decency and dignity of human lives all over the world. Likewise, Bangladesh has sheltered 1.1 million Rohingyas from Myanmar despite its own constraints of resources. It is committed to engaging all possible diplomatic tools to raise the awareness of human conscience - for not only guaranteeing the safe and



sustainable return of the Rohingya people to their motherland but also to ensure justice and accountability – so that the atrocities which they suffered, just like those suffered by the Bengalis in 1971, never happen again, anywhere.

A Brief Overview of Current Status

Global admiration for Bangladesh's development strides, including poverty reduction and women empowerment, places it above regional neighbors, propelling towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Bilaterally, mutual respect and constructive engagement characterize Bangladesh-India relations, even amidst challenges like Teesta River water-sharing. Similarly, Bangladesh maintains strong ties with other regional and global partners, extending support during crises.

Regionally, Bangladesh has been active in various alliances and initiatives like SAARC, BIMSTEC, CVF, the D-8, and IORA, showcasing its commitment to multilateral diplomacy. In combating COVID-19,

governmental policies balanced lives and livelihoods, showcasing resilience by achieving a 6.1% growth rate in the last fiscal year despite global economic disruptions.

As a forthcoming developing country, Bangladesh eyes both opportunities and challenges, notably in trade preferences. It's proactively addressing climate change, allocating substantial funds for adaptation and mitigation while chairing forums like the Climate Vulnerable Forum. Migration remains a focal point, with efforts to ensure safe and dignified employment for Bangladeshis abroad. The Rohingya crisis, although a formidable challenge, continues

to see Bangladesh advocating for safe repatriation, yet the recent military coup in Myanmar complicates matters.

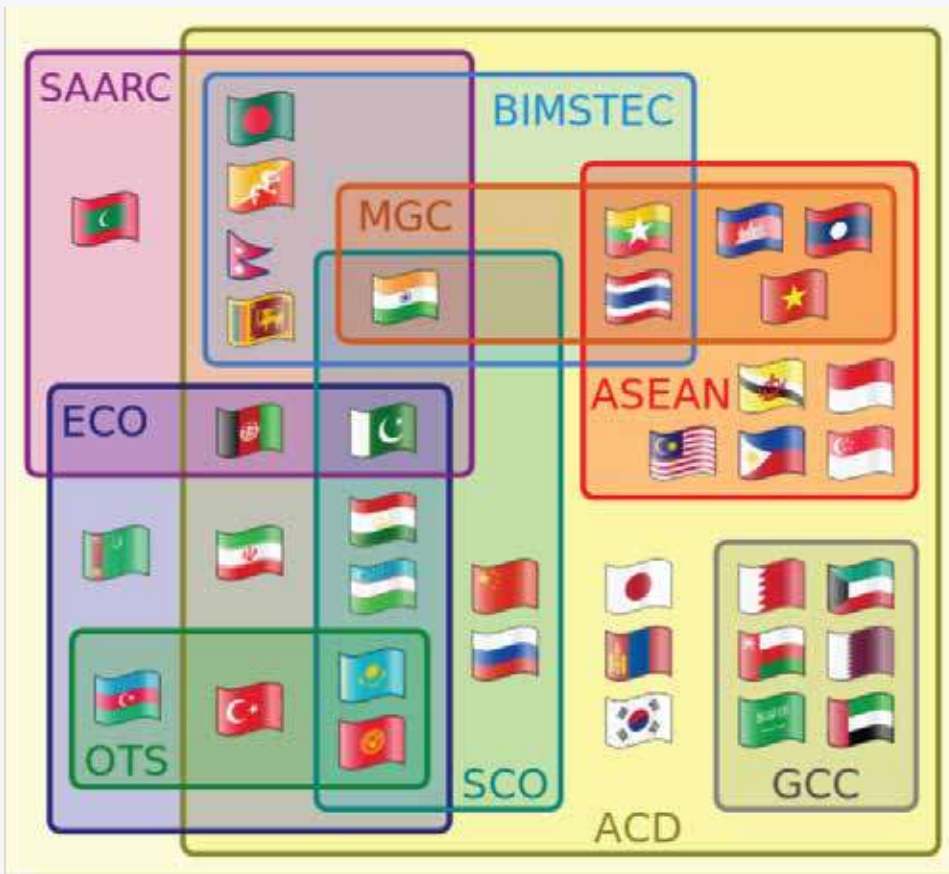
Employing soft power, Bangladesh highlights its cultural heritage, secular identity, culture of peace, and sustainable products on the global stage. Investment-friendly policies, economic zones, and high-tech parks beckon foreign investments, while efforts for export diversification are underway.

Digital advancements, propelled by a robust IT professional pool, have fortified Bangladesh's digital infrastructure, benefiting education and other sectors during the Covid-19 pandemic. In development, significant projects like the self-funded Padma Bridge symbolize Bangladesh's monumental progress over 50 years, a testament to the nation's resilient and entrepreneurial spirit.

Bangladesh's Importance in Geopolitics: Geo-economics, Geo-strategy, Geo-ideology Bangladesh, the thriving nation on the eastern banks of the Indian subcontinent, stands as a



Sheikh Hasina's Foreign Policy in the Footsteps of Bangabandhu



strategic pivot in the larger Indo-Pacific theater. With the increasing interest of major powers like China, the U.S., and India, Bangladesh's geopolitical weight has grown exponentially. China views Bangladesh as an integral part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aiming to consolidate its influence in the Bay of Bengal region. On the other hand, India sees Bangladesh as a crucial ally, not only for regional stability but also as a counterbalance to China's growing influence. The U.S., under its broader Indo-Pacific strategy, views Bangladesh as a potential partner in ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific. As these major powers vie for influence, Bangladesh must astutely navigate its strategic partnerships to ensure its national interests are preserved and enhanced. What is important for us is to see that we keep our constitutional prerogative of friendship to all and malice to none at the core of our view of the strategies that overlap on and across us.

key player in the global geopolitical realm. Rooted in a rich history and the indomitable spirit of its people, Bangladesh has emerged as a significant nation in terms of geo-economics, geo-strategy, and geo-ideology. Bangladesh navigates the intricate landscape of international relations and, understanding Bangladesh's unique position in these domains is of paramount importance.

Geo-economics: A Hub of Connectivity and Trade

Bangladesh's economic prowess is hard to overlook. Located between the burgeoning markets of India and Southeast Asia, it is positioned as a connector, bridging the East with the West. The nation's geo-economic significance is underpinned by its strategic location, which is instrumental for regional trade and connectivity projects like the

Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) corridor. Such projects promise to transform the regional trade dynamics and place Bangladesh at the epicenter of Asian economic growth.

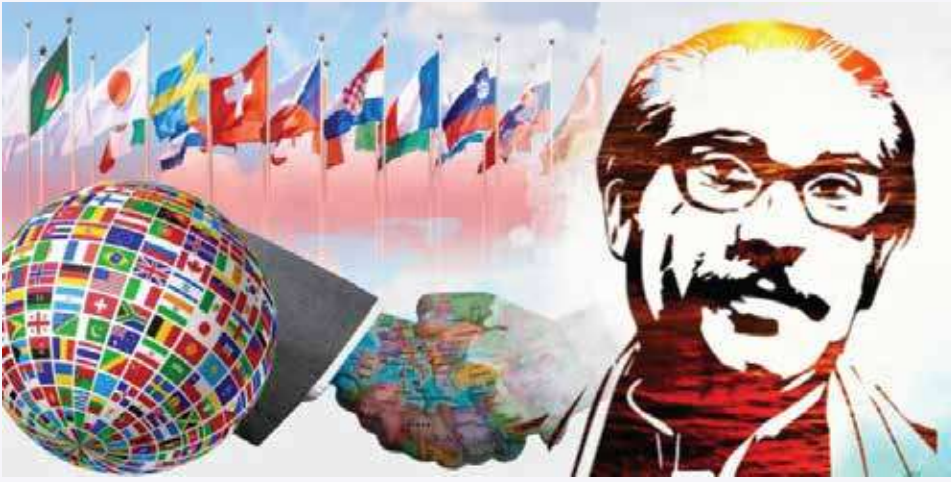
Furthermore, with a burgeoning garment industry that contributes massively to global supply chains, Bangladesh commands a pivotal role in international trade. The nation's ports, especially the Port of Chittagong, play a vital role in connecting the hinterlands of India, Bhutan, and Nepal to the broader world, underlining Bangladesh's geo-economic significance.

Geo-strategy: The Balance Between Major Powers

Geographically, Bangladesh sits at the crossroads of South and Southeast Asia, making it a

Geo-ideology: A Beacon of Secularism and Democracy
Bangladesh stands as a testament to the idea that secularism and democracy can thrive in a predominantly Muslim-majority nation. Born out of a struggle for language and cultural identity, Bangladesh's founding principles resonate with ideals of secularism, democracy, and pluralism.

In a region where radical ideologies sometimes threaten to take root, Bangladesh offers a counter-narrative. By



championing the principles of democracy, inclusivity and acceptance, Bangladesh sends a strong message to neighboring countries about the viability and desirability of democratic governance. As extremist ideologies challenge the fabric of many societies, Bangladesh's commitment to secularism, justice and democracy can serve as a model for nations grappling with similar challenges. Conclusion As we chart the nation's course in the world, recognizing Bangladesh's unique position in geo-economics, geo-strategy, and geo-ideology is

crucial. By harnessing its economic potential, tactfully navigating strategic partnerships, and upholding its foundational principles, Bangladesh can not only safeguard its national interests but also shape the future geopolitical landscape of the region.

There are already two more veritable strategic spaces that have opened up – informatics and space. Our locational triangulations and our creative minds make us potential players in both domains. Foreign Policy

must take into account the emergent spaces too. We have already commenced with our #ZeroDigitalDivide campaign through the e-Quality centre and we are planning on creating integrated approaches towards ensuring economic and creative connectivity both for our individuals and our enterprises and also the global supply solutions which could optimize themselves with a connection through our people and our technical stacks – underwritten by an ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship.

In the years to come, Bangladesh's role in global geopolitics is poised to grow, propelled by its economic strides, strategic location, and unwavering commitment to democratic ideals. It is imperative that Bangladesh leverages these strengths, ensuring a prosperous and stable future for its people and cementing its position as a pivotal actor in the global geopolitical arena.

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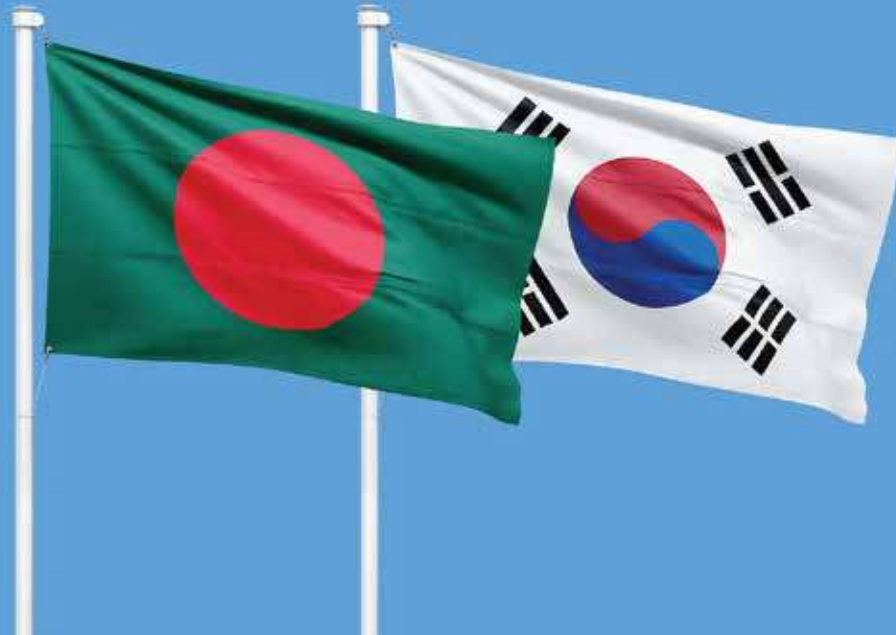
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MARKING HALF A CENTURY: THE EVOLVING KOREA-BANGLADESH DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

H.E. Park Young-sik

The year 2023 marked the 50th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between the Republic of Korea and the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The official establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries took place on December 18, 1973. Over the last five decades, Korea and Bangladesh have witnessed a remarkable journey of cooperation in various areas, including trade, investment, development, and people-to-people exchanges have strengthened cooperation in various areas such as trade, investment, development, and people-to-people exchanges.

Substantial bilateral relations began with the inception of

Bangladesh's RMG industry. It is a well-known story that the partnership between Bangladesh Desh Garment and Korean company Daewoo Corporation in 1979 planted the seed of Bangladesh's RMG

industry. Since then, Korean garment enterprises have made great contributions to the rapid growth of Bangladesh's RMG industry, which accounts for over 85% of the country's exports. The KEPZ in Chattogram, the first country-specific private Export Processing Zone, is serving as a symbol of the Korea-Bangladesh business ties. The KEPZ is currently exporting approximately 1.25 billion USD and employing more than 70,000 workers.

Korea is currently the fourth largest FDI investor in Bangladesh. Recently, there has been an increase in investment in manufacturing industries such as automobiles, mobile phones, and consumer electronics



Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with President of South Korea Yoon Suk Yeol during a bilateral meeting, on the sidelines of G20 Summit



President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Mohammed Shahabuddin, received the credentials from the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Bangladesh, Park Young-Sik, at Bangabhaban

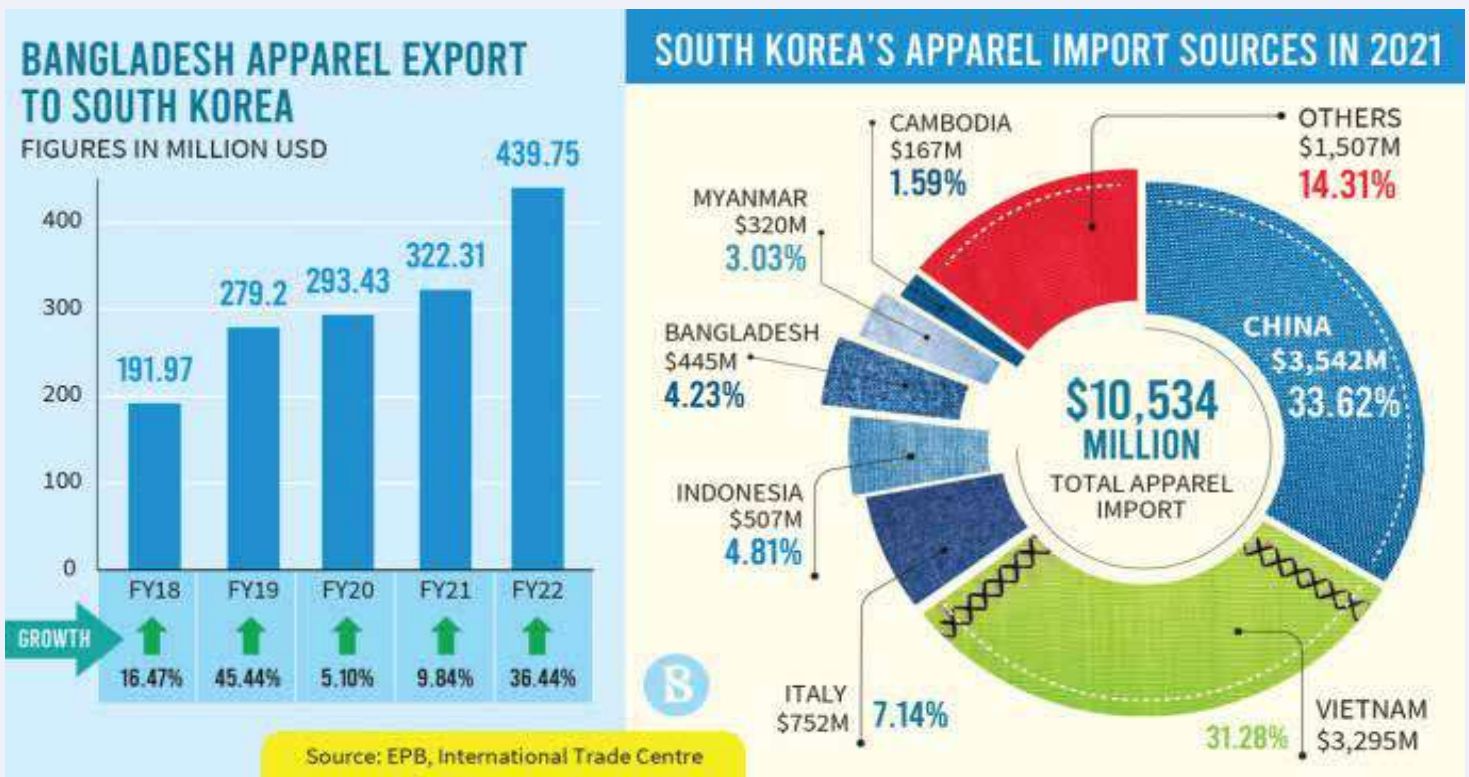
through joint ventures with local partners. Samsung Electronics manufactures consumer electronic goods, including mobile phones, in Narsingdi, while Hyundai cars are being assembled at the assembly plant at the Kaliakoir Bangabandhu Hi-Tech Park from 2023. These companies are creating good quality jobs through domestic manufacturing.

On the trade front, Korea is currently providing preferential market access to around 95% of Bangladeshi products in the Korean market through the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) and World Trade Organization (WTO) arrangements. Bilateral trade has reached a record high, surpassing 3 billion dollars for the first time in 2022. The Economic Partnership

Agreement (EPA) or similar arrangements, currently under discussions between Korea and Bangladesh, will further enhance trade and investment in mutually beneficial ways. Korea wishes that the negotiations on bilateral EPA will be soon started.

Bangladesh has a big potential for infrastructure development as its economy has been growing fast with its growth rate recording over 5% in the last 20 years. And its graduation from the Least Developed Country status in 2026 will attract essential foreign capital required for the ongoing infrastructure development in Bangladesh. Korea aspires to become a vital partner in Bangladesh's infrastructure development, just as we have done in the RMG sector.

According to data, 111 Korean companies have participated in 240 Bangladesh infrastructure





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projects since 1973. Especially, \$5.4 billion of the projects was implemented during 2016~22. The Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) can be utilized by Bangladesh with the condition of 0.1~0.5% of interest rate and 30 years of maturity. The

size of the EDCF has been increased to USD 3 billion until 2027 and there is a possibility for further expansion. All Bangladesh infrastructure projects don't need to be financed by government budgets or international loans.

Public Private Partnership (PPP) can be an option for financing infrastructure projects. BSNSN Water Supply Project is currently being discussed in the PPP mechanism. Korean companies' participation in Bangladesh's infrastructure development has big advantages. Firstly, Korean companies guarantee the quality of the project, regardless of road, bridge, railroad etc. Secondly, Korean companies do not bring in Korean workers and therefore can contribute to the creation of jobs. Thirdly, Korean companies do not delay any project intentionally or inflate the cost of the project deliberately, and focus on timely completion.

Bangladesh has been a key partner in Korean development cooperation efforts. Currently, it ranks third in Korea's ODA recipients with several ongoing projects focused on education,

Korea has been a crucial partner and friend of Bangladesh

Bilateral trade has not increased at all for more than 10 years



Pandemic poses a lot of difficulties and challenges

Several Korean companies discussing investment possibilities

There are many scholarship programmes provided by Korean government



water sanitation, health, public administration, and transportation. This ODA can be applied to the TVET (Technical Vacation and Education Training) of Bangladesh. There are more than 110 vocational training centers across Bangladesh, but the number of trainers or instructors is small, their technological skills for teaching is lack, and the facilities and equipment for teaching is not sufficient. Therefore, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) can develop projects for strengthening their capacity-building.

Additionally, Korea has emerged as a noteworthy destination for Bangladeshi migrant workers. Between 2008 and 2022, a total of 28,697 workers went to South Korea under the Employment Permit System. Furthermore, there have been success stories of workers who returned from South Korea and utilized the money, experience, and technological skills they gained during their stay to establish their own businesses. The Korean government is dedicated to guaranteeing that migrant workers benefit from safe and cozy working environment.

Korean culture, including K-dramas, K-movies, K-pop, K-art, K-food, and K-beauty, is gaining popularity in Bangladesh. This trend reflects the shared values and creative expressions that bridge the geographical distance between our nations. The Hallyu (Korean Wave), a cross-border cultural phenomenon, will enhance deeper mutual understanding and long-lasting cooperation between Korea and Bangladesh.

The great Bengali poet and the first Asian Nobel Laureate, Rabindrantah Tagore, wrote a poem in 1929 for the Koreans, calling Korea as “the Lamp of the East.” That poem instilled courage and determination to the Korean people. With Tagore's inspiring and shared values of democracy, market economy and human rights, Bangladesh and Korea have cultivated reciprocal relations across all fields. Building on what Korea and Bangladesh have achieved together over the last 50 years, both nations are committed to making the next 50 years a brighter and more prosperous in all areas.

H.E. Park Young-sik
Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of Korea

BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER HOSTS KING'S BIRTHDAY RECEPTION CELEBRATING UK-BANGLADESH PARTNERSHIP

Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury, MP, Honourable Minister of Education, Government of Bangladesh, graced the reception as the guest of honour. The event, hosted by British High Commissioner Sarah Cooke, commemorated the official birthday of His Majesty King Charles III.

Dignitaries from various sectors including the Government of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Parliament, Diplomatic Corps, and representatives from trade, business, academia, social development, arts, culture, media, and sports gathered to celebrate the occasion.

British High Commissioner Sarah Cooke remarked, "It is my pleasure to host this reception to celebrate the official birthday of His Majesty King Charles III. It is also an opportunity to celebrate the strength of the UK-Bangladesh partnership, based on our deep shared history, strong cultural links, and Commonwealth ties."

The King's Birthday Party is an annual event celebrated globally by British High Commissions and Embassies, marking His Majesty The King's birthday on 14th November. His Majesty serves as the Head of the Commonwealth, comprising 56 nations collaborating for prosperity, democracy, and peace.





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CHANGING NATURE OF POWER AND IMPORTANCE OF INDIAN OCEAN-BANGLADESH PERSPECTIVES

Lt Gen (Retd) Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman, PhD

Changing Nature of Power Power shifting is a realistic phenomenon of the international order system; horizontally it shifted from Greeks to Romans to Persians to Ottomans to the Europeans (Anglo-American). It shifted vertically; from Nationalization to Regionalization to Internationalization to Globalization. Then geographically it is shifting from North to South, from West to East. In the geopolitical configuration, till the beginning of the 20th century, we experienced a unipolar world led by the United Kingdom. After the Second World War geopolitics was dominated by bipolar world. With the dismemberment of the USSR, we saw again a unipolar

world. Arguably after 2003, the fluid multipolar world is gradually taking understandable shape. So, power shifting is a dynamic process, in the international system. As a student of 'Structural Realism' theoretically, the modern international system to a great extent is responsible for power competition and shifting of power. Hence, the structure of the international system, and the architecture of the international system largely explain how the states behave on a day-to-day basis in this system. The system is anarchic, there is no higher authority to whom one can fall back, if in trouble. Thus there is a natural tendency to engage in security competition and acquire power because in that situation

others are not capable of hurting. So, in this disordered system, there is conflict, competition, cooperation, alliances, as well as opportunity (those who can exploit).

In the current multipolar fluid situation, we are observing geopolitical and geo-economics containment and counter-containment measures between peer competitors. As US-led unipolarity has been challenged by China, in the process of containment strategy formation of Quad, AUKUS, and building US-led over 180 military bases in the East and South China Sea primarily to contain China. In addition, G-7 with its vision to "Bring together world advanced economics to influence

global trends and tackle pervasive and crosscutting issues and global crisis” put China at bay. As a countermeasure, China has come up with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) formation and expansion of BRICS, New Development Bank, and De-dollarization to break free. In regional space, China has evolved with the ‘String of Pearls Strategy’ to secure its sea line of communication. The other regional heavyweight India, as a response has come up with

Atlantic and Pacific orientation. It was influenced by World Wars, Imperial Japan, Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, Communist China, Korea and Cold War. Nonetheless, no ocean needs strategic stability more than the Indian Ocean. It is surrounded by 37 countries having 1/3 of the world's population. This is the demographic and strategic hub of the 21st century. Indian Ocean houses important choke points like Bab El Mandeb;

navies jockeying for domination. This ocean accounts for ½ of world container traffic and 70% of petroleum products.

The presence of China and India near Hormuz and Bab El Mandeb will be expanding along with the US. Indian Ocean rivalry between the US and China in the Pacific interlocks with the regional rivalry between India and China. In addition, China has a Malacca dilemma, the old fear that the Ming-China world was disrupted by the Portuguese in 1511. In that conflict between the Sultan of Malacca and Admiral Afonso de Albuquerque of Portuguese, China supported the Sultan of Malacca, and ultimately Portuguese defeated the Malaccan Forces. This caused a telling blow to Chinese commerce through the Malacca Strait. China is more of a civilization than of a nation and civilization will always trace back to history. So, in case of strategic issues China shall likely remain engaged with all parties to avoid repetition of the same sufferings. Finally, the Indian Ocean will be where global power dynamics will be revealed, together with the contiguous Near East and energy-rich Central Asia.

The littorals of the Indian Ocean fall within the ‘Rim Land’ that has immense geopolitical significance. Around this ‘Rim Land’ the first great game unfolded about 400 BC between Greeks and Persians and the second great game was between Arabs and Chinese around 750 AD. However, the third great game or new great game in geopolitics between East and West is likely going to be in the Indian Ocean Region.



‘Necklace of Diamond Strategy’ to protect her interest in oceans. So, what we are experiencing these are not rivalry but great power relationships in the anarchical international system.

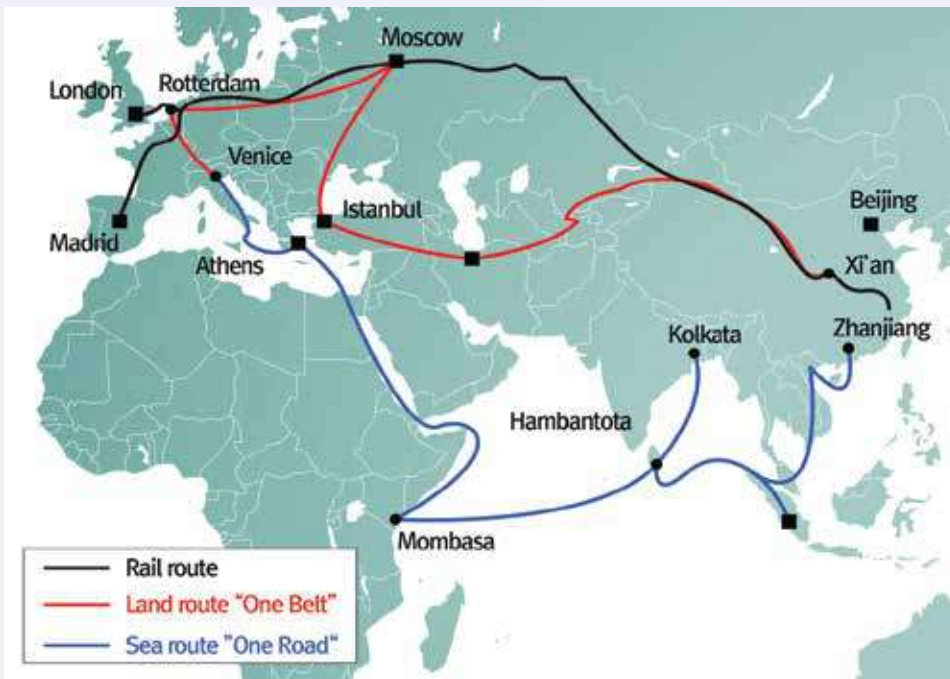
Power asymmetry is a fact of international system however, hegemon has the option either to cooperate or choose to conflict hence there is a natural security competition and the Indian Ocean Region is no exception.

Indian Ocean

The USA and the West ignored the Indian Ocean for their

recently Houthis of Yemen have proved its significance by almost paralyzing the sea line of commerce between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. The strait of Hormuz and Malacca are equally important. It is said, “Whoever is lord of Malacca has his hand on the throat of the world” and “if the world is an egg, Hormuz is the yoke.”

Indian Ocean is an idea where centrality is Islam spreading from Somalia to Indonesia. This has a civilizational connotation where energy politics and world



Initial One Belt, One Road project.

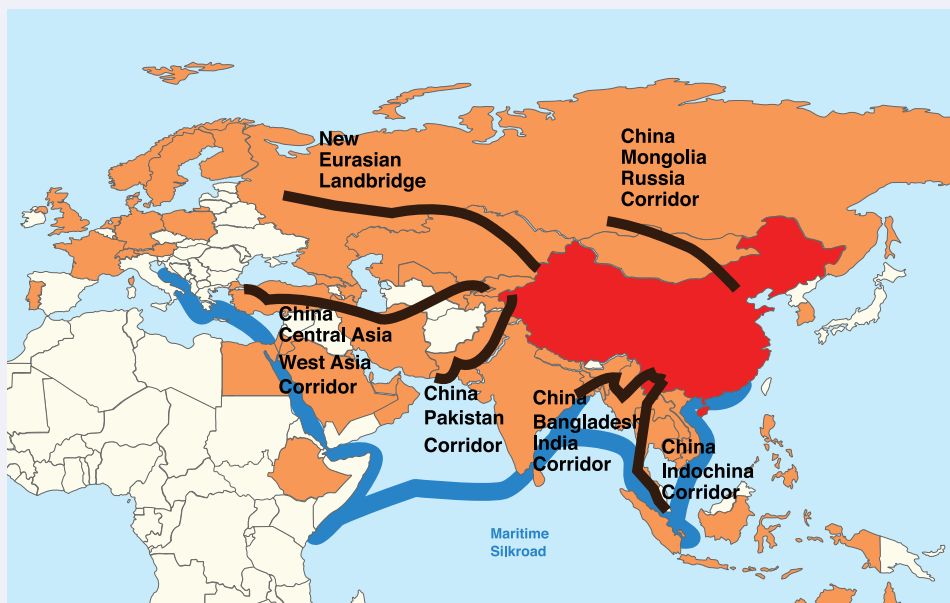
Regional Geopolitics

India Factor: India is the 3rd largest oil consumer after the US and China, she is expanding in the Indian Ocean Region horizontally from peninsular India to the East with her look East and act East policy. The Kaladan project, the India-Myanmar-Thailand highway project, also the right to use naval bases in the East like in Singapore, Vietnam, and Japan. In the West relations with Gulf Cooperation

Council, relations with Iran, and recovering Iraq are worth mentioning. There is a deal with Iran that it will supply 7.5 million tons of liquefied Natural Gas to India annually for 25 years. Iran may be a strategic rear base of India, like Afghanistan against Pakistan. India helping Iran to develop Chabahar Port in the Arabian Sea encouraging a road link from the port to Afghanistan. India has economic

and cultural ties with both Persian and Arabian Shores. Iran also appeals to India as a viable transit state for Central Asian energy.

China Factor: Deng Xiaoping's guidance of peaceful rising; hiding capacities biding time and remaining free from ambition's days are over. China very well remembers what the big powers of Europe, Japan, and the US did to her, between 1850-1950. So, China to maintain its growth would like to remain as powerful as possible in Asia. Hence, there is a shift from Deng Xiaoping's guidance to the China Dream, a powerful China in Asia and a leading power in the world. More than 85% of China-bound oil passes through Malacca and the precarious East and South China Sea where she is being contained by a huge number of military bases by the US and her allies as mentioned earlier. In case of crisis, China will be energy-starved. China's 'Centre of Gravity' is her energy security so to break free from this stranglehold in the East and South China Sea, China devised BRI in 2013.



China in Red, the members of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in orange. The proposed corridors in black (Land Silk Road), and blue (Maritime Silk Road).

The idea is to make the West's containment strategy irrelevant. Through BRI, China is expanding vertically South into the Indian Ocean through pivot countries like Myanmar and Pakistan by building the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. China has also struck a deal with Iran for about 400 billion dollars in 2021 to improve its communication system connecting ports to Afghanistan. Recently China has become a development partner to Afghanistan. In the future, China

will come up with another economic corridor to the Indian Ocean through Afghanistan and Iran. Both these countries suffered and still suffering in the hands of the US-led West, so there is a natural chemistry between them and China. To protect her sea line of communications China has developed several deep-sea ports along the Southern Eurasian 'Rim Land' for dual use (civil and military) in collaboration with host countries.

China at Doklum 2017, Naku La 2021, at Galwan Valley in 2020-2021, and China claiming Arunachal as its territory maybe to irritate India, overload the decision-making cycle and increase its defense expenditure.

Bangladesh Perspectives

Bangladesh holds the key to the result of a long-dormant historical trade route between two rising giants of the 21st century. Earlier the importance

Naku La incidents near the 'Chicken Neck' in 2017 and 2021 and very recently China's reemphasizing claim for Arunachal has made Bangladesh's geophysical location very sensitive. It may be connected that in June 2017, Doklum border tension was created by China near the 'Chicken Neck', and in August 2017, 'Catastrophic Rohingya Ethnic Cleaning' was conducted by Myanmar, the strategic partner of China. Again in January 2021, Naku La border tension was created around the 'Chicken Neck' and Junta in Myanmar conducted a coup in February 2021. These may be co-incident or maybe to keep the other regional powers bogged down with internal dynamics.



The Indian Ocean, a crucial hub for global trade and energy transport, sees significant military presence with bases and fleets from major powers such as the United States, China, and India, reflecting the ongoing geopolitical competition and strategic importance of the region

Looking back into history, Admiral Zheng He (15th century Ming Dynasty Explorer), his story says the Indian Sea was part of 'China's Saga'. China still follows the same main and secondary fleet routes of Zheng He. So, when China develops ports and communication infrastructure in Tanzania, Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia it replicates its past, incidentally 'Ogaden Basin' in Somalia, and Ethiopia has a huge gas reserve. China no longer accepts the Indian Ocean as the Ocean of the Indians. In addition, in recent times border incidents and skirmishes between India and

and strategic significance of the Indian Ocean has been highlighted. This Ocean may be described as divided into two by peninsular India namely Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal. In the apex of the Arabian Sea, Iran and Pakistan are located and volatility created in these countries explains their geopolitical significance. In the Bay of Bengal, the apex country is Bangladesh and to some extent Myanmar. In addition, Bangladesh's geographical location constitution India's geostrategic limitation, the 'Chicken Neck'. The Doklum and

Water sharing is now part of geopolitics, the Yarlung Tsangpo/Brahmaputra River, the Tista River where two regional powers contesting and Bangladesh has been entangled especially on the Tista River issue (the proposed Chinese Tista project is near Indian geostrategic vulnerable 'Chicken Neck'). She is walking on a tightrope. The USA has been pushing Dhaka for a long time for two defense deals, GSOMIA (security and information sharing agreement) and ACSA (logistic agreement). Dhaka was avoiding these possibly to maintain her balanced stance between China and the USA. There are two geopolitical matrixes in the Bay of Bengal Region; the US-Bangladesh-India Triangle and the US-China-India-Bangladesh Quadrangle. In these relationships, there are harmony and disharmony, positive stability, and negative stability.



Rohingya Refugee

For example, Bangladesh-India-US relationship geopolitically is in harmony and positive stability. In the case of the India-China-US-Bangladesh relationship this is only partly in harmony and partly has negative stability. In this complex equation how a smaller country like Bangladesh would navigate in geopolitical murky water is a million-dollar question. Should she balance or bandwagon? Both have positive and negative consequences. Dhaka has chosen to balance, it talks about the inclusive Bay of Bengal and it is a member of both the Indo-Pacific Alliance and BRI.

However, in Bangladesh neighborhood, Myanmar hill tribes are now part of new geopolitics. It's bordered by both India and China with abundant

resources. Chittagong Hill Tracks is not far away. It is likely to be sucked into such a geopolitical vortex. Both regional powers want Myanmar as a Vassal State. Bangladesh is a buffer to China's energy corridor (Myanmar -China gas and oil pipelines). India's anxiousness of 'Maldives Syndrome' is understandable, if Dhaka is leaning to Beijing. China needs stability in Myanmar for the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor as such maintains a balanced relationship with all parties in Myanmar's volatile internal turmoil. The USA is also engaged with the National Unity Government (Aung San Suu Kyi's NLD-led) and 3KC (Kayah, Kayah, Kachin, and Chin State; they have a considerable Christian population and Western Missionaries are active there). It

has promulgated the Burma Act where if the US president feels, military means can also be applied. The Rohingya Act is around the corner. All these substantiate US interest in the neighborhood further complicating the geopolitical landscape. Under these prevailing circumstances, the Rohingya issue is no longer humanitarian or bilateral. It is more of a geopolitical issue now, meaning repatriation likely to be in limbo.

Conclusion

Robert D. Kaplan in his book 'Monsoon' writes about Myanmar "China India and other Asian nations jockeying for position with one of world's worst, weirdest, wealthiest and most strategically placed rogue regimes". In the Rohingya crisis both regional powers including Russia who are considered our strategic/development partners sided with Myanmar. Where did we go wrong? Do we need to revisit our policy? Dhaka needs to address these questions. Meanwhile, India horizontally and China vertically expanding into the Indian Ocean Region, this is the movement of 'Regional Geopolitical Tectonic Plates' in two different directions causing tremors, smaller countries like Bangladesh need to learn how to maneuver in this dicey environment.

Lt Gen (Retd) Mohammad MahfuzurRahman, PhD

Former Principal Staff Officer
Armed Forces Division
Prime Minister's Office
and Advisor, Diplomats World Publication



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THE CRYING NEED: BANGLADESH AND THE NECESSITY OF NORM-SETTING IN THE GEOPOLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE IN SOUTH ASIA

Mansura Amdad

South Asia, in contemporary times, seems to be tied up in a penury—knowledge redux.¹ Harboring one of the biggest numbers of population in the world, South Asia faces a paradox in drawing out the full extent of its human capital. The Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023 denotes that over a third of the poorest people of this world live in the South Asian region² – and rather alarmingly, the index has striking semblances with the Global Knowledge Index (GKI) 2023. All of the South Asian states have performed *sub par* and additionally, among the 133 ranked states, none could

go over the 91st position (see Table 1).³

Although the correlation of poverty with knowledge may not be a causation for the performance in the knowledge

frontier, it still bears the stark picture that the South Asian states have been unable to harness their human capital. In the contestations of critical geopolitics (which illuminates the role of discourse and ideology

and points towards the non-material aspects of power in the subjective setting of *human geography*) vis-à-vis classical geopolitics (dominated by the concerns of territorial interests, national power, and *physical geography*), the South Asian states require stepping up in meeting their crying need of regional connectivity by addressing the concerns of their large demography.⁴

States*	Rank in GKI 2023	Rank in GKI 2022
Bangladesh	112	105
Bhutan	93	89
India	95	91
Nepal	101	108
Pakistan	117	110
Sri Lanka	91	79

Table 1: The South Asian states' performance in the Global Knowledge Index (2022 and 2023).

*Afghanistan and Maldives were not part of the index in both of the years.



Dohazari Cox's Bazar Railway Project

Regional connectivity incentives in South Asia have been in vogue since the 1990s – revolving around the notions of trade and transport connectivity,⁵ information and communications (ICT) connectivity, energy connectivity, and people-to-people connectivity. In the aftermath of the COVID–19 pandemic, the issue of connectivity has taken a new turn, as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) *is currently focussing on towards the seamlessness and sustainability* paradigms of connectivity aimed at the least developed countries (LDCs), the

landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and the small island developing states (SIDS).⁶ In this prospect, the onus is on transport, energy and digital connectivity among the LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS – crucially underpinning the importance of a long-term change for a future of net-zero emission.⁷

However, in the recent discussions, the people-to-people connectivity factor (that crucially ties all the other factors together) has become obscure. The UNESCAP defines people-to-people connectivity as greater mobility crossing borders in tandem with



Bangladeshi diaspora in various countries, showing the global presence of Bangladeshi professionals

ICT connectivity enabling smoother migration – resulting in growth of labour, business, civil society networks, and knowledge systems.⁸ It is observable that the growth in people's informed interaction is the key to ignite all the 'hard' as well as 'soft' infrastructural growth.⁹ Thereby, from this vantage point of critical geopolitics, a closer look at Bangladesh's potential as a norm-setter is duly necessary.

As one of the LDCs seeking to alleviate its status, Bangladesh is required to up its game in several areas pertaining to regional connectivity. The country is well focussed on the 'hard' infrastructural aspects pertaining to trade and transport connectivity, ICT connectivity, and energy connectivity. It has several regional connectivity measures undertaken at the moment; mostly aiming at linking the country internally first, and then connecting with the world. The Ministry of Commerce, the National Board of Revenue, and the Bangladesh Land Port Authority are working together for making the Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project–1 (BRCP–1) a reality, with three components looking at greater trade and transportation facilitation with India and Bhutan, with women empowerment vis-à-vis trade and smoother trading conditions by building better land ports and ICT infrastructure.¹⁰ Notable are the efforts like the 103.5 kilometre Dohazari – Cox's Bazar railway project as a broader part of the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) railway corridor – meeting both economic and ecological



Chattogram Port

demands while increasing transport connectivity,¹¹ the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) sub-regional economic cooperation, with a tangible goal of the BCIM Economic Corridor (BCIM—EC) driven by “open regionalism” and “seamless connectivity” between South and Southeast Asian states.¹²

Bangladesh, in this regard, stands at a critical juncture – while the country is endowed with a population of over 170 million,¹³ the country’s population has often been neglected or the stance on the huge population has mostly borne a negative connotation.¹⁴ While this population is of utmost importance – Bangladesh still requires addressing its huge geopolitical position in terms of its population residing within the country as well as beyond the state. Bangladesh is the 8th most populated country in the world,¹⁵ it is also the 6th largest migrant sending country upon this earth.¹⁶ Therefore, the groundwork for people-to-people connectivity is underway – but how does this huge population still remain a potential to be transformed into actual demonstration of power?

The answer lies in knowledge-based economy (KBE) – a theoretical paradigm of developed countries’ economies for decades. But even beyond this, KBE is a novel term for an age-old saying – that knowledge is the only wealth that increases via sharing. The major proponent of KBE, Paul Romer, has been one of the recipients of the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences (popularly known as the Nobel in Economics) in 2018¹⁷ – for his decades-long work on *ideas* – and the core feature of knowledge and ideas as *imperishable goods*.¹⁸ While some had earlier addressed the immense potential of using the demographic dividend of Bangladesh to attain economic benefits in the future,¹⁹ the key

thrust of the notable personalities in pushing for a KBE has been a moderately recent phenomenon in Bangladesh, yet to be coalesced into a thorough movement.²⁰

The GKI is an eye-opener in this regard. As the index focusses on pre-university education; technical and vocational education and training; higher education; research, development and innovation; information and communications technology; economy; and enabling environment – it shows a pathway by which Bangladesh can not only work on its tangible and intangible measures of knowledge and demography within the country, but also work on the specific sectoral areas where it can provide a leading norm-setting role for other South Asian states. The COVID—19 pandemic starkly pointed out which sectors are going to dominate the future – notably (but not necessarily limited to) “artificial intelligence (AI), information technology (IT), robotics, and environmental problems (including climate change)” – and Bangladesh must hit the bull’s eye so far as these sectors are concerned.²¹



Renewable energy projects in South Asia, emphasizing sustainability



Responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on informal workers in South Asia

If anything, the pioneers of any initiative gain momentum – and given the nature of KBE, early momentum is a pressing matter.

Bangladesh must assume a two-pronged role: internally, strengthening the people-to-people connectivity in

terms of knowledge production and dissemination, and externally, becoming the norm entrepreneur in solidifying the KBE framework in South Asia. The skilled populace of Bangladesh is already making its mark in European, North American, and Oceanian countries. The key issue is addressing the inequalities within and beyond the country and collaborating together with other South Asian states to create a better future for the country and pave the way towards strengthened regional cooperation.

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Lecturer

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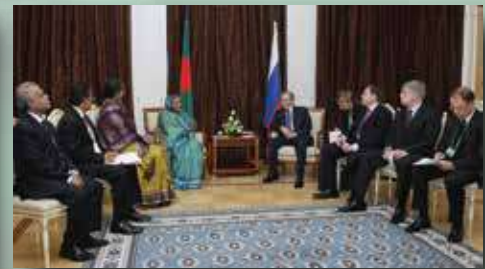
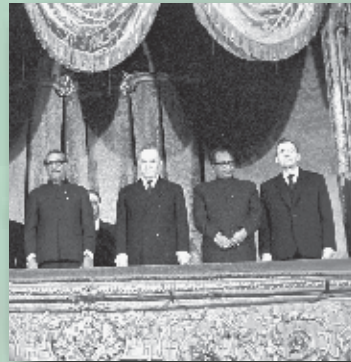
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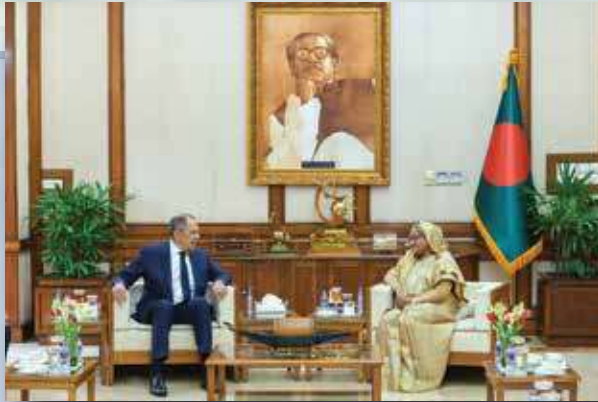
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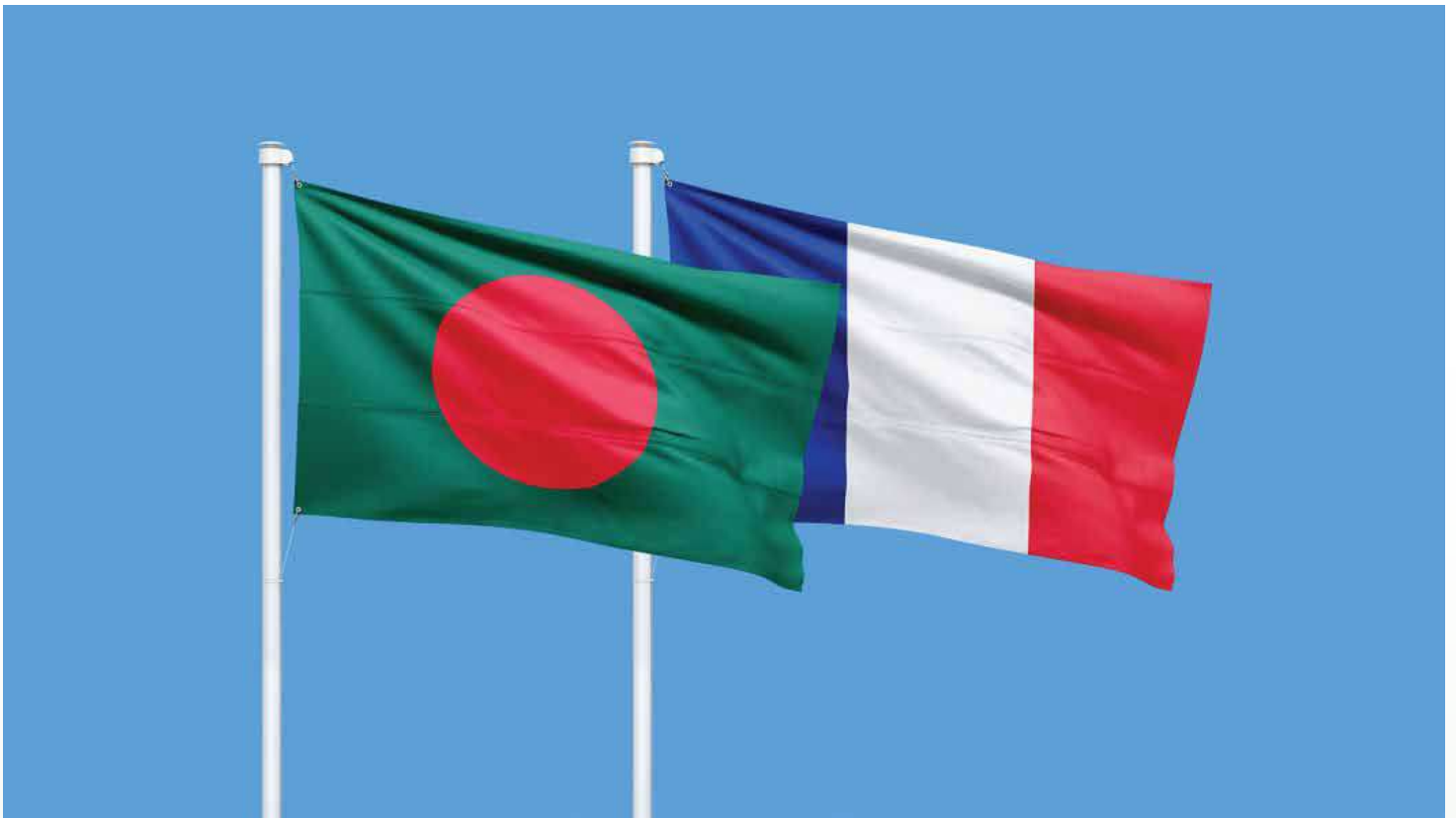
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SHARED HERITAGE RUSSIA AND BANG PARTN



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FRANCE-BANGLADESH TIES: A FLOURISHING PARTNERSHIP FOR A VIBRANT FUTURE

H.E. Marie Masdupuy

The relationship between France and Bangladesh has flourished lately, reaching a new height with President Macron's historical visit to Dhaka in September 2023. This visit marked a joint commitment to establishing a "strategic partnership for peace, prosperity, and people." France expressed confidence in the economic prospects offered by Bangladesh for shared growth and inclusive development and

reiterated its commitment to deepen and broaden bilateral economic partnership through

business collaboration. This economic partnership is already very concrete with flagship projects.



During his visit to Bangladesh in 2023, French President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina solidify bilateral ties

Our accomplishments are numerous, reflecting the wide spectrum of our cooperation :

-Reinforced Economic Ties: Bilateral trade has grown significantly, with France being Bangladesh's fifth-largest export destination in Europe.



President of Bangladesh receiving credentials from French Ambassador Marie Masdupuy at Bangabhaban, December 12, 2022

French companies are actively involved in Bangladesh's development, particularly in engineering, energy, aerospace, digital, blue economy and water sectors.

- Enhanced Development Cooperation: France has reaffirmed its role as a trusted development partner for

Bangladesh. The recent credit facilities agreements between the French Development Agency (AFD) and Bangladesh aim at improving urban governance and infrastructure, as well as supporting Bangladesh's climate budget.

- Collaboration on Climate Action: Both nations share a

strong commitment to tackling climate change. France actively supports Bangladesh's climate resilience efforts and promotes global energy transition initiatives.

When we look ahead, France wishes for a vibrant future for its partnership with Bangladesh. Key areas of focus include:

- Expanding Trade and Investment: encouraging further trade expansion and exploring new avenues for French investment in Bangladesh's growing economy. The Trade and Investment Summit held in Paris last October was a true success in that regard, generating renewed interest by Bangladeshi and French companies.

- Deepening Security Cooperation: collaborating on maritime security, promoting a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific, and providing advanced technical assistance for strategic security infrastructure development.

- Fostering Knowledge Sharing: encouraging cultural and academic exchanges, including through the promotion of studies in France, and promoting scientific and technological cooperation between the two nations.

France believes that a strong France-Bangladesh partnership is essential for promoting peace, prosperity, and sustainable development



Marie Masdupuy, Ambassador of France to Bangladesh, with Her Excellency Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina



French President Emmanuel Macron paid homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi 32

in the region and beyond. This collaboration is being driven by shared values of democracy, human rights, and a rules-based international order.

Bastille Day, celebrated every year on July 14th, is a significant national holiday in France that commemorates the storming of the Bastille

prison in 1789. This event marked the beginning of the French Revolution and symbolizes the end of absolute monarchy and the birth of democracy.

It was a pivotal moment in French history that led to the establishment of the French Republic and the promotion of ideals like liberty, equality, and fraternity. The celebration fosters a sense of national pride and unity among the French people, as it is a time to reflect on our shared history and values.

Overall, Bastille Day is a celebration of freedom, democracy, and the enduring spirit of the French people.

H.E. Marie Masdupuy
Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of France



PHILIPPINES EMBASSY IN BANGLADESH MARKS 126TH INDEPENDENCE DAY WITH CULTURAL GALA

The Philippines Embassy in Bangladesh commemorated the 126th Independence Day with a vibrant celebration at Dhaka Regency Hotel, showcasing rich cultural heritage and culinary delights. The festivities commenced with a solemn flag-raising ceremony led by Ambassador Leo Tito L Ausan, featuring a message from the Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary.

Later in the day, a diplomatic reception highlighted by national anthems, speeches, and cultural performances underscored the strengthening of diplomatic ties between the Philippines and Bangladesh. Notably, Jahangir Kabir Nanok, Minister for Textiles and Jute, graced the occasion as the chief guest, emphasizing the significance of bilateral relations.

The celebration continued the following day with a Filipino Culinary Night, curated by Chef Datu Shariff Pendatun, offering a taste of southern Philippines delicacies and regional specialties. Participants relished traditional dishes, further enhancing the cultural exchange between the two nations.

In a statement, the embassy expressed gratitude to all attendees for their contributions in making the event memorable. The Philippine Independence Day, observed annually on June 12th, commemorates the country's liberation from Spanish colonial rule in 1898, featuring festivities that honor its rich history and heritage.





UNOPS BANGLADESH CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN ENGINEERING DAY: A SALUTE TO WOMEN SHAPING INFRASTRUCTURE

Shirin Sultana

On June 24, 2024, the UNOPS Bangladesh office buzzed with unique energy as it celebrated International Women in Engineering. The event transcended mere commemoration; it became a platform to acknowledge the transformative power of engineering and, more importantly, to celebrate the remarkable contributions of women in this field.

The theme for International Women in Engineering Day 2024, #Enhancedbyengineering, resonated throughout the event.

Discussions centered on how engineering ingenuity paved the way for a more sustainable future. UNOPS Bangladesh brought this theme to life, showcasing how Bangladeshi engineers tackle challenges like climate change and resource scarcity through groundbreaking solutions.

Shedding Light on Women in Infrastructure

However, the celebration had a deeper purpose – to spotlight women's often-overlooked contributions to infrastructure development. UNOPS Bangladesh celebrated the significant and

growing number of women engineers who are shaping the landscape of infrastructure in Bangladesh.

We were fortunate to have a panel of inspiring speakers who shared their journeys and experiences with the enthusiastic student audience from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), BRAC University, and United International University (UIU). Their stories provided invaluable insights into the challenges and rewards of a career in engineering and the unique



UNOPS Celebrates International Women in Engineering Day 2024

perspectives women bring to the table. Open discussions delved deeper, exploring the unique challenges and opportunities faced by women in the infrastructure sector. These discussions aimed not only to bridge the gender gap but also to foster a more inclusive environment that empowers women engineers to thrive.

UNOPS: Championing Gender Equality in Infrastructure

UNOPS, a global leader in infrastructure, procurement, and project management, strongly advocates for gender equality. It actively works to dismantle barriers and create a more inclusive environment within the

engineering field, encouraging women's participation at all levels.

This commitment was evident throughout the International Day of Women in Engineering celebration at UNOPS Bangladesh. By showcasing the achievements of women engineers and fostering discussions on gender parity, UNOPS is taking concrete steps to pave the way for a more diverse and equitable infrastructure sector, not just in Bangladesh but across the globe. This event highlighted the importance of women's contributions to engineering and focused on the Sustainable Development Goal

(SDG 5), which advocates for gender equality.

The event featured speakers Shamina Reza Ava (Eminent Architect), Fatema Begum Mita (CAD Architect), Maria Wernevi (Advisor to the Regional Director, Project Management and Gender, Diversity & Social Inclusion, Asia Region, UNOPS), and Sudhir Muralidharan (Country Manager of UNOPS Bangladesh). While opening the session Sudhir Muralidharan said ‘Women engineers don't just solve problems—they revolutionize solutions. Their diverse perspectives are the blueprint for a better world. Today, we celebrate their ingenuity, resilience, and the future they're building for us all’. Maria Wernevi discussed the importance of gender-sensitive project management and the positive impact of inclusive practices in engineering projects. She stressed the need for policies that promote gender equality and support the professional growth of women engineers. Shamina Reza Ava shared her journey as a pioneering woman in engineering, addressing the societal and workplace challenges women face. She highlighted the need for visible role models and systemic changes to create a more inclusive environment. Ms. Ava emphasised that women’s unique perspectives are crucial for innovation and solving global challenges.

Fatema Begum Mita discussed the significant obstacles women in engineering encounter through her diverse experiences, including a lack of workplace





A UNOPS engineer stands in front of a key cultural heritage site undergoing repair in Albania

flexibility, unclear promotion paths, and limited mentorship. She underscored the importance of visibility and representation, stating that celebrating women engineers' achievements inspires young girls to pursue careers in the field.

Focus on Bangladesh:

Women in Bangladesh have moved forward in leaps and bounds over the last few years, carving their identities in every sector. Despite a patriarchal society, women have made their presence felt and their contributions known. However, there remains a sector where female participation still needs to improve despite having great potential. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields are crucial for economic growth and innovation. However, women remain underrepresented in these areas, particularly in engineering. Bangladesh presents a concerning picture. Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), a leading institution, reports that only 6% of

engineering professionals are women, with most of them concentrated in junior positions.

Building a Balanced Workforce: UNOPS' Commitment to Gender Equality in Engineering UNOPS plays a crucial role in infrastructure development worldwide. While ensuring strong infrastructure is key, UNOPS recognizes the importance of a diverse and inclusive workforce to achieve this goal. This includes promoting gender equality,

particularly within the engineering field, traditionally dominated by men. Empowering Women in Engineering: UNOPS' Strategic Approach

UNOPS is pioneering gender equality in engineering through multifaceted initiatives:

1. Integrated Gender Lens:

Embedding gender considerations throughout project lifecycles, UNOPS actively advocates for the recruitment of women engineers by local authorities and contractors.

2. Skill Enhancement: UNOPS invests in targeted STEM training programs, equipping women with cutting-edge skills for infrastructure development and fostering their career growth.

3. Mentorship Ecosystem: By cultivating a robust network of experienced professionals, UNOPS provides invaluable guidance and support to aspiring female engineers, dismantling barriers to entry and advancement.

4. Progressive Workplace Culture: UNOPS champions an inclusive environment with flexible work arrangements and



A Nepali homeowner receives a consultation from a UNOPS engineer



UNOPS engineers inspect a construction site in Turkana, Kenya

proactive measures to counter gender bias. Notably, UNOPS offers generous parental leave policies: six months of maternity leave and four months of paid paternity leave.

Transformative Impact and Future Trajectory:

● **Diversity Dividend:** By broadening the engineering talent pool, UNOPS infuses infrastructure projects with diverse perspectives, driving innovation.

● **Holistic Infrastructure Solutions:** A more representative workforce leads to infrastructure designs that are inherently more inclusive and responsive to

varied user needs.

● **Paradigm Shift:** Highlighting the achievements of women engineers not only inspires the next generation of STEM professionals but also challenges entrenched gender stereotypes.

While quantitative data on female engineer employment may be limited, UNOPS' comprehensive approach is catalyzing significant shifts in the engineering landscape. These efforts are instrumental in advancing gender parity and fostering inclusivity within the realm of infrastructure development.

How is UNOPS making this change?

UNOPS is driving change in the way young women view and can access the engineering and construction sector through several key initiatives:

- 1. Highlighting success stories:** Showcasing female engineers like Verona Ymeri Hoxha in Kosovo to inspire the next generation.
- 2. Promoting leadership:** Actively encouraging qualified women to take on leadership roles, even in challenging environments.
- 3. Mentorship and support:** Placing women in senior positions to serve as role models and mentors for aspiring female leaders.
- 4. Inclusive practices:** Implement mandatory PSEAH criteria on sites, ensure female toilets, and follow an inclusive building manual.
- 5. Dismantling barriers:** Tackling unconscious bias, offering flexible work arrangements, and providing targeted training programs.

UNOPS' commitment goes beyond achieving gender parity. It's about creating a more equitable and sustainable future in construction. By empowering women to lead, UNOPS ensures that infrastructure projects are robust and truly inclusive.

Shirin Sultana
Partnership Advisor
UNOPS Bangladesh



কষ্টের সঞ্চয়ে কামিয়াব হোক আজন্সঞ্চিত হজের নিয়ত

ধর্মপ্রাণ মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের পবিত্র হজ পালনের সুবিধার্থে গ্লোবাল ইসলামী ব্যাংক নিয়ে এলো 'লাব্বাইক'-মুদারাবা হজ ডিপোজিট স্কিম। ধারাবাহিক সঞ্চয়ে সত্যি হোক আপনার হজ যাত্রা।

- প্রচলিত হজ স্কিমগুলোর মধ্যে সর্বাধিক সুবিধাসম্বলিত
- বার্ষিক ৮% মুনাফা (প্রাক্কলিত)
- সর্বোচ্চ ২০ বছর মেয়াদি স্কিম



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HONORING 248 YEARS OF DEMOCRACY: THE UNITED STATES' COMMITMENT TO FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

H.E. Peter D. Haas

When our Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776, it marked the birth of a nation founded on the principles of freedom, the rule of law, and the pursuit of happiness. From that moment, the people of the United States began their democratic journey and stewardship of our representative government.

Our Constitution's preamble continues to guide the American people forward, as it has for 248 years:

"We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility,

provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

A crucial step in forming this "more perfect union" occurred more than a decade after 1776 on April 30, 1789. George Washington arrived in what is now downtown New York City, then the temporary capital of the United States, to take an oath of office as the first President of the United States of America.

The event – now termed inauguration – was without precedent and Washington delivered the first-ever Presidential speech to the elected body chosen to represent the American people, the United States Congress.

Washington stated that the continuation of American democracy was "entrusted to the hands of the American people."

Fast forward nearly two and a half centuries. We are still on that journey and our democracy continues to grow and evolve.

The Declaration, U.S. Constitution, and Bill of Rights articulate the fundamental rights of individuals and the responsibilities of government.

These rights did not apply equally to all Americans in 1776, but our founding ideals inspired future Americans to be self-critical and improve on democracy, even if change took time.

And those changes brought the progress we needed.

We abolished slavery with the 13th Amendment, expanded representation when women voted for the first time in 1920, and enshrined the rights for all Americans, regardless of race or color, through the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. In 2015, our Supreme Court affirmed marriage equality.

Our democratic journey has been a winding path – reflecting aspirations and imperfections that come with the pursuit of a more perfect union.



H.E. Dr. Hasan Mahmud, MP, Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, delivering his speech at the 248th Independence Day reception hosted by the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka

The year 2024 is an unprecedented year for the world's democracies. More people are voting in 2024 than at any other time in history, with over 60 national elections worldwide, including in Bangladesh and the United States. Yet democracy itself faces challenges globally.

President Biden has called the contest between democracy and autocracy the challenge of our time.

Democracy is not easy. Its benefits may not appear overnight. But fairly elected governments unleash human potential and defend human dignity.

Today I'm proud to say that the United States has had 59 presidential elections and transfers of power. Our current Congress is the most diverse in American history, with Generation Z represented and 133 lawmakers identifying as Black, Hispanic, Asian American, or multiracial. More women are in Congress than ever before.

And as we celebrate American independence tonight in Bangladesh, I am reminded that we are on a collective journey.

As a partner, and with humility, the United States has and will continue to point out challenges to democracy in Bangladesh. I sincerely believe that the ability to discuss and address today's challenges leads to a better tomorrow. And I am optimistic about the future.

Like July Fourth, March 26, 1971, is similarly recognized as the birth of Bangladesh. You also earned independence through the sacrifice of brave patriots fighting against tyranny.

Fast forward 53 years. The relationship between the United States and Bangladesh is drawn from our shared struggle for self-governance and independence.

From the early days of independence to Bangladesh's current status as a rapidly developing economy, Bangladesh has shown resilience and made significant strides in improving literacy, reducing poverty, and enhancing healthcare. Bangladeshi initiatives have opened educational opportunities for women and girls, and promoted women's participation in the workforce.

At my confirmation hearing in 2021 to become U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh, I said: "For the people of Bangladesh to realize their full potential, they must



Ambassador Peter Haas eloquently addressing the audience at the grand 248th Independence Day reception, graciously hosted by the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka



Fireworks are the biggest and most well-known event on the 4th of July. Every single community, town, and the city will put on their own firework show



4th of July is characterized by the elaborate and fun-filled parades that take place simultaneously in cities across America

also be free to express themselves.” Express themselves as individuals, express themselves through a free media, and express themselves through labor unions.

I still believe this.

And let me now add: As the United States and Bangladesh strive towards a “more perfect union,” the media and free press ensure transparency and accountability. Electoral systems, which always should be unpredictable, underscore the integrity of representative government.

The United States stands by the Bangladeshi people, civil society, and the media in their ongoing pursuit of the rule of law, transparency, and accountability.

Our coming together here in Dhaka is a celebration of what is possible. In this year of elections, one thing remains true: The destiny of democratic government is justly placed into the hands of the people.

People like you. People who will make a difference.

H.E. Peter D. Haas

Ambassador

United States of America to Bangladesh

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DHAKA: A PORTRAIT OF AN ARTWORK THROUGH THE EYES OF A FILIPINA DIPLOMAT

Lynn R. Gutierrez

When people ask me why I chose Dhaka for my first foreign assignment, I tell them: why not? I love challenges. I love exploring new things and places. I love adventure. And Dhaka did not disappoint. Barely three months in this booming city, I have experienced so many amazing things but my favorite experience yet is sipping this delicious Tandoori tea along the sidewalks of Uttara, eating grilled fish sprinkled with mango powder in Purbachal, and sipping a lychee mojito at Raindrop Garden Cafe while listening to Filipino music.

Dhaka, the vibrant capital of Bangladesh, is a gem waiting to be explored. Stepping foot into this bustling metropolis, one is



Ordered a cup of Tandoori from my favorite vendor in Uttara

immediately engulfed in a whirlwind of sights, sounds, and scents. The chaos of the streets, the colorful markets, and the rich display of cultures coexisting harmoniously—it's an olfactory banquet like no other.

Language may be a barrier at times, but what truly bridges the gap is the warmth of Bangladeshi hospitality. From the rickshaw wallahs navigating through traffic with unparalleled skill to the street vendors serving up delectable snacks on every corner, the people of Dhaka never fail to greet you with a smile and extend a helping hand.

Amidst the hustle and bustle of this dynamic city, one finds solace in the embrace of the Filipino Community here in Bangladesh. Despite being thousands of miles away from home, the camaraderie and support within our community have made my almost four

months of stay here in Dhaka not only bearable but truly memorable and rewarding. Whether it's celebrating traditional Filipino festivals or simply sharing stories over a plate of adobo, being surrounded by familiar faces has made Dhaka feel a little bit more like home.



Amazed by the wealth of sea food while feeling at home in this riverside restaurant in Purbachal

As a Filipina diplomat, my dream is to further boost the trade relations between the Philippines and Bangladesh. With both countries boasting dynamic economies and a wealth of opportunities waiting to be tapped into, there is immense potential for growth and collaboration. From fostering partnerships in key industries such as agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, and technology to facilitating cultural exchanges and promoting tourism, there are endless avenues to explore in strengthening the ties between our two nations. Beyond the realm of business and diplomacy, my mission is also to introduce further Filipino culture and heritage to our friends here in Bangladesh. Whether it's showcasing the beauty of our traditional dances and music or tantalizing their taste buds with the flavors of Filipino cuisine, I believe that cultural exchange is the cornerstone of building lasting



Good food, good ambience, and great company over the familiar tune of Filipino music at Raindrops Cafe

friendships and mutual understanding.

Even as I write this article, I am aware that my journey in Dhaka is far from over. There are still countless places to visit, people to meet, and experiences to savor. From exploring the historic landmarks of Old Dhaka to immersing myself in the vibrant arts and music scene, there's a whole world waiting to be discovered right at my doorstep.

Dhaka, through the eyes of a Filipina diplomat, is a city teeming with life, culture, and endless possibilities. It is a place where every corner holds a new discovery, and where every encounter leaves a lasting impression. And as I continue to navigate this high-spirited metropolis, I am grateful for the opportunity to call Dhaka my home away from home.

Lynn R. Gutierrez

Third Secretary and Vice Consul
Embassy of Republic of Philippines in Bangladesh



THE ARCHITECT OF WELLNESS: BANGABANDHU'S HEALTH INITIATIVES IN POST-INDEPENDENT BANGLADESH

Prof. Dr. Abu Nasir Rizvi

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of Bangladesh, returned to his homeland on January 10, 1972, after enduring a harrowing imprisonment in Pakistan. His return marked the dawn of a new era for the war-torn nation. Bangladesh had just emerged from a devastating war of independence, and its infrastructure was in ruins. As the new Prime Minister, Bangabandhu faced the colossal task of rebuilding the country from scratch. One of his primary focuses was on the health sector, recognizing it as a fundamental necessity for the well-being and development of the nation.

Bangabandhu's vision for a prosperous Bangladesh was deeply rooted in ensuring the basic necessities for all citizens. This was reflected in the Constitution of Bangladesh, which was formulated and enacted in just 11 months under his leadership. The Constitution explicitly acknowledges health as a basic necessity. Article 15 of the Constitution states that it is the fundamental responsibility of the state to provide basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and medical care. Additionally, Article 18 emphasizes the state's duty to raise the level of nutrition and improve public health.

Upon taking office, Bangabandhu took swift action to address the immediate health needs of those affected by the war. He initiated measures for the treatment of severely wounded freedom fighters and began rebuilding hospitals that had been destroyed during the conflict. Recognizing the large number of individuals who had been disabled during the war, he established a rehabilitation center in Dhaka to provide care and support for these individuals.

One of the most significant and compassionate initiatives undertaken by Bangabandhu was his support for the women who



Sheikh Mujibur Rahman established the Women's Rehabilitation Board, setting up 22 health centers and 11 vocational training centers across the country to support women's health and economic independence

had been subjected to horrific sexual violence during the war. It is estimated that about 200,000 women were raped by the Pakistani army and their collaborators. Many of these women were left traumatized and stigmatized. To address their physical and mental health needs, and to restore their dignity, Bangabandhu recognized them as "Birangonas" (the brave ones). He established the Women Rehabilitation Board, which set

up 22 health centers across the country to provide medical care, and 11 vocational training centers to help these women become economically independent. This initiative was pivotal in reintegrating these women into society.

Bangabandhu also recognized the importance of ensuring an adequate supply of medicines. He took steps to import medicines to meet domestic



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman among the cyclone affected people, listening to the stories of their suffering (1974)

demand through the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB). These medicines were then distributed by the Medical Association to ensure they reached the healthcare centers that needed them the most. To encourage self-sufficiency, he supported local pharmaceutical companies in producing medicines and established the Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS) to enhance medical education and training.

Bangabandhu's vision extended to expanding healthcare infrastructure across the country. He took groundbreaking steps to ensure that healthcare services were accessible to people at all levels, including district, thana (sub-district), and union levels. He converted thana-level hospitals into 10-bed facilities, where MBBS doctors and consultants could provide services. This initiative laid the foundation for a healthcare system that aimed to bring medical services to the doorsteps of the common people.

Bangabandhu's vision for healthcare was not limited to urban centers. He understood the importance of reaching rural areas, where the majority of the population lived. He pioneered the concept of Community Clinics with the aim of providing primary healthcare services at the grassroots level. These clinics were intended to serve as the first point of contact for healthcare, providing essential services and reducing the burden on higher-level healthcare facilities.

Bangabandhu placed a special emphasis on maternal and child health. He aimed to reduce child

and maternal mortality rates by prioritizing emergency medical care and ensuring access to health and family welfare services for all citizens. This focus was crucial in a country where high mortality rates among mothers and children were prevalent. His policies laid the groundwork for significant improvements in these areas in the years to come.

Understanding that prevention is better than cure, Bangabandhu

professionals. He took steps to enhance the training and development of doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers. He encouraged higher medical education and training abroad and established institutions to provide postgraduate medical education and training. His efforts ensured that the healthcare workforce was equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide quality care.

disaster response. He allocated properties to establish the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, which was tasked with providing medical and other aid during emergencies. This initiative was crucial in a country frequently affected by natural disasters, ensuring that medical care was available to those in need during such times.

Nutrition was another critical area that Bangabandhu addressed. He established the Nutrition Institution to provide nutritional support to the population. Recognizing the link between nutrition and health, he implemented measures to ensure food security and improve the nutritional status of the population. These efforts contributed to significant improvements in public health over the years.

Bangabandhu's tenure as Prime Minister was tragically cut short on August 15, 1975. However, the foundations he laid for the health sector have had a lasting impact. His vision and initiatives set the stage for the remarkable progress that Bangladesh has made in the health sector over the past five decades. Today, Bangladesh is recognized for its achievements in reducing childhood and maternal mortality rates, expanding immunization coverage, and improving overall public health.

The country's health indicators have seen significant improvements. Life expectancy at birth has increased from 46 years in 1970 to 73 years in 2020.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina materialising Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's dream

established the National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM). This institution was tasked with implementing preventive healthcare measures and conducting research to address public health issues. By promoting preventive healthcare, Bangabandhu aimed to reduce the incidence of diseases and improve the overall health of the population.

Bangabandhu recognized that a robust healthcare system required well-trained

Given the high population growth rate at the time, Bangabandhu established the Department of Family Planning to address population control. He understood that managing the population growth was essential for the country's economic development and the well-being of its citizens. Through effective family planning programs, the annual population growth rate was significantly reduced over the years.

Bangabandhu also focused on emergency medical services and



Community health clinic in Bangladesh

The neonatal mortality rate has dropped from 96.34 per 1,000 live births in 1971 to 17.49 in 2020. Similarly, the infant mortality rate has declined from 137.2 per 1,000 live births in 1971 to 24.32 in 2020. These achievements are a testament to the solid foundation laid by Bangabandhu.

Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the current Prime Minister of Bangladesh, has been pivotal in materializing her father's vision for a robust healthcare system. Under her leadership, Bangladesh has made remarkable strides in the health sector, continuing the legacy of prioritizing public health established by Bangabandhu.

One of the major achievements under her guidance is the

significant reduction in child and maternal mortality rates. According to UNICEF, the under-five mortality rate dropped from 56 per 1,000 live births in 2006 to 28 in 2019. Additionally, maternal mortality decreased from 322 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2001 to 173 in 2017, as reported by the World Bank.

Sheikh Hasina has also overseen the expansion of the immunization program, with 83.9% of children under one year fully vaccinated in 2019, up from just 2% in the 1980s. The establishment of over 13,000 Community Clinics, which provide primary healthcare services to rural populations, stands as a testament to her commitment to accessible healthcare for all.

Moreover, her government's swift response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including a robust vaccination campaign, has been internationally recognized. The World Health Organization praised Bangladesh for its efficient management of the pandemic, ensuring widespread vaccine coverage despite limited resources. These efforts highlight Sheikh Hasina's dedication to fulfilling Bangabandhu's vision of a healthy, prosperous Bangladesh.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's vision for the health sector was revolutionary. He recognized the importance of healthcare as a fundamental right and took comprehensive measures to ensure its accessibility and quality. His initiatives in the early years of Bangladesh's independence set the benchmark for the nation's healthcare system. As Bangladesh continues to develop, the legacy of Bangabandhu's vision for a healthy and prosperous nation remains a guiding force. His dedication to improving the health and well-being of the people of Bangladesh is a testament to his enduring legacy and visionary leadership.

Prof. Dr. Abu Nasir Rizvi
Dean BSMMU &
Advisor, Diplomats World Publication

PRIME MINISTER SEEKS SWEDEN'S SUPPORT FOR SMOOTH LDC GRADUATION



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has requested Sweden's support for Bangladesh's smooth transition from a Least Developed Country (LDC). During a farewell meeting with Swedish Ambassador Alexandra Berg von Linde, she emphasized the need for GSP Plus facilities. Ambassador von Linde expressed Sweden's interest in assisting Bangladesh and highlighted their commitment to expanding cooperation in the Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector, with a focus on sustainability.

Discussions also covered investment in Bangladesh's Special Economic Zones and the Rohingya crisis. The Prime Minister voiced concerns over Myanmar's internal conflict affecting Rohingya repatriation, while the Ambassador agreed on the necessity of a conducive environment for their return. The meeting was attended by senior officials, including Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin and Principal Secretary M. Tofazzel Hossain Miah.

EU AMBASSADORS ENGAGE IN WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSIONS WITH LAW MINISTER ANISUL HUQ ON LABOUR LAW REFORM, CYBER-SECURITY, AND DATA PROTECTION



EU Ambassadors held an extensive discussion with Honorable Law Minister Anisul Huq, MP, addressing key issues including labour law reform, cyber-security, and data protection. The meeting facilitated a robust exchange of ideas aimed at enhancing legislative frameworks and ensuring the protection of digital and labor rights.

During the discussion, both parties emphasized the importance of modernizing labour laws to better protect workers' rights and align with international standards. The dialogue on cyber-security underscored the need for comprehensive measures to safeguard national and personal data against emerging threats. Additionally, the conversation on data protection focused on establishing robust protocols to ensure the privacy and security of citizens' information in the digital age.

This engagement reflects a shared commitment to fostering collaborative efforts between the EU and Bangladesh in addressing critical legislative and security challenges.

BANGLADESH SEEKS EXTENDED TRADE BENEFITS FROM CHINA



Chinese IDCPC Minister Liu Jianchao met with Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud today. Dr. Mahmud requested continued DFQF market access for Bangladeshi products beyond 2026 and urged increased exports to China. He also sought Chinese support for Bangladesh's BRICS partnership and assistance in major infrastructure projects. Minister Liu assured support and praised Bangladesh's development. Both ministers anticipated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's upcoming visit to China.

IFRC PRESIDENT KATE FORBES LAUDS BANGLADESH'S DISASTER RESPONSE AND HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS IN MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER HASAN MAHMUD



The visiting President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Mrs. Kate Forbes met with Foreign Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud, MP at his office.

She commended the government's response in the aftermath of Cyclone Remal recently and also in dealing with the protracted Rohingya humanitarian situation.

The Bangladesh Foreign Minister welcomed the IFRC President on her maiden visit to Bangladesh, and also within a short period of assuming office. He recalled the work of ICRC and IFRC in support of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) over the years, especially for disaster response and maternal health service delivery.

The IFRC President shared her experience of visiting Satkhira and Cox's Bazar, and encouraged

Bangladesh to share some of its innovative humanitarian assistance models with other countries. Minister Mahmud suggested operating additional hospitals in certain major cities in the country under the aegis of the National Red Crescent Society.

They also discussed the evolving situation in Myanmar's Rakhine State, and the prevailing scenario for humanitarian support by interested international partners. The Bangladesh Minister urged BDRCS to consider expanding its activities in support of the Rohingya sheltered in Bhashan Char.

The IFRC President expressed interest in working with Bangladesh in advancing the Federation's work on climate change and migration. Minister Mahmud assured of Bangladesh's constructive engagement at the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in October 2024.

Mrs. Forbes also appreciated the work of the nominated Bangladesh member in the IFRC Governing Board that she presides over.

Dr. M. U. Kabir Chowhdury, Chairman, BDRCS, and Mr. Alberto Bocanegra, IFRC Representative in Bangladesh were also present.

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM'S HIGH COMMISSIONER AND DIPLOMATIC CORPS DEAN VISIT DMP COMMISSIONER IN DHAKA



On July 15, 2024, His Excellency Haji Haris bin Othman, Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam in Bangladesh, accompanied by Haji Rozaimie bin Dato Paduka Haji Abdullah, First Secretary of the High Commission of Brunei Darussalam in

Bangladesh, paid a courtesy call on Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Mr. Habibur Rahman, BPM (Bar), PPM (Bar), at the DMP Headquarters.

The visit was attended by prominent DMP officials, including Dr. Mahid Uddin, BPM-Bar, Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime and Operations), and Mr. Md. Asaduzzaman, BPM-Bar, Additional Commissioner of Police (Counter Terrorism & Transnational Crime). The meeting marked a significant step in strengthening cooperation within the Diplomatic Enclave in Dhaka and enhancing collaborative efforts in law enforcement with the DMP.

BANGLADESH SEEKS ASEAN'S SUPPORT TO BECOME ITS SECTORAL DIALOGUE PARTNER



At the 31st ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) held in Vientiane recently, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mr. Md Rais Hasan Sarower, ndc, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs called for strong support from ASEAN Member States for Bangladesh to become Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN.

Highlighting the critical role of ASEAN in resolving the Rohingya crisis, Mr. Rais emphasized the need for stronger and more effective cooperation from ASEAN leaders and ARF Member States to ensure the safe, sustainable, and dignified return of

forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals from their temporary shelter in Bangladesh to their homeland in Myanmar.

Drawing on the foreign policy dictum of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, "Friendship to all, malice towards none," Director General Rais reiterated Bangladesh's commitment to and continued support for ARF activities aimed at promoting collective security, peace, and shared prosperity.

On the sidelines of the 31st ARF SOM, Mr. Rais held bilateral meetings with Ms. Michelle Chan, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, and Ms Dato' Astanah Abdul Aziz, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN and discussed issues of mutual interest.

The 31st ARF SOM was chaired by H.E. Mr. Thongphane Savanphet, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR. Senior officials at the level of Foreign Secretaries and Ambassadors from 27 ARF Member States participated in that meeting.

RUSSIA DAY CELEBRATED IN BANGLADESH



On June 12, 2024, the Russian Embassy in Bangladesh hosted a reception for Russia Day. The event featured a concert titled "Power of Love, Power of Light" by AtomStroyExport, with

performances by the Western Military District Ensemble of Song and Dance.

Ambassador H.E. Mr. Alexander Mantyskiy spoke about Russia's foreign policy and criticized Western double standards. Chief Guest H.E. Mr. Anisul Huq, Bangladesh's Minister of Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs, highlighted the long-standing partnership between Russia and Bangladesh.

The event also included an exhibition on Russia-UNESCO cooperation and an awards ceremony for the Bangladeshi winners of the Andrei Stenin International Press Photo Contest 2023. The celebration was attended by diplomats, officials, business leaders, and cultural figures.

JICA AND DMP HOST ROAD SAFETY POSTER AND SLOGAN CONTEST AWARDS



Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), in collaboration with Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), organised the “Poster and Slogan Contest Awards Ceremony” for the Dhaka Road Traffic Safety Project.

The award ceremony was held on June 6, 2024, at the National Theatre Hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in the capital. Students from 16 schools and 11 universities around Dhaka city participated in the contest to demonstrate interest and engagement in the issue of road safety, reads a press release.

DMP initiated the Dhaka Road Safety Project with technical support from JICA. The project, aimed at enhancing road safety around Dhaka, focuses on multiple key areas.

As part of this, DMP and JICA organised the Poster and Slogan Contest, a significant step in heightening public awareness and engaging the community.

Their efforts were recognised with awards under various categories, each one symbolising a

significant cause, DMP Commissioner Award, DMP Additional Commissioner (Traffic) Award, JICA Award, JETRO Award, JCIAD – Nippon Signal Award, JCIAD – Tekken Corporation Award, and DRSP Award.

On this occasion, Habibur Rahman, bpm (Bar), ppm (Bar), commissioner, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, commented, “The students at the schools and the universities today are going to be the caretakers of the country in the future. I expect that through awareness programs like DRSP, the young population will not only be aware of traffic safety and obey the regulations themselves but also encourage their friends and family to do the same and become ambassadors of traffic safety.”

Md Munibur Rahman bpm, project director, DRSP & ADC (Traffic), Dhaka Metropolitan Police delivered the opening speech at the ceremony. Md Jahangir Alam, project manager, DRSP & ADC (Traffic-Admin & Research) presented the project brief and showcased DMP’s Traffic awareness activity in this program.

Over 700 participants, including officials from DMP, expert team members from JICA, personnel from Japan External Trade Organisation, officials from the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and students and teachers from sixteen schools and eleven universities, whose presence added immense value to the ceremony.

US SAYS IT WILL REMAIN BANGLADESH’S STEADFAST PARTNER IN ROHINGYA REFUGEE RESPONSE



The United States has said it will continue to advocate with countries in the region, and at the United Nations, for a peaceful resolution of the

conflict in Myanmar so that the Rohingyas and others displaced by the violence can safely return home.

"Until that day arrives, however, Bangladesh should know that the United States will remain a steadfast partner in the Rohingya refugee humanitarian response," said Regional Refugee Coordinator at the US Embassy, Mackenzie Rowe, during a small group briefing at the American Centre.

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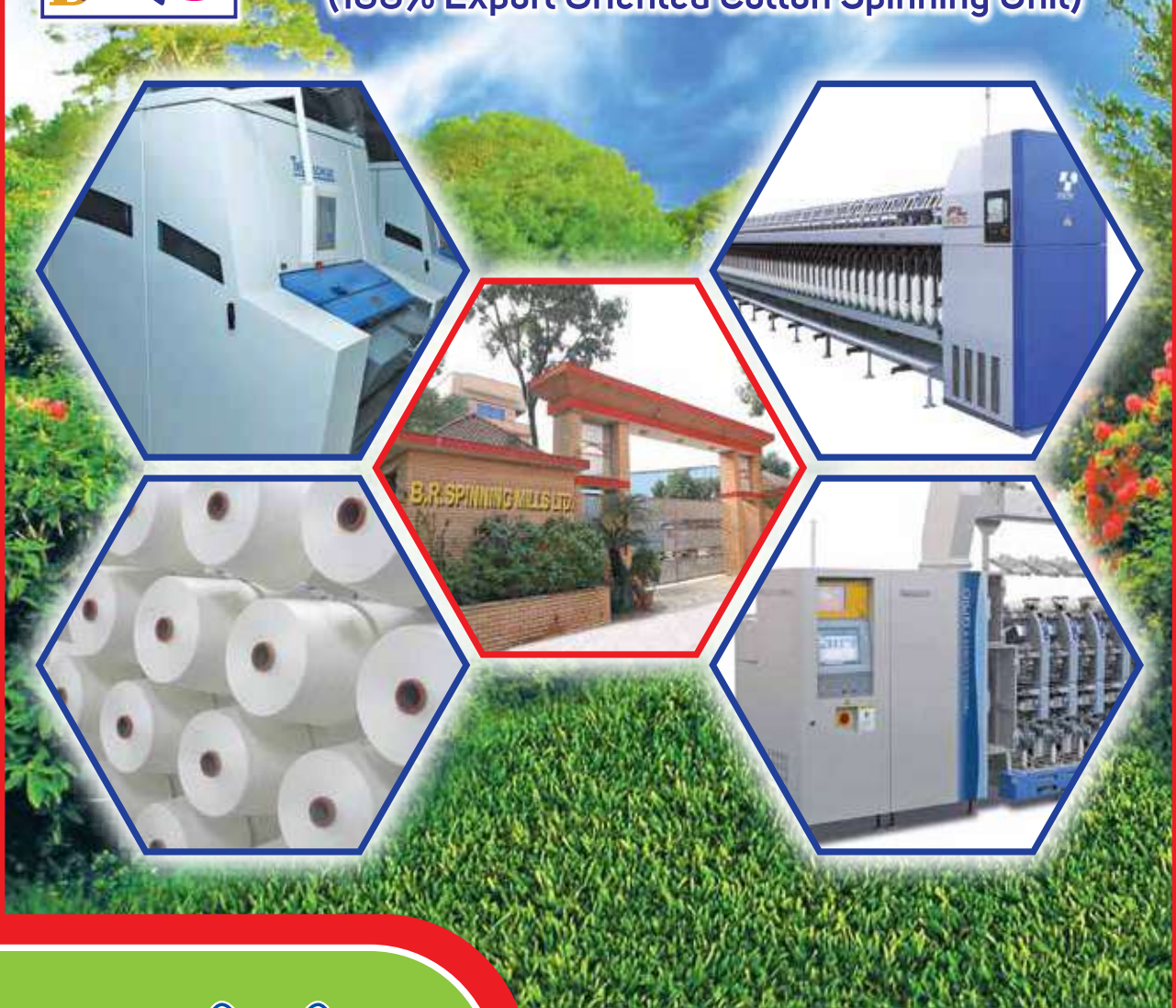
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