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DIPLOMATS WORLD

The Only Diplomatic Magazine in Bangladesh

**The Liberation War of Bangladesh and Victory Day: Echoes of Freedom
and the Spirit of Nobel Laureate Professor Dr. Muhammad Yunus**

**The Movement for Hindu Rights in Bangladesh:
Just Demands or a Political Conspiracy?**

**Reviving SAARC is Critical to Building Harmony
and Bridging the Distance in South Asia**

**Brief Report on the Lecture "Navigating the Nexus of Blue
Economy, Geopolitics and Geoeconomics in the Bay of Bengal"**





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December ushers in a season of celebration and reflection. At Diplomat's World, we join our esteemed readers in embracing the joy of Christmas and the promise of a rewarding new year. This month also holds profound significance for Bangladesh, as it commemorates its Victory Day, a time of unity, resilience, and national pride.

In this spirit, Chief Adviser Prof. Muhammad Yunus has continued his commitment to fostering inclusivity and justice. This month, he held open discussions with leaders from the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim communities, as well as indigenous hill tribes, affirming the government's dedication to celebrating diversity. Prof. Yunus emphasized the collective responsibility to uphold the rights of minority populations as essential to building an equitable and just nation.

A key milestone was the interactive session with envoys from 19 European Union countries. Prof. Yunus highlighted the interim government's twin mandates: overseeing a peaceful transfer of power to an elected government and implementing reforms to strengthen national institutions and policies. Notably, 15 commissions are actively working on reforms, including crucial election reforms. Discussions also covered trade benefits, labor rights, climate change, human rights, and the repatriation of Rohingya refugees, with the EU reaffirming its support for Bangladesh's democratic transition.

India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri visited Dhaka this month, reinforcing the robust Bangladesh-India partnership. Misri acknowledged Prof. Yunus's leadership and conveyed Prime Minister Modi's support. Discussions focused on deepening bilateral cooperation in trade, connectivity, energy, and cultural exchange. Misri reiterated India's commitment to fostering people-centric development projects that benefit both nations.

This edition delves into these significant developments, offering insights that resonate with our global readership of diplomats, academics, and business leaders. As Bangladesh navigates its journey toward inclusive governance and regional collaboration, December stands as a testament to the nation's resilience and aspirations for a brighter future.

The Economist has recognized Bangladesh as the country of the year 2024.

Wishing all our readers a joyful holiday season and a prosperous new year.

Shahed Akhtar
Ambassador & Fmr. Secretary, GoB
and Editor, Diplomats World



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THE MOVEMENT FOR HINDU RIGHTS IN BANGLADESH: JUST DEMANDS OR A POLITICAL CONSPIRACY?

Prof. Dr. Mohd. Aminul Karim

Historically, communal harmony has been a foundation of Bangladesh society, where diverse religious and ethnic communities have coexisted for centuries. Despite being a Muslim-majority nation, the principles of tolerance and respect have allowed Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, and Muslims to live together largely peacefully. However, recent developments have brought significant concerns to the forefront, particularly as the interim government, born from a student-led anti-discrimination movement, seeks to navigate a landscape marred by years of

misrule, corruption, injustice and social unrest. The demands for Hindu rights have emerged as a critical issue, raising questions about their legitimacy and the underlying motives driving this activism.

Minority Rights in Bangladesh
Bangladesh is characterized by a richly diverse society, home to multiple religions, ethnic groups, and languages. Minorities in this context refer to communities that are numerically smaller than the dominant Muslim population and are often distinguished by their religious, linguistic, or

cultural attributes. The Hindu community, the second largest minority, constitutes about 10% of the population. That said, the Bangladeshi Constitution guarantees equal rights and religious freedoms to all minority groups, particularly the Hindus. Their resurgence in activism prompts an examination of both the historical context and the current socio-political dynamics that have led to this moment.

Failure of the Previous Awami League Government
Under the Awami League government, which ruled for



Puthia Rajbari Temple, a glimpse of the cultural heritage of the Hindu minority, constituting about 10% of the population.

over about two decades, the issue of minority rights was largely neglected. Despite numerous incidents of violence and discrimination against the Hindu community, the government failed to take meaningful action to address these grievances. For instance, the infamous murder of Bishwajit, a young Hindu boy, in 2012 exemplified the government's indifference to minority safety. He was brutally attacked by members of the ruling party's student wing, in an incident that was broadcast live on television, highlighting the extreme vulnerability of minority communities under the regime. Despite public outrage, justice meted out was slow, and only a few perpetrators were held accountable, sending a clear message of impunity.

Additionally, reports of land grabbing, forced conversions—I don't think this happens from the majority Muslim society of broader Bangladesh—government's failure to implement protective

laws for minorities or to use the minority card for political use tend to compound this issue. Instead, there were reports of state-sponsored oppression where minority voices were silenced, contributing to a culture of fear and helplessness. There is, definitely, a possibility of local level-euphemistically called 'village politics'-- politics impinging on the issue.

The Role of Social Media in Spreading Rumors

In recent times, social media has played a dual role in shaping narratives around Hindu rights in Bangladesh. False posts claiming rampant oppression of Hindus circulated widely, predominantly and sadly from accounts linked to India. Fact-checkers confirmed that while some misinformation originated externally, there were also internal sources spreading rumors, potentially to incite violence or unrest. In several cases, attacks on properties linked to the ruling party were falsely attributed to religious motivations, masking the political undercurrents at play.

These manipulated narratives serve to distract from the systemic issues, if any, facing the Hindu community and obscure the reality of their struggles, reinforcing the idea that the previous government prioritized political gain over genuine concern for minority rights.



Protests following the tragic murder of Bishwajit Das in 2012 highlight the vulnerabilities faced by minority communities



Social media posts and misinformation, tools of unrest or catalysts for genuine activism?

Current Context of the Movement: Genuine Claims or Political Manipulation?

The ongoing movement advocating for Hindu rights has ignited intense debates within the political domain of Bangladesh. With the interim government undertaking social reforms and gearing up for elections, the timing of this resurgence raises eyebrows. Critics argue that some elements within the movement might be leveraging Hindu issues

for political gain, exploiting the community's grievances to destabilize the current administration.

Analysts point out that during the tenure of the Awami League, when Hindu rights were seldom discussed, the lack of significant protest suggests that the recent surge in activism might be opportunistic rather than a spontaneous call for justice. I would not, in any way, rule out

the possibility of local level politics that may involve also land or property grabbing. The sudden urgency of these demands amid a changing political landscape has led many to suspect that external influences and political agendas are at play.

Intent of the Movement: Genuine Need or Political Agenda?

There is a growing sentiment among many that the rights and security of the Hindu community are essential issues that deserve urgent attention. If the movement is genuinely aimed at securing these rights, it could pave the way for positive societal changes. However, experts caution that if the underlying motives are politically driven, it could threaten the very fabric of communal harmony in Bangladesh. I would once again reiterate Bangladesh has been a land communal harmony for ages together.

Many fear that the instrumentalization of Hindu rights for political purposes could lead to further polarization and unrest. True advocacy must be rooted in a genuine desire to address historical injustices rather than simply a means to gain political leverage.

Public Reaction and National Integration

Public reactions to the movement for Hindu rights have been mixed. Some view it as a reaction to perceived Indian interference, suggesting that the timing coincides with attempts to undermine Bangladesh's internal stability. This suspicion



Activists demanding Hindu rights during a rally in Bangladesh



Bangladesh is a land of communal harmony, balancing minority rights and national integration for a stable future

is amplified by the context of the new interim government taking office, leading to questions about the motivations behind the movement.

Many experts have warned that the timing of this activism coinciding with upcoming elections could incite further instability. They emphasize the need for a delicate balance between addressing minority grievances and maintaining national integration. Any deficiency, as such, can be better addressed once a more stable political environment is established. It may take time but

this nation is definitely moving towards that direction. After a revolution, it takes some time for the dusts to settle down.

Possibility of Political Manipulation and Future of the Movement

The possibility of political manipulation behind the current movement cannot be entirely dismissed. Throughout Bangladesh's political history, issues concerning minorities have occasionally been utilized for political advantage. The previous government's negligence in addressing these issues has allowed for the

current climate of dissent to flourish.

Experts argue that if this movement is shaped by genuine intentions, it could lead to significant advancements in social justice and minority rights. Conversely, if it becomes a tool for political machinations, it may result in confusion and unrest, further complicating the already volatile socio-political landscape.

To truly secure the rights and safety of minority communities, long-term strategies are necessary, ideally pursued under a democratically elected government. Establishing meaningful dialogues, creating protective laws, and fostering inclusive policies are essential steps toward ensuring that the rights of all citizens, including Hindus, are strictly upheld in Bangladesh. At strategic level, there is no problem at all in Bangladesh society. At tactical level, there is need for better socialization and ensuring punishment to the perpetrators, as per law of the land. Rule of law is a great panacea to this social fissure.

Prof. Dr. Mohd. Aminul Karim

Former Commandant, National Defense College, Bangladesh
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FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN CHINA AND BANGLADESH: SHARING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

H. E. Yao Wen

As the New Year begins, everything takes on a new look. In the year 2025, the China-Bangladesh relationship will usher in its 50th year of dynamic development. At the start of the new year, I would like to extend my New Year greetings and best wishes to all the people of Bangladesh. I wish the nation of Bangladesh prosperity and stability, and the people happiness and health.

In 2024, the world witnessed further transformation and instability, marked by protracted and intensified geopolitical conflicts, repeated attempts to

decouple and sever supply chains, and the rapid rise of the Global South. It has become all the more clear where the once-in-a-century transformations are heading. In 2024, China acted on the blueprint drawn up at the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and made big strides in comprehensively deepening reform. Marking the 75th anniversary of its founding, China carried forward its great cause of national development and pressed ahead with Chinese modernization with vigor and

determination. In 2024, facing a critical juncture in history, we upheld fundamental principles while breaking new ground in diplomacy; and we responded to a fast-changing landscape with composure and confidence. Our diplomatic efforts have helped foster a favorable external environment for China's high-quality development and provided much-needed stability to a turbulent world.

China has always been an important member of the Global South. We have been committed to promoting unity and revitalization of the Global



On August 25th, H.E. Mr. Yao Wen, Ambassador of China to Bangladesh, called on H.E. Professor Muhammad Yunus, Hon'ble Chief Adviser of Interim Government of Bangladesh

South, promoting the cause of global development, and making no country left behind on the path to modernization. President Xi Jinping called for more open and inclusive Global South cooperation and announced eight measures in support of Global South cooperation. We have made substantive progress in promoting high-quality Belt and Road cooperation in light of the urgent needs of many countries. With 155 countries joining the big family of Belt and Road cooperation, this road to happiness is growing ever broader. Given the widening development deficit, President Xi Jinping announced at the G20 Summit China's eight actions to support global development, which include strengthening cooperation with other countries in key areas such as poverty reduction, food security, and scientific and technological innovation.

Over the past year, a remarkable new chapter has been written in head-of-state diplomacy, which has steered the trend of the times toward peace, development, and win-win cooperation. Breakthroughs have been made in building a community with a shared future for mankind, which has shaped the historical trend toward a

shared future and greater solidarity in our global village. We have provided new opportunities for the world with Chinese modernization, which has promoted the development trend of modernization in countries around the world. China's cooperation with other developing countries has set a fine example, which has reinforced the trend of uniting for strength within the Global South. China has made new progress in pursuing all-round diplomacy, which has built up the trend toward a new type of international relations.

Facing the future, China will continue to bear in mind the larger picture, shoulder responsibilities for the greater good, and advance the right and just cause, and we will continue to hold high the banner of peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit, and do our best to promote world peace, tranquility and the common progress of humanity.

H.E. Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist



On September 25, 2024, the Embassy of China in Bangladesh hosted a reception celebrating the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China



From July 15 to 18, the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China convened its third plenary session in Beijing

Party of China, points out that China and Bangladesh are friendly neighbors who know each other well. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, the two countries have always respected and supported each other, treated each other as equals, and cooperated for win-win results, setting an example of friendly exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation between countries, especially among Global South Countries. Honorable Chief Advisor Prof. Muhammad Yunus said that Bangladesh and he himself have forged long-standing friendly ties with China. This year, under the guidance of top leadership of the two sides, China-Bangladesh relations have continued to

develop, and the profound friendship between the peoples has been even stronger. This year, the China-Bangladesh relationship withstood the test of drastic political changes in Bangladesh, maintained the momentum of development, and demonstrated great resilience and vitality.

Mutual respect and trust are the solid foundation of the China-Bangladesh relationship. As the Bangladeshi proverb says, "Friendship is not a rope, but a bond of hearts", true friendship is not based on external constraints, but on inner connection. China has always supported Bangladesh in pursuing an independent foreign policy, following a path

of development in line with its national conditions, safeguarding national sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, and opposing any external interference. China respects the development path independently chosen by the Bangladeshi people and pursues a policy of friendship and good neighborliness towards all Bangladeshi people. No matter how the domestic situation in Bangladesh may evolve, the core of the China-Bangladesh relationship, which is based on mutual respect, equality, and mutual benefit, will not change; the foundation of friendship between the two peoples will not change; and the determination of the two governments and people of all sectors in the two countries to support and promote the development of bilateral relations will not change. China sincerely hopes that, under the guidance of the interim government led by Honorable Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, the reforms will proceed, the political situation will stabilize, the economy will flourish and people's livelihoods will continue to improve.

Mutual benefit is the strong driving force for the China-Bangladesh relationship. China is the largest trading partner of Bangladesh. The China-Bangladesh relationship has been elevated to a new historical height of comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership. Under the new circumstances, jointly advancing high-quality Belt and Road cooperation is even more opportune, and the room for



On September 22, the Chinese National Emergency Medical Team arrived in Bangladesh

further developing the comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership is even broader. Since the establishment of the interim government, 12 Chinese enterprises have invested a total of 210 million U.S. dollars in Bangladesh. China will provide 1 billion yuan of grants to Bangladesh for livelihood projects agreed upon by both sides. The total amount of foreign direct

investment (FDI) to Bangladesh declined by 8.8 percent, but the FDI from China experienced a remarkable threefold increase compared to the previous fiscal year. China has pledged further expansion of its opening up to Bangladesh and will continue to provide Bangladesh with zero-tariff treatment for 100 percent of its taxable items before it graduates from the least developed countries. China will import fresh mangoes from Bangladesh, and vigorously engage in practical cooperation with Bangladesh in the fields of photovoltaics, agriculture, low-carbon development, and so

forth. These pragmatic initiatives fully reflect the firm support of the Chinese government for the interim government, and will certainly contribute to the economic and social development of the country and benefit the people of the two countries.

Mutual assistance is the warm bond of the China-Bangladesh

life-saving equipment and facilities in response to the floods. At present, direct flights between the two capitals have been launched and operated, with as many as 58 flights per week between the two countries, which can accommodate more than 11,000 passengers. The flights substantially facilitated the exchanges of personnel between both sides. Currently, there are nearly 15,000 Bangladeshi students studying in China, building a solid bridge for cultural and academic exchanges between the two countries. Teachers at the two Confucius Institutes and one Confucius Classroom in Bangladesh have taught nearly 3,000 students in the past year. It also further strengthened the people-to-people exchanges, laying the foundation for the friendly relations between the two countries.

The year 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the China-Bangladesh diplomatic relationship and the China-Bangladesh Year of People-to-People Exchanges. China will work together with Bangladesh and stay committed to the principles of mutual respect, mutual support, equality, and win-win cooperation. China stands ready to work with Bangladesh to support each other on issues concerning core interests such as sovereignty, security, and development, to strengthen cooperation and collaboration under the United Nations and other multilateral institutions, advocate the common values of humanity and promote the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.



On October 12th, Chinese naval fleet Qi Jiguang and Jing Gangshan arrived at Chittagong Port, starting a goodwill visit to Bangladesh

relationship. At the request of the interim government, China dispatched a National Emergency Medical Rescue Team to Bangladesh to provide humanitarian and emergency assistance to those injured during the July-August movement in 2024. It was the first medical rescue team dispatched by a foreign government since the formation of the interim government. When Bangladesh was struggling against the floods and dengue fever, China was the first to lend a helping hand by visiting the affected areas and providing Bangladesh with



China will continue to maintain high-level exchanges and friendly cooperation between political parties, strengthen coordination of policies and synergy between development strategies, carry out more exchanges of experience on governance, and optimize cooperation mechanisms at all levels and in all fields. China supports Bangladesh in becoming a BRICS partner country and playing a more active role in regional organizations such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Bay of

Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation. We will also continue the efforts for the political settlement of the Rohingya crisis.

China will continue to work with Bangladesh on the path to modernization, promote the implementation of the eight major steps to support high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, and carry out the construction of major landmark projects and “small and beautiful” livelihood programs. China will also strengthen

cooperation with Bangladesh in photovoltaics, water resources, poverty alleviation, green and low-carbon development, and explore specific measures to promote the implementation of the vision of “three zeroes”. We will encourage more Chinese companies to invest in manufacturing industries and promote the integrated development of the industrial chain and supply chain between the two countries.

China will continue to enhance friendly cooperation in such fields as culture, education, tourism, sports, health, youth, women, media, and think tanks. We will take a series of practical measures to facilitate cross-border travel and form a new pattern of non-governmental exchanges. By doing so, the friendship between our two peoples will be further strengthened, bringing more tangible benefits to the peoples, and it will make the China-Bangladesh comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership deeper and more substantive.

H. E. Yao Wen
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
People's Republic of China to Bangladesh

The background of the page is a collage of historical black and white photographs. The top left shows a street scene with a crowd and a car. The top right shows a large crowd holding flags, including the Algerian flag and a banner that reads 'ALGERIE INDÉPENDANTE'. The bottom half of the page is dominated by a large, high-contrast black and white photo of a dense crowd of people, many with their mouths open as if shouting or chanting, and several Algerian flags being held high. The text is overlaid on this collage.

64TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 11 DECEMBER 1960 DEMONSTRATIONS

The Embassy of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria in Dhaka recently commemorated the 64th anniversary of the significant 11 December 1960 demonstrations. This event took place at the Algerian Residence in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and was attended by a distinguished gathering from various sectors. Among the attendees were journalists, diplomatic correspondents, influential business figures, religious representatives, and both current and former employees of the Algerian Embassy in Dhaka.

The 11 December 1960 demonstrations are a pivotal moment in Algeria's history, marking a key turning point in the country's liberation revolution. On this day, the Algerian people took to the streets in protest against the proposition of President Charles de Gaulle, who suggested an "Algerian-Algeria" that excluded the National Liberation Front (FLN), the legitimate representative of the Algerian people, from peace negotiations. The initial protests in Algiers' Belkourt district quickly spread across the country, leading to violent repression. Hundreds were killed, thousands were injured or went missing. It was during these demonstrations that the Algerian flag was first raised, symbolizing the beginning of the end of colonial rule in Algeria.

The Honorable Ambassador of Algeria to Bangladesh, Dr. Abdelouahab Saidani, delivered a comprehensive speech, offering a detailed account of the events of 11 December 1960 and explaining how these protests led Charles de Gaulle to reconsider his position on Algeria.



THE LIBERATION WAR OF BANGLADESH AND VICTORY DAY: ECHOES OF FREEDOM AND THE SPIRIT OF NOBEL LAUREATE PROFESSOR DR. MUHAMMAD YUNUS

AKM Sayedad Hossain

The Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 stands as a monumental chapter in the annals of history, a saga of unparalleled courage, resilience, and sacrifice. It was a struggle rooted in the aspirations of a people seeking justice, equality, and self-determination. The nine-month-long war culminated on December 16, 1971, when Bangladesh emerged as a free and sovereign nation. This day, celebrated as Victory Day, is a beacon of pride and

reflection for the people of Bangladesh. It also provides an opportunity to connect the values of liberation with the visionary ideals of Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus, whose work in social and economic empowerment continues to inspire the nation.

The Liberation War: A Fight for Identity and Justice

The Liberation War of Bangladesh was not merely a battle for territorial

independence; it was a struggle for the fundamental rights of language, culture, and identity. The seeds of this movement were sown in the early days of Pakistan's creation in 1947 when the Bengali-speaking population of East Pakistan found themselves marginalized by the dominant political and economic elites of West Pakistan. The imposition of Urdu as the sole state language in 1948 sparked protests and laid the foundation for the Language



Historic photographs show the courage and unity of freedom fighters and civilians during Bangladesh's struggle for independence

Movement, culminating in the historic sacrifices of February 21, 1952, now commemorated as International Mother Language Day.

Over the years, the economic disparities between the two wings of Pakistan deepened, with East Pakistan contributing a significant portion of the country's revenue but receiving minimal investment in return. The growing discontent reached its zenith in the 1970 general elections when the Awami League, led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won a landslide victory. Despite their mandate to form the government, the political leadership of West Pakistan refused to transfer power. The ensuing political crisis led to the brutal crackdown on March 25, 1971, known as "Operation Searchlight," where the Pakistani military unleashed unimaginable atrocities on the people of East Pakistan.

The genocide and systematic oppression galvanized the people of East Pakistan into a full-fledged war for

independence. Under the leadership of Bangabandhu and the Mukti Bahini (Liberation Army), the nation united to fight for its freedom. Ordinary citizens—students, farmers, professionals, and women—joined hands to resist the might of the Pakistani military. The support of neighboring India, particularly the Indian Armed Forces, proved instrumental in securing victory. On December 16, 1971, Pakistan's military surrendered, and Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation.

Victory Day: A Celebration of Triumph and Reflection
Victory Day, observed on December 16, is a day of immense pride and solemn reflection for the people of Bangladesh. It is a time to honor the sacrifices of the three million martyrs who laid down their lives for the nation's freedom and the countless others who endured unspeakable hardships. The day begins with tributes at the National Martyrs' Memorial in Savar, where leaders and citizens alike gather to pay their respects.

The celebrations extend across the country with parades, cultural programs, and the singing of patriotic songs. The national flag, a symbol of the hard-won independence, is hoisted with pride. Schools, colleges, and organizations organize discussions and exhibitions to educate the younger generation about the history and significance of the Liberation War. Despite the festivities, Victory Day is also a time to reflect on the nation's journey since independence



People from all walks of life gather at the National Memorial at Savar, on the outskirts of the capital, to pay tribute to the liberation war martyrs



Financial independence enables women to overcome poverty and build a better future for themselves and their families

and the challenges that lie ahead in fulfilling the dreams of the freedom fighters.

The Spirit of Professor Muhammad Yunus: Building on the Legacy of Liberation

While the Liberation War achieved political freedom, the struggle for economic and social emancipation continues. In this context, the contributions of Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus stand as a testament to the enduring spirit of liberation. His work embodies the principles of empowerment, equity, and innovation that resonate deeply with the ideals of the Liberation War.

Professor Yunus, often referred to as the "Banker to the Poor," revolutionized the concept of microfinance by founding Grameen Bank in 1983. His innovative approach to providing small loans to impoverished individuals without requiring collateral challenged traditional banking norms and demonstrated the

potential of marginalized communities to become self-reliant. Grameen Bank's focus on empowering women, who constitute the majority of its borrowers, has had a transformative impact on rural economies and social structures.

The success of Grameen Bank earned Professor Yunus the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006, making him a global icon of social entrepreneurship. His vision of creating a "world without poverty" aligns

seamlessly with the aspirations of the Liberation War—a society where every individual has the opportunity to live with dignity and contribute to the nation's progress.

Beyond microfinance, Professor Yunus has championed the concept of social business, a model that prioritizes social impact over profit. Through ventures addressing issues such as healthcare, education, and renewable energy, he has demonstrated how businesses can serve as catalysts for social change. This philosophy reflects the Liberation War's ethos of collective responsibility and the pursuit of a just and equitable society.

Women's Empowerment: A Shared Vision

One of the most remarkable aspects of both the Liberation War and Professor Yunus's work is their focus on women's empowerment. During the war, women played a pivotal role as freedom fighters, caregivers, and advocates for justice. Their courage and resilience remain an enduring source of



Young students represent the nation's hope and commitment to education and equality for all



Green energy initiatives like solar panels and eco-friendly farming embody Bangladesh's pursuit of sustainable development

inspiration. Professor Yunus's emphasis on providing financial independence to women through microfinance has furthered this legacy, enabling millions of women to break free from the cycle of poverty and become agents of change in their communities.

The Path Forward: Sustaining the Legacy

As Bangladesh celebrates Victory Day, it is imperative to recognize the progress made since independence while addressing the challenges that persist. The nation has achieved significant milestones in economic growth, education,

and healthcare, but issues such as income inequality, environmental degradation, and political polarization demand attention.

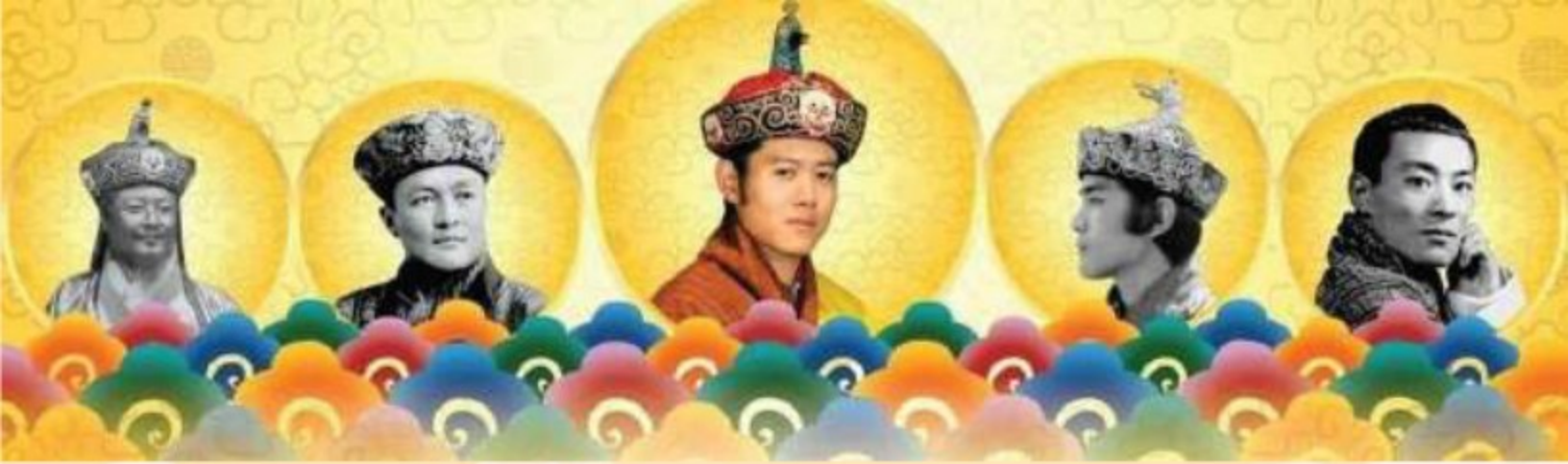
The principles championed during the Liberation War and by visionaries like Professor Yunus offer valuable lessons for navigating these challenges. The commitment to inclusivity, justice, and innovation must remain at the heart of Bangladesh's development agenda. Investments in education, technology, and sustainable practices can drive the nation towards realizing the dreams of its freedom fighters.

Victory Day and the Spirit of Professor Yunus: A Shared Legacy

Victory Day is more than a commemoration of the past; it is a celebration of the enduring spirit of freedom and resilience that defines Bangladesh. The Liberation War and the transformative work of Professor Yunus are intertwined in their vision of a society where every individual has the opportunity to thrive. Both serve as reminders of the power of collective action and the importance of nurturing human potential.

As Bangladesh continues its journey, the legacy of the Liberation War and the spirit of Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus will remain guiding lights. Together, they inspire the nation to build a future where the ideals of justice, equity, and innovation flourish, honoring the sacrifices of the past and fulfilling the aspirations of generations to come. Victory Day is not just a celebration; it is a reaffirmation of the values that make Bangladesh a symbol of hope and resilience on the global stage.

AKM Sayedad Hossain
Associate Editor
Diplomats World



BHUTAN NATIONAL DAY COMMEMORATION IN DHAKA

A grand reception was held in Dhaka to celebrate Bhutan National Day, bringing together over 350 attendees, including members of the diplomatic corps, Bangladeshi authorities, business leaders, media representatives, travel agents, hoteliers, Bhutanese students, and friends of Bhutan.

The event was honored by the presence of H.E. Mr. Sk. Bashir Uddin, Hon'ble Adviser to the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Textiles & Jute, as the Chief Guest.

The reception featured a showcase of Bhutanese culture and flavors, with stalls set up by the Drukair Office in Dhaka and Bhutan Outlet (STCBL) to highlight their products and services. Guests enjoyed authentic Bhutanese food, beverages, and juices while being treated to captivating cultural performances by Bhutanese students. Excitement peaked with lucky draws, adding a festive touch to the occasion.





REVIVING SAARC IS CRITICAL TO BUILDING HARMONY AND BRIDGING THE DISTANCE IN SOUTH ASIA

Professor Dr. Mohammad Tarikul Islam

Regional cooperation is critical for fostering the exchange of experiences, best practices, and innovative solutions among member nations, leading to significant advancements in policy, governance, economic, and social outcomes founded on mutual trust and respect. Regional collaboration can help South Asia's regional identity and progress. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks as Afghanistan's Former President Ashraf Ghani watches during the opening session of

the 18th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit in Kathmandu on November 26, 2014.

Former Bangladesh President Ziaur Rahman first proposed the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 1980, sending letters to various governments in order to foster intra-regional cooperation and expedite the economic and social development of its members. The first summit meeting of

South Asian government heads was held in Dhaka on December 7-8, 1985, during which the formation of SAARC was publicly established. The regional institution sought to build mutual understanding and trust among its member states. Unfortunately, SAARC's progress has repeatedly been hampered by persistent regional disputes.

It has been ten years since SAARC's last summit in Kathmandu, Nepal, and many experts of South Asia have long



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking at the 18th SAARC Summit as Afghanistan's former President Ashraf Ghani listens attentively

deemed SAARC ineffectual and irrelevant. Despite the wealth of good conditions and chances for regional collaboration, South Asia as a whole fails to fully capitalize on them.

The dispute between India and Pakistan, as well as India's aggressive approach towards the region, are among the many factors contributing to SAARC's poor advancement. According to experts, despite being South Asia's most powerful and populous country, India is viewed with suspicion by its neighbours.

Expert discussions reveal that India is well-positioned to play a more significant role in maintaining regional integrity and leading collaboration among South and Central Asian nations, thanks to its unwavering commitment to multipolarity and captivating cultural influence. However, some argue that India is now the principal impediment to regional cooperation in South Asia, rather than the driving force.

The primary cause of regional geopolitical problems is India's vision and support for regional governments, which are rooted in a racist ideology held by the country's present ruling party. That worldview is inherently incompatible with demonstrating equal cooperation to its smaller neighbours. And it has essentially crippled SAARC, hurting both regional

collaboration and South Asia's visibility in international fora.

Unfortunately, the SAARC countries lack economic complementarity; instead, they are highly competitive markets in which each country sells basically comparable items such as cotton, jute, spices, and so on. Furthermore, there is less intra-regional trade in the area, limiting the subcontinent's ability to integrate economically. The entire concept of SAARC is a shared market, similar to that of the EU, but unlike European nations, South Asian nations have been unable to establish proactive cooperation among member states, such as free movement of citizens across the region or market integration.

SAARC should be re-empowered at this critical time for South Asia—as nations have either seen their governments deposed or are experiencing economic turmoil—so that its benefits can play a role in resolving all of the



Headquartered in Nepal, the SAARC Secretariat symbolizes the institutional foundation of South Asia's regional collaboration



interim government, led by Nobel winner Prof Muhammad Yunus, believes SAARC has the capacity to promote regional integration. Bangladesh values SAARC and wishes for its growth as a regional body. The government is committed to respecting the purposes and ideals of the SAARC charter, and it believes that SAARC should continue to exist. The strong will of South Asian countries will largely determine whether SAARC can be revived, and Bangladesh's foreign affairs adviser deserves credit for taking a proactive approach in expressing Bangladesh's desire to resuscitate SAARC.

region's integrating difficulties, such as availability, people-to-people contact, and efficient commerce. Open borders or constant availability across the full region are, indeed, required. It includes everything, from telecommunications to railroads, highways, and maritime infrastructure.

Cross-border collaboration is necessary if South Asian leaders' goals are to reduce conflicts, combat terrorism, and promote seamless communication, as the region's proximity suggests.

Despite certain disappointments, Bangladesh's

Given regional dynamics, South Asian countries would benefit from functionalism, which would entail deferring resolution of controversial problems in order to strengthen SAARC cooperation. India should approach the region with an open mind and play an important role in promoting unrestricted growth among its neighbours.



Economic integration within SAARC remains limited, as the member nations' markets are highly competitive and export similar products

Despite its several problems, SAARC has not been completely inactive. Of course, it has not served its purpose, but that doesn't imply it won't. It is therefore vital to ensure that any growth or improvement inside SAARC does not impair the region's strategic operations. As a result, there is still considerable work to be done. Nonetheless, if conversations proceed logically and usefully, they may develop into possibilities. Regardless of the enmity between India and Pakistan, conflicts between any two members should not impede



Cross-border cooperation, including trade and infrastructure, is crucial to boosting economic growth and connectivity in South Asia

other members of SAARC sub-regions from working more effectively together.

Regional cooperation makes sense geographically, socially, economically, culturally, and politically, as witnessed in the EU and ASEAN, and throughout SAARC's functional phase, such as when the South Asian Free Trade Area was established in 2006. Increased engagement and collaboration, while leaving past errors behind, will benefit the whole South Asian area.

The interim government in Bangladesh, led by Nobel

laureate Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus, has stressed the importance of reviving SAARC from the start of his tenure as Chief Advisor.

"Problems between the two countries should not affect other countries in South Asia," he said, adding that "If South Asian leaders meet every year, stand together, and take pictures, then a message goes out to the entire world that we are united. This will present South Asian countries in a positive light to the rest of the world, allowing us to progress. South Asia is at a critical moment, with tensions between important players

persisting while other countries' economy is in disarray. Hostility is counterproductive; rebuilding SAARC via mutual cooperation would at least revive hope in the region.

Bangladesh can take two key moves right away to make room for SAARC to revive. To strengthen public diplomacy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs may brief its ambassador who is serving as Director at the SAARC Secretariat. This can be accomplished through a series of consultative sessions in which experts from SAARC member countries debate issues of mutual importance. The next phase is for MOFA to continue its SAARC rejuvenation strategy in all South Asian countries by building contacts and exchanging ideas with different stakeholders. Holding the next SAARC Summit should be the key priority right now. The SAARC Secretariat must adopt a proactive approach to this matter. Bangladesh's interim administration must take the initiative to unite the SAARC platform and transform it into a hub for the region's prosperity, peace, and stability.

Professor Dr. Mohammad Tarikul Islam
Department of Government and Politics,
Jahangirnagar University &
Visiting Scholar and Guest Faculty
Oxford, Cambridge, and Harvard Universities



QATAR AND BANGLADESH CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC TIES

Qatar's Ambassador to Bangladesh, H.E. Seraya Ali Al-Qahtani, highlighted the deepening ties between the two nations during a reception marking Qatar's National Day and 50 years of diplomatic relations.

"Over 50 years, our brotherly ties have deepened, rooted in shared history, culture, religion, and values," said the Ambassador at the city hotel event on 17th December 2024.

H.E. Dr. Asif Nazrul, Adviser for Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs, attended as the chief guest, along with diplomats, business leaders, and civil society members. The event celebrated the nations' achievements and aspirations for stronger collaboration.



VICTORY DAY MESSAGES FROM HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC ENVOYS



Wishing all the Bangladeshis around the world a joyous Victory Day as we celebrate the spirit of freedom and unity. We also celebrate your resilience, courage, and the spirit of freedom. Here's to decades of friendship and shared values! Representing Algeria in Bangladesh is a great and sensitive responsibility because it is about embodying the aspirations and interests of our two great nations in a country with which Algeria shares the common struggle for freedom, independence, and defending the values of justice, equality, peace, security and supporting just causes across the globe.

Happy Victory Day to Bangladesh!

Long Live Algeria and Long Live Bangladesh and long live the brotherly and friendly relationship between the two countries.

H.E. Dr. Abdelouahab Saidani

Ambassador

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to Bangladesh



On this momentous occasion of Victory Day, the High Commission of Brunei Darussalam extends heartfelt congratulations and warmest wishes to the people of Bangladesh. December 16th marks a historic day, commemorating the defeat of the Pakistan Armed Forces in the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 and the birth of an independent Bangladesh.

The 54th Victory Day of Bangladesh will be remembered as one that followed a unique revolution—the student-led mass uprising of 5th August, which changed the course of the nation's history. As you celebrate this significant milestone, we honor the bravery, resilience, and sacrifices of the Bangladeshi people who fought valiantly for their freedom and sovereignty. Your unwavering spirit and determination have paved the way for a prosperous and vibrant nation.

May this Victory Day inspire unity, peace, and continued progress for Bangladesh. We look forward to strengthening the bonds of friendship and cooperation between our nations in the years to come.

H.E. Mr. Rozaimée Abdullah

Chargé d'affaires

High Commission of Brunei Darussalam



Celebrating the unwavering strength, unity and harmony of Bangladesh. May the progress of Bangladesh towards peace and prosperity continue to thrive. Happy Victory Day!

ঐতিহাসিক এই দিনে, বাংলাদেশের অদম্য শক্তি, ঐক্য এবং সম্প্রীতির বিজয় উদযাপন করছি। একটি শান্তিপূর্ণ ও সমৃদ্ধ আগামীর পথে বাংলাদেশের অভিযাত্রা অব্যাহত থাকুক। বিজয় দিবসের শুভেচ্ছা!

H.E. Mr. Yao Wen

Ambassador

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Bangladesh





The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia extends a heartfelt greeting to the people of Bangladesh on this momentous occasion of the 54th anniversary of Victory Day.

On this day, let's honor the courage, sacrifice, and resilience that led to the birth of a free and independent Bangladesh.

May the spirit of unity and triumph continue to inspire the people of Bangladesh to lead the nation into prosperity.

H.E. Arif Suyoko
Chargé d'Affaires Ad Interim (KUAI)
Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia



Happy Victory Day of Bangladesh to everyone.

I on behalf of The State of Libya would like to congratulate on the great Victory Day of Bangladesh.

16th December is a special holiday that is full of celebration and dear to all the nations of Bangladesh and for us also. The occasion of Bangladesh Victory Day calls for the best of the celebration. The day is full of red and green in order to celebrate this remarkable day with high spirits to remember the martyrs.

We Pray for all the martyrs and the people who dedicate their life for this victory of Bangladesh.

H.E. Abdulmutalib S M Suliman
Ambassador
Embassy of the State of Libya



I would like to extend my warm greetings and best wishes to the friendly people of Bangladesh as they observe the 54th Victory Day of Bangladesh.

This historic day is a reminder of the long struggle of the Bangladeshi people whose courage, resilience and sacrifice led to the birth of an independent country. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Government and people of Bangladesh on the achievements they have made over the last 53 years.

Nepal and Bangladesh enjoy a deep-rooted friendship and multifaceted cooperation, characterized by trust and mutual respect. The bonds of our friendship have been nurtured and strengthened over the years. I am confident that we will continue to make further headways in various areas of cooperation for the prosperity and well-being of both our nations.

Wishing the people of Bangladesh a joyous Victory Day 2024!

সবাইকে মহান বিজয় দিবসের শুভেচ্ছা !

H. E. Ghanshyam Bhandari
Ambassador
Embassy of Nepal in Bangladesh





The Philippine Embassy in Bangladesh extends its warmest congratulations to the Government and people of the People's Republic of Bangladesh on the 53rd Victory Day. This historic day stands as a testament to the resilience and courage of the Bangladeshi people. The Philippines reaffirms its solidarity with Bangladesh and remains committed to efforts that promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the nation. May this occasion inspire continued progress and enduring unity for the people of Bangladesh.

H.E. Lynn R. Gutierrez

Chargé d'affaires, a.i.

Embassy of the Philippines in Dhaka, Bangladesh



I warmly congratulate the people of Bangladesh on the auspicious occasion of Victory Day.

This day marks a new and glorious chapter in the history of your country. It also reminds us of the courage and patriotism of martyrs who gave their lives for the freedom of Motherland.

53 years ago, the Soviet Union whole-heartedly supported the newly formed state. Today, Russia remains a proud and reliable partner for Bangladesh in its development journey.

I am convinced that through joint work we will achieve progress, prosperity, and many more victories for our two countries in the years to come.

Happy Victory Day!

H.E. Mr Alexander Khozin

Ambassador

Embassy of the Russian Federation



I have the honor to convey my warm felicitations and sincere best wishes to the people of Bangladesh on the happy occasion of the 54th Victory Day of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Victory Day, celebrated on 16 December in Bangladesh, is a momentous occasion marking the triumph of the country's struggle for independence.

Over the years, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have been enjoying long-standing ties of close friendship and cooperation based on abiding trust, goodwill, shared interests and strong people-to-people interactions.

I also wish to convey my best wishes for the continued progress and prosperity of the people of Bangladesh.

H.E. Dharmapala Weerakkody

High Commissioner

High Commission of Sri Lanka in Bangladesh





REFLECTIONS ON INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

H. E. Pranay Verma

Our relationship with Bangladesh is long-standing and unique. We are linked by a shared history, a shared geography, in addition to a common language and culture. We both seek, and value, a relationship based on mutual trust and understanding, and mutual respect. There is broad shared empathy between our people, much of which can be traced back to Bangladesh's Liberation War of 1971. Regardless of how it may be characterized, it is a people-centric relationship. People and public opinion shape our relations more than we realize.

As a neighbour to whom we take a long-term view of our relations,

our ties with Bangladesh derive strength from our belief that our peace, security, progress, and prosperity are interlinked. And therefore, we strive to create common stakes in our mutual prosperity through a robust framework of multifaceted cooperation. Both of us are important stakeholders in the peace, security, and development of the Bay of Bengal. We also share a common biosphere and ecological environment, which makes our collaboration vital to address shared challenges such as environmental sustainability and climate change.

Because of its geographical location, emerging capacities, and growing regional and global

ambitions, Bangladesh is not just a pillar of our "Neighbourhood First" Policy, but sits at the intersection of most of India's key foreign policy visions – such as the "Act East Policy", the doctrine of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in Region), as well as our Indo-Pacific Vision.

We believe ours is a relationship of great consequence, not just for the two of us, but also for our region, given our growing capacities and aspirations to get more integrated by leveraging each other's strengths and complementarities. Bangladesh is uniquely poised to advance the integration agenda under the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation



Dr. Mohammad Yunus, Chief Advisor of the Interim Government of Bangladesh, delivers a keynote address at the Bay of Bengal Conversations 2024

(BIMSTEC), being located at the geographical, political, and economic centre of gravity of the region and also as the host of BIMSTEC's headquarters.

Many transformative changes that have taken place in our relations and which unlocked the growth potential of the region, are results of mutual sensitivity we have shown to each other's concerns and aspirations. Bangladesh's "zero-tolerance" to terrorism and its determination of not sheltering insurgencies targeting India, proved vital for our cooperation and prosperity. It will remain an important factor in the future development of our two countries, our region, and our relationship.

One of our biggest achievements – the resolution of our maritime and land boundaries, has opened up a whole host of avenues for our land and maritime connectivity as well as cooperation in the blue economy. Our maritime boundary settlement, by referring the matter to the Permanent Court of

Arbitration and then following its ruling in letter and spirit, is a fine example of how the principle of democratic and rules-based international order that we strongly believe in, has found reflection in our bilateral conduct.

A key manifestation of the transformation of our multifaceted partnership, that has directly benefitted the people of both our countries, is our growing trade and economic

engagement, and our connectivity links.

Today, Bangladesh is our largest trade partner in South Asia and the fifth largest in the world. India under SAFTA has unilaterally given duty-free, quota-free access to Bangladesh for more than a decade now, for all goods, which has enabled greater exports from Bangladesh to India.

We often hear concerns about trade deficit for Bangladesh, but it is important to appreciate that much of India's exports to Bangladesh either constitute critical inputs for a large part of Bangladesh's exports, or are supplies of essential commodities that help Bangladesh deal with inflationary pressures.

Actually, a less appreciated fact is that India is now among the largest export markets for Bangladesh in the entire Asia, with Bangladeshi exports to India consistently hovering around 2-billion-dollar mark over the last few years. And we do want this number to grow.



Indian High Commissioner Verma delivers an insightful address at the Bay of Bengal Conversations 2024



A map of BIMSTEC member countries marked, emphasizing Bangladesh's central role in the organization

We strongly believe that connectivity is a major enabler that help our societies, our businesses and our people to closely connect and benefit from each other. And we have made quite some progress.

With a contiguous geography and a long shared-history, in many ways, we are actually trying to reconnect our two countries. We have restored six of the seven pre-1965 railway links for both passengers and goods. A major part of our bilateral trade and people-to-people movement are channeled through thirty-six functioning Land Customs Stations, five of which have been upgraded to the level of Integrated Check Posts. Just earlier this month, we added new infrastructure at Petrapole Integrated Check Post that will significantly enhance cargo movement and passenger convenience.

Today, Bangladesh RMG exporters are using three large Indian airports – Kolkata, Delhi, and Bengaluru – as highly cost-effective transshipment hubs for their exports to third countries, making Bangladeshi products much more competitive in Western markets. Our deep-sea ports are ready to offer similar advantages to Bangladeshi exporters.

Our connectivity links are not limited to trade and transport. We are also building robust energy connectivity. Some of the examples are – a new cross-border diesel pipeline launched last year bringing high-speed diesel from an Indian refinery to Bangladesh; the cross-border power transmission lines uninterruptedly supplying nearly 1200 MW of power from Indian power grid to Bangladesh; and the first transmission of 40 MW of power from Nepal to

Bangladesh through the Indian grid just two days ago. All these are examples of how our energy connectivity and collaboration are augmenting our energy security and contributing to the creation of a true regional economy.

In short, our approach to connectivity is a simple one – it is about transforming our geographical proximity into new economic opportunities, that benefit people of both our countries and also the entire region.

Our belief that people are the foundation of our relations was evident when COVID-19 struck us when we opened our arms to help each other. It is also evident in our large visa operations in Bangladesh, where despite current limited operations, we issue more visas to Bangladeshi citizens each day than any other diplomatic mission in Dhaka.

As custodians of our future relationship, youth are an important stakeholder in our partnership. This is evident in nearly a thousand scholarships every year that India offers to Bangladeshi youths and young professionals, including from civil society and media, belonging to all regions and affiliations. Just two months ago, more than five hundred highly talented Bangladeshi students left for higher education in some of India's premier educational institutions on our ICCR scholarship. Our Bangladesh Youth Delegation, or the BYD programme as it is popularly known, is another robust platform for our youth outreach that today has a proud, nationwide alumni network.



Dr. Mohammad Yunus and High Commissioner Verma

To sum it all up, India will continue to seek a stable, positive, and constructive relationship with Bangladesh in which our people are the main stakeholders. We have and will continue to support a democratic, stable, peaceful, and progressive Bangladesh.

We remain committed to working together with the government and people of Bangladesh to fulfill the shared aspirations of our people for peace, security, and development. And we strongly

believe that our partnership must benefit the common people on both sides.

Both India and Bangladesh are today far more developed and capable than they were ever before. And we also depend on each other far more today than we ever used to, as our economies and development paths continue to intertwine. We must keep reinforcing our interdependencies.

As two aspirational societies with growing economic

capabilities, there is so much we can offer to each other, and create new opportunities if we continue to engage closely, pragmatically, and constructively with each other. A strong and prosperous Bangladesh, we believe, is vital for India just as a strong and prosperous India is for Bangladesh.

And, a final reflection. The fact that our trade and economic ties, our transport and energy connectivity, and our people-to-people engagements have sustained a positive momentum, despite the turbulent changes in Bangladesh, shows that our relations are truly multifaceted, and cannot be reduced to a single agenda or issue. There are irritants but they have not restricted the overall forward movement in our relations. As two nations whose progress and prosperity are as inter-linked as our geographies and historical roots, the reality of our interdependence and mutual benefit will keep reasserting itself again and again, regardless of changes in the political wind.

We must shape the course and narrative of this very important relationship, with objectivity and with empathy.

The article is based on High Commissioner Verma's recent address at the Bay of Bengal Conversations 2024 hosted by the Centre for Governance Studies in Dhaka.

H.E. Pranay Verma
High Commissioner
High Commission of India, Bangladesh

THAILAND EMBASSY CELEBRATES NATIONAL DAY WITH GRAND RECEPTION IN DHAKA

On December 5, 2024, the Royal Thai Embassy in Dhaka hosted a grand reception at the Royal Thai Residence to celebrate Thailand's National Day, the Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej The Great, and Father's Day. The event, graced by Chief Guest H.E. Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed, Adviser to the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Science and Technology, was attended by 200 distinguished guests, including diplomats, officials, business leaders, and the Thai community.

Ambassador Makawadee Sumitmor paid tribute to the late King's legacy of 70 years, emphasizing his development projects and the global recognition of World Soil Day. She also highlighted Thailand-Bangladesh relations in politics, economics, and humanitarian efforts, particularly for the Rohingya crisis.

Two key announcements were made: visa exemption for Bangladeshi official passport holders effective December 19, 2024, and the launch of Thailand's e-visa system on January 2, 2025. The Tourism Authority of Thailand added cultural vibrancy to the event with performances and a spotlight on UNESCO's recognition of Tom Yum Goong as an Intangible Cultural Heritage.





CELEBRATING BHUTAN'S 117TH NATIONAL DAY: HONORING UNITY, LEGACY, AND BHUTAN-BANGLADESH FRIENDSHIP

H.E. Rinchen Kuentsyl

Kuzuzangpola, Bhutan as a unified nation-state was founded by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel in the 17th century. For administration purposes, he instituted a dual system of governance, under which the powers of the government were split between a spiritual ruler and a temporal ruler. This dual system of governance lasted for almost two hundred years. However, by the early 19th century, the central government weakened and the regional governors and local rulers started fighting for supremacy. As a result, civil strife broke out in the country, which continued till the end of the 19th century. Towards the end of the 19th century, the governor of central Bhutan emerged as the most

powerful leader. The people of Bhutan, tired of a century of civil war, decided to elect him as the King of Bhutan. So, on 17th December 1907, Sir Ugyen Wangchuck, the Governor of Trongsa was elected as the first hereditary monarch by the people of Bhutan (Yes, he was knighted by the British in 1904 for his distinguished services to the British Empire in India. Hence the title 'Sir'). The signing of the historic 1907 contractual agreement by the representatives of the monastic body, civil officials, local rulers, and common people, defined Bhutan as a modern monarchy and changed the course of its history forever.

17th December is a day that we honor not just a moment in

history but a journey - our Kingdom's journey of resilience, unity, peace, and happiness of its people. It is a day when we commemorate the coronation of our First King, His Majesty Ugyen Wangchuck, in 1907, marking the foundation of Bhutan as a unified kingdom under the enlightened leadership of the Wangchuck dynasty.

On this day, we honor and pay tribute to the leaders, both past and present, whose unwavering dedication, wisdom, and foresight have been instrumental in shaping Bhutan's remarkable journey. We express our deepest gratitude to His Majesty the Fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuk, whose farsighted leadership and the



His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck is the Fifth and Reigning King of Bhutan

development philosophy of Gross National Happiness has transformed Bhutan. The development philosophy of Gross National Happiness emphasizes that the wellbeing and happiness of the Bhutanese people should be achieved through a harmonious balance of economic growth, environmental conservation, cultural preservation and good governance. This approach has enabled Bhutan to pursue progressive socioeconomic policies, achieve sustainable growth without compromising our national security, values, culture and environment.

Current King His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, continues to build on this legacy through a compassionate leadership. His Majesty's commitment to ensuring Bhutan's stability, peace, and prosperity, while embracing modernity with integrity, resonates deeply with the aspirations of Bhutanese people.

His Majesty King Jigme ascended to the throne as the Fifth King as Bhutan transitioned to a Parliamentary Democracy. His Majesty has ensured that democracy thrives for the wellbeing and prosperity of Bhutan. Since the introduction of democracy, we have had four parliamentary elections, we graduated from

the group of Least Developed Countries, and committed to remain carbon neutral in perpetuity. Bhutan today is one of the few carbon-negative countries in the world.

The visionary leadership of the Wangchuck Dynasty, from the first King Sir Ugyen Wangchuck to the present King His Majesty King Jigme, has been crucial in ensuring Bhutan's sovereignty and security. We are truly grateful for their enduring legacy and the sense of purpose they have instilled in our hearts.

Bhutan – Bangladesh relations

Bhutan and Bangladesh share a strong and deep-rooted relationship, built on mutual goodwill, friendship, shared values, and a commitment to peace and prosperity. Our ties have grown steadily, not only through diplomatic engagements but also through practical cooperation in areas such as trade, transit, human resource development, and people-to-people contact, all of



H.E. Mr. Sk. Bashir Uddin, Hon'ble Adviser to the Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Textiles & Jute, graces the 117th National Day of Bhutan as Chief Guest, participating in the ceremonial cake-cutting

which are vital to both our nations' growth and development.

Besides being a close friend and a neighbour, Bangladesh is Bhutan's second-largest trading partner and the only country with which Bhutan enjoys a trade surplus. The growing trade between our two countries has immensely contributed to the prosperity of both our peoples and further enhanced our economic

In addition to trade, our cooperation extends into the crucial area of transit. Bhutan and Bangladesh have signed the Agreement on Movement of Traffic-in-Transit, which facilitates the efficient movement of goods for both export and import using multimodal transport arrangements, including access to river and sea ports. This agreement will significantly enhance our connectivity, ensuring smoother trade and

arts. Today, we have more than 250 Bhutanese students studying in Bangladesh, the majority of whom are pursuing degrees in MBBS, dentistry, and pharmacy. The opportunities provided by Bangladesh's excellent and accessible educational institutions have enriched the lives of many Bhutanese students, strengthening the ties between our two countries. As many of us are aware, one of the students who graduated from Mymensingh Medical College in Bangladesh went on to become the Prime Minister of Bhutan.



Punakha, served as the capital of Bhutan until 1955, making this Dzong a central piece in the nation's history

interdependence. In 2020, Bhutan and Bangladesh signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), which provides Bhutan with duty-free access to 34 products in Bangladesh, and Bangladesh enjoys duty-free access to 100 products in Bhutan. This agreement has been a key milestone in strengthening our economic ties. As we continue discussions to include additional products under the PTA, we are optimistic about the growing opportunities for trade and investment between our two countries.

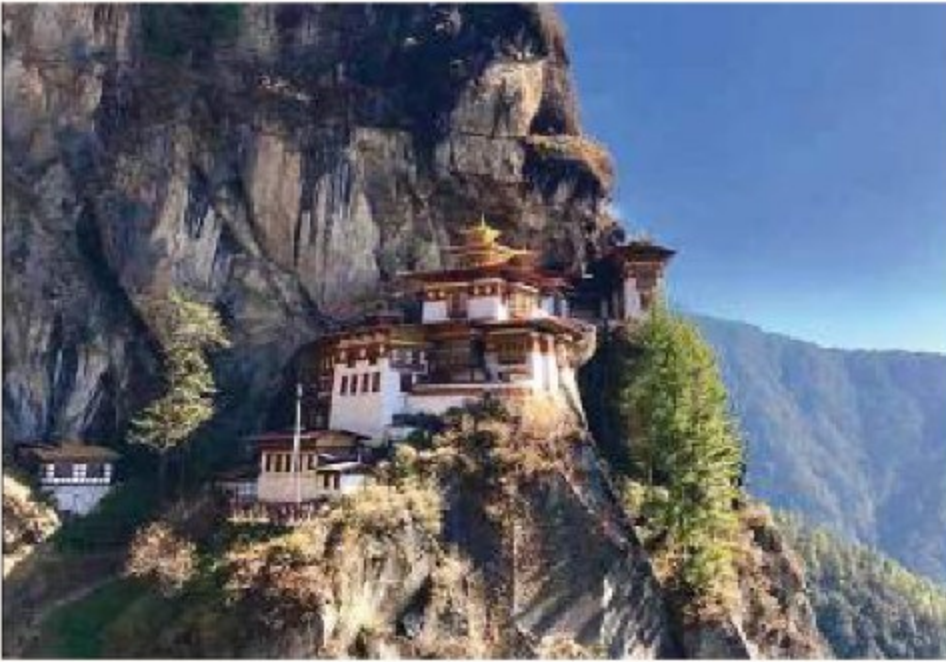
fostering greater economic cooperation. Similarly, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the Use of Inland Waterways for the Transportation of Bilateral Trade and Transit Cargoes.

Our partnership in human resources development has also been a pillar of our bilateral relations. Since the 1980s, Bhutan has been sending students to Bangladesh for higher education in a wide range of fields, such as medicine, engineering, agriculture, social sciences, and

Bhutan also looks forward to cooperation in the IT sector. The need for a reliable and secure digital connectivity, particularly for a landlocked country like Bhutan, is crucial in today's highly digitized world. In this regard, Bhutan is deeply appreciative of the concurrence of Bangladesh to provide internet bandwidth to Bhutan at a reasonable rate. Bhutan looks forward to establishing this bandwidth connection soon. This collaboration will not only enable Bhutan to harness the power of ICT to transform itself but will also contribute to regional integration in the realm of digital connectivity.

Gelephu Mindfulness City - Bhutan's vision for the future

While our past modernization and development efforts have served us well, Bhutan is mindful that continuation of the same approach will not guarantee the same results under the constantly changing national and international landscape. Realizing the need to be innovative and creative in order to grow and prosper, His



Paro, nestled in the scenic Paro Valley of Bhutan, is a treasure trove of natural beauty, history, and culture

Majesty King Jigme announced the Gelephu Mindfulness City project, during the National Day celebrations last year.

The Gelephu Mindfulness City will be a unique blend of

Bhutan's traditional values of Gross National Happiness and cutting-edge urban planning. As a planned city with modern amenities, it is expected to attract investment in fields such as information technology,

education, and healthcare, thereby boosting Bhutan's competitiveness in the region. Moreover, its emphasis on wellness tourism will enhance Bhutan's reputation as a peaceful and spiritual destination, attracting international visitors seeking a balanced, mindful lifestyle.

I invite you all to view a short video presentation on the proposed Gelephu Mindfulness City after my statement.

In conclusion, I would like to convey the appreciation of the Royal Government of Bhutan to the Government of Bangladesh and to all of you here for your unwavering friendship and support to Bhutan and its endeavours. And once again, I thank you for being part of today's celebrations.

This article is based on the speech delivered by H.E. Ambassador Rinchen Kuentsyl on the occasion of Bhutan's 117th National Day celebration in Dhaka.

H.E. Rinchen Kuentsyl

Ambassador

The Embassy of the Kingdom of Bhutan, Dhaka, Bangladesh



مِيحَرَّلَانِ-مَحَرَّلَاهِ لِّلْاِمْسِبِ

CELEBRATING UNITY AND FRIENDSHIP: QATAR NATIONAL DAY AND 50 YEARS OF BANGLADESH-QATAR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

H.E. Mr. Seraya Ali Al-Qahtani

May Allah bless you with all goodness and happiness. It is my great pleasure to celebrate the National Day of the State of Qatar, the dearest occasion to the Qatari people, commemorating the founding of Qatar as a unified State under the leadership of the Founder Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammad Al - Thani, on December 18, 1878.

The major achievements that the State of Qatar made in the political, diplomatic, economic, sports, health, and education fields and others, reflect the unity and solidarity between the wise leadership and the loyal people and draw.



The Founder Sheikh Jassim Bin Mohammed Bin Thani

Over more than 50 years of diplomatic relations between the State of Qatar and the People's Republic of Bangladesh the brotherly ties have deepened as the both countries enjoy excellent and deep relations fostered by history and common culture, religion, and values. Relations between the two countries reached their best, especially with the auspicious visit of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, May Allah protect Him, to Bangladesh last April, which took the bilateral relations between the two countries to a new heights and strengthened cooperation in all areas of common interest, including political and diplomatic cooperation, trade, investment, energy, labor recruitment, civil aviation, tourism, defense, and

others, in addition to signing several agreements and memoranda of understanding between the State of Qatar and Bangladesh, which had a great impact in promoting and

strengthening the bonds between the two brotherly countries.

About 400,000 members of the Bangladeshi community work in the State of Qatar at present, and they receive all the required comfort and care guaranteed by Qatari laws. These working hands contribute significantly to the economic and social development of the two brotherly countries.

In the context of economic relations between Qatar and Bangladesh, I am proud to inform you that it has reached a significant level. The trade volume between the two countries in the year 2023-2024 touched the milestone of 2.5 billion US dollars, where the value of exports from Qatar to Bangladesh amounted to more than 2 billion dollars making it one of the leading exporters of various commodities, especially natural gas, to Bangladesh, and the value of imports from



His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Emir of Qatar



Qatar National Day Military Parade: A spectacular display of strength, unity, and pride as the nation's armed forces march in celebration of Qatar's heritage and achievements



H.E. the Ambassador of the State of Qatar to Bangladesh Mr. Seraya Ali Al-Qahtani



Qatar Embassy in Bangladesh celebrates National Day and marks 50 years of Bangladesh-Qatar diplomatic relations with a grand event highlighting friendship and mutual cooperation

Bangladesh to Qatar amounted to more than 31 million dollars.

The State of Qatar is eager to support all efforts aimed at promoting cultural and civilized openness among the nations of the world. The State of Qatar pays great attention to developing its relations with countries and regional and international organizations, and actively contributes in promoting international peace and security through mediation to settle disputes by peaceful means, and supports development and stability projects in different countries. The mediations of the State of Qatar in Philistine, Ukraine, Sudan, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Chad, and others, have not just paved the ways for building peace, stability, and development in these countries, but also at the regional and international levels. The State of Qatar strongly believes that peaceful means are the best way to resolve conflicts and end wars.

Finally, our distinguished guests, I take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to you for your auspicious presence at this event, hoping that you will enjoy the party and wish you every success.

هتاكربو هللا ةمحرؤ مكيلع مالسلاو

H.E. Mr. Seraya Ali Al-Qahtani
Ambassador
Embassy of the State of Qatar in Bangladesh



BRIEF REPORT ON THE LECTURE “NAVIGATING THE NEXUS OF BLUE ECONOMY, GEOPOLITICS AND GEOECONOMICS IN THE BAY OF BENGAL”

Dr. Md Aynul Hoque

On 2nd December 2024 an impactful event was organized on the prospects and challenges of blue economy under the title “Navigating the Nexus of Blue Economy, Geopolitics and Geoeconomics in the Bay of Bengal” by Diplomats World at Foreign Service Academy, Dhaka. Various experts on subject matter discussed and gave opinions after the keynote presentation by Professor Dr Lt. Gen (Retd) Aminul Karim. The presentation is primarily based on his book *The Bay of Bengal Geopolitics and the QUAD*, published by NOVA Science, New York, and my paper titled “Smart Governance for a Sustainable

Blue Economy: The Case of the Bay of Bengal”, published by Springer-Nature, Switzerland.

Keynote presentation by Professor Dr Lt. Gen (Retd) Aminul Karim.

There is an urgent need to address the decline in ocean health. There is also a need for operationalizing, implementing, and reviewing well-crafted concepts and strategies for the clients. There is also an urgent need to study its geopolitical implications. The Bay of Bengal areas like Bangladesh, eastern parts of India, and western parts of Myanmar rightly deserve effective governance to ensure

better sea health, such as preventing plastic pollution, preserving sustainable fisheries, exploring gas and oil, taking care of dead zones in it and on-going depletion of mangrove forests along its coasts. This presentation attempted to suggest realistic and actionable strategies to indicate dedicated governance structures and policy consistency for the blue economy in the Bay of Bengal and its attendant geopolitical implications.

The concept of blue economy entered the era of development studies in 1994. This concept gained its prominence during the



Md. Touhid Hossain,
Advisor of Foreign Affairs

UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 called the Rio+ 20 Summit in 2012. A blue economy is a long-term strategy aimed at supporting sustainable economic growth while improving human well-being and social equity and preserving environment. The Summit suggested a few clear and practical steps for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), based on knowledge of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). SDGs 13 and 14 relevant here.

There is widespread interest in harnessing the economic potential of the oceans as it is projected its contribution to the global economy is going to double from USD 1.5 trillion in 2010 to over USD 3 trillion in 2030. Fisheries and aquaculture contribute USD 100 billion per year and 260 million jobs to the global economy. Marine aquaculture, offshore wind, fish processing, and shipbuilding and repair have a stronger potential for growth. This next frontier—the oceans, seas, and coast—provides us with

opportunities with vast resources like food, oxygen, energy, and livelihoods that include different marine-based industries. Our Earth is a blue planet having 71 percent of its 510 million square kilometres surface covered by marine salt waters. So, oceans have considerable impacts on weather, temperature, cyclones, tidal bores, and the supply chain especially the food supply for humans and other species. No wonder, over 97 percent of world water is stored in the oceans. Supply Chain is an integrated affair in the Indo-Pacific. Both geopolitics and geoeconomics are relevant.

Oceans, seas, and coasts are our new frontiers, which we must exploit to keep human civilization kicking and running. But a word of caution here:

- Such exploitation must be done in a planned way—by utilizing the best possible appropriate technology so that their health does not deteriorate to an extent to cause a natural death ultimately.
- It looks like if health deteriorates, human civilization



Professor Dr Lt. Gen (Retd)
Aminul Karim

tends to collapse. Gunter Pauli, the founder of the blue economy concept, injects optimism into this overused planet, when he says the blue economy has to be used more creatively,

- “The Blue Economy inspired by Blue Planet Earth with a blue sky and a blue ocean, is now turning into a major platform for motivating entrepreneurs, changing the economy not from the top down, but rather from the bottom up”.

The Concept of the Blue Economy—Geopolitics
The blue economy is an



Marine researchers exploring sustainable practices for the blue economy



Fisheries and aquaculture are key sectors in harnessing the blue economy

ocean-based green economy. It is a new growth engine that should also ensure its own sustainability to ensure the Earth's survival. The blue economy visualizes the oceans as "shared development spaces." As its main argument, the concept calls for the separation of socioeconomic development from environmental degradation. It can now be aligned with economic and trade activities. This is, however, triggered by a need to "integrate conservation and sustainability in the management of the maritime

domain." Sustainability refers to maintaining a balance between activities like economic, trade, legislative and regulative supporting system, like ecological and environment, and the communities dependent on livelihood and food and it is likely to give rise to geopolitics.

Coastal Economy versus Ocean Economy

Colgan (2003) has defined a coastal economy as "all economic activity in the coastal region, and is thus the sum of

employment, wages, and output in the region...the coastal economy incorporates a broader set of economic activity." The coastal economy is broader than the ocean economy like boat building and seafood retailers are in the non-coastal regions.

Blue Economy Sectors and Activities –next frontier available in the Bay of Bengal

The Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) is over 6.2 million square kilometres in area with a mostly narrow continental shelf around its perimeter. Its depths reach 2000 and are over 4000 meters in its central area. Most of the BOBLME—66%—area is within the EEZs of its countries such as Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. Bangladesh marine water covers an area of 165,887 km² while total continental shelf area covers about 66,400 km² and the EEZ spans 166,000 km² towards open sea, which is bigger than the land area.

The Bay of Bengal and Bangladesh—Goeconomics

The Bay of Bengal is extremely critical for the sustenance of people in Bangladesh as this country is almost devoid of any onshore reckonable resources. It involves Bangladesh's existential threats. Susceptible to blockade. The Bay is critical for the sustenance of Bangladesh because of two shipping lines going to the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia. It has gas resources which are fast depleting due to its use in both domestic and industrial sector. After the international verdict given on the disputed maritime areas with the neighbouring



Renewable energy projects like offshore wind farms are a cornerstone of the blue economy



The blue economy merges sustainability and economic growth for a balanced future

countries, the coverage of Bangladesh's marine system is estimated to be 118,813 square kilometres, with an extended continental shelf of about 37,000 square kilometres. This shelf is divided into three major divisions such as eastern, central, and western. Bangladesh's coastline thus extends, a total of 710 kilometres, from the living coral island the Saint. Martin's in the southeast to the virgin Sundarbans. Saint Martin's is a flashpoint between Bangladesh

and Myanmar. The Incident of 2008 between Bangladesh and Myanmar Navies.

Comments and opinions followed the keynote speech

The audience was full of experts and they commented on different aspects of geopolitics and the blue economy such as Bangladesh's vision and strategies as many actors are contending in the Indian Ocean. The session was moderated by Commodore Syed Misbah Uddin

Ahmad, (C), NUP, ndc, afwc, psc, BN (retd), Director General of Bangladesh Institute of Maritime Research and Development. Rear Admiral (retd) Abu Sayed Mohammad Abdul Awal, Sheikh Mahmudul Hasan, BN (retd), Former Secretary & Ambassador M. Shameem Ahsan, Lt. Commander (Retd) Saiful Islam, Dr. Mansur A. Chowdhury, Former Secretary & Ambassador Shahed Akhtar and other notable experts echoed similar concerns such Bangladesh's position in UNCLOS and developing naval capacity to harness the potential of blue economy. The chief guest of the session was Mr. Touhid Hossain, Foreign relations adviser of Bangladesh government. He emphasized on diplomatic efforts, developing military and economic capabilities to fully utilize the blue economy prospects in the Bay of Bengal and navigating Bangladesh's economy to a land-based to sea-based economy. Some suggestions were given by expert audience to present Bangladesh strongly in the blue economy perspectives and mitigate threats and challenges too.

Dr. Md Aynul Hoque
Associate Editor
Diplomats World



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EU DELEGATION MEETS CHIEF ADVISER MUHAMMAD YUNUS TO STRENGTHEN BANGLADESH-EU PARTNERSHIP



The EU Delegation to Bangladesh expressed its gratitude to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus for hosting an unprecedented exchange of views with Ambassadors of EU Member States and the Head of the EU Delegation at his office. This open and engaging meeting was part of a joint initiative aimed at reinforcing the Bangladesh-EU partnership.

The discussion emphasized the EU's solidarity with Bangladesh and its commitment to deepening cooperation. It also built upon the recent launch of talks for a comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Bangladesh.

EU representatives lauded the reform ambitions of the Interim Government, reiterating their readiness to support a successful and inclusive transition. They highlighted the importance of human rights, the rule of

law, and good governance, which are critical for achieving democratic elections. The role of youth in shaping the nation's future was a focal point of the dialogue.

Key topics included fundamental rights such as freedom of expression, media independence, gender equality, anti-corruption efforts, climate action, energy transition, and regional cooperation. The EU also acknowledged Bangladesh's significant humanitarian role in hosting over a million Rohingya refugees.

On economic matters, the EU emphasized the potential for increased foreign direct investment (FDI) and agreed to explore ways to improve the business environment in January, leveraging the newly established EuroCham. The EU also reiterated its commitment to enhancing connectivity under the Global Gateway strategy, with a visit from the Vice-President of the European Investment Bank (EIB) scheduled for January 2025.

The meeting reaffirmed the shared vision of a prosperous Bangladesh-EU partnership, aiming to advance reforms, build economic opportunities, and uphold the aspirations of Bangladesh's citizens.

H.E. MOHD SHUHADA OTHMAN PRESENTS CREDENTIALS TO PRESIDENT MOHAMMED SHAHABUDDIN AT BANGABHABAN



H.E. Mohd Shuhada Othman, the newly appointed High Commissioner of Malaysia to Bangladesh, presented his Letters of Credence to The Honourable President Mohammed Shahabuddin at Bangabhaban on December 5, 2024.

Upon his arrival at Bangabhaban, His Excellency was greeted with a ceremonial welcome by a horse-mounted contingent of the Presidential Guard Regiment (PGR).

The official ceremony featured the playing of Malaysia's national anthem, "Negaraku," and Bangladesh's national anthem, "Amar Sonar Bangla," by the regimental band. Following the anthems, H.E. Mohd Shuhada inspected the guards of honour as part of the formalities.

H.E. Mohd Shuhada Othman is the 17th High Commissioner of Malaysia to Bangladesh since the establishment of the High Commission in 1972. This moment marks a significant milestone in the long-standing relationship between the two nations, further strengthened by the recent visit of The Honourable Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to Bangladesh.

The ceremony underscored the enduring friendship and shared aspirations for deeper collaboration between Malaysia and Bangladesh.

DANISH AMBASSADOR INAUGURATES "ARTIVISM FOR PEACE" EXHIBITION IN DHAKA



On December 9, 2024, Danish Ambassador to Bangladesh, H.E. Christian Brix Møller, inaugurated the Artivism for Peace exhibition at Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed Park in Dhaka. This remarkable event featured over 120 artworks by young Bangladeshi artists from Dhaka, Chattogram, Mymensingh, Jashore, and Rangpur.

Jointly organized by UNDP, Bangladesh Computer Council, and Kashful Foundation, with support from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, the exhibition

highlighted the transformative power of art in addressing critical social challenges.

Themes explored included promoting unity in diversity, combating gender-based violence, fostering peaceful coexistence, and raising awareness about mental health. Through vibrant paintings and striking graffiti, young artists shared their vision for a more inclusive, tolerant, and peaceful society.

In his remarks, Ambassador Møller emphasized Denmark's commitment to youth empowerment and harmonious communities. Denmark has been a strong supporter of the Partnerships for a Tolerant and Inclusive Bangladesh (PTIB) project of UNDP, backing its first and second phases.

The exhibition showcased the potential of art to inspire change and build solidarity, resonating with the broader mission of promoting peace and inclusion in Bangladesh.

BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER PRESENTS KING CHARLES III CORONATION MEDAL TO BANGLADESHI MILITARY MEMBERS



On December 10, 2024, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Sarah Cooke hosted a prestigious ceremony at her residence to present the King Charles III Coronation Medal to members of the Bangladesh Military who participated in the historic Coronation event of Their Majesties The King and The Queen.

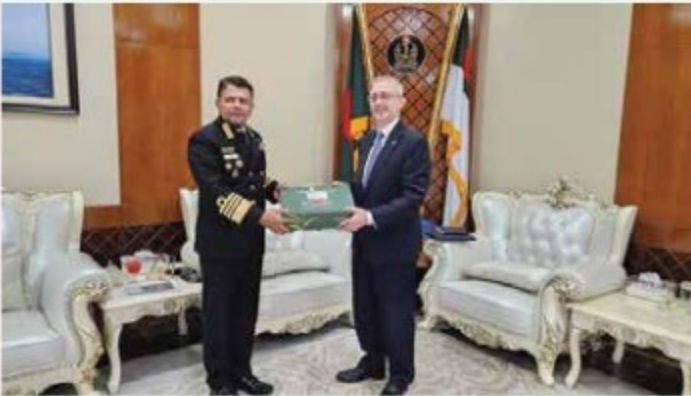
The Coronation, a momentous occasion, took place on May 6, 2023. The Coronation Medal was introduced as a commemorative symbol to honor this significant event and those who contributed to its success.

During the ceremony, High Commissioner Sarah Cooke expressed her pride in the strong ties between the UK and Bangladesh, stating:

"I'm proud that members of the UK Armed Forces marched alongside counterparts from Bangladesh and other Commonwealth member states during this historic event."

The event highlighted the enduring partnership and shared history between the United Kingdom and Bangladesh, particularly within the Commonwealth framework. The medals serve as a testament to the collaborative spirit and camaraderie demonstrated during the Coronation.

EU AMBASSADOR MICHAEL MILLER ENGAGES IN STRATEGIC DISCUSSIONS WITH BANGLADESH NAVY CHIEF



EU Ambassador to Bangladesh Michael Miller visited the Naval Headquarters, where he held a productive exchange with Admiral Nazmul Hassan, Chief of the Bangladesh Navy.

The meeting highlighted the breadth of EU-Bangladesh cooperation, extending into the

security sector. Discussions centered on potential avenues for collaboration, generating numerous ideas for new initiatives to strengthen ties between the EU and Bangladesh in maritime security and defense.

Ambassador Miller expressed his appreciation for the hospitality and the forward-looking dialogue, emphasizing the EU's commitment to supporting Bangladesh in areas that ensure stability, security, and mutual growth. Admiral Nazmul Hassan echoed these sentiments, underscoring the Navy's readiness to explore innovative partnerships with the EU.

This visit marks another step in deepening the strategic engagement between Bangladesh and the European Union, reflecting shared priorities in regional security and sustainable development.

DIPLOMATIC CORPS COMMEMORATES 54TH VICTORY DAY WITH WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY AT NATIONAL MEMORIAL



On the 54th Victory Day, members of the Diplomatic Corps, heads of missions, and international representatives gathered at the National Memorial in Savar to honor the martyrs of the 1971 Liberation War.

Joined by senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, they laid wreaths at the altar, paying tribute to the sacrifices made for Bangladesh's independence.

The solemn ceremony highlighted the enduring spirit of the Liberation War, uniting diplomats and government leaders in remembrance as part of the nation's Victory Day observance.

PAKISTAN HIGH COMMISSIONER HOSTS DINNER HONORING GHAZAL MAESTRO RAHAT FATEH ALI KHAN



The High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh, Syed Ahmed Maroof, hosted a dinner at Pakistan House, Dhaka, in honor of legendary ghazal singer Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, who is in Dhaka for a charity concert organized by Dhaka University students and the BPL Opening Ceremony by the BCB.

The event brought together notable personalities, including actress Shabnam, singer Shakeela Khurasani, filmmaker Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, and members of the concert's organizing committee. High Commissioner Maroof thanked the guests and praised Rahat Fateh Ali Khan for strengthening cultural ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh through his soulful music.

ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR DR. ABDELOUAHAB SAIDANI PAYS COURTESY CALL ON HON'BLE ADVISER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS MD. TOUHID HOSSAIN



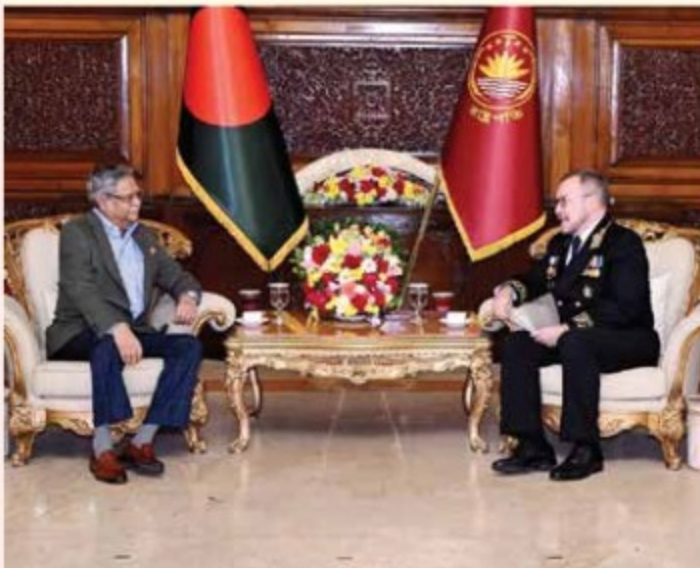
H.E. Dr. Abdelouahab Saidani, the Ambassador of Algeria to Bangladesh, paid a courtesy call on the Hon'ble Adviser for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Md. Touhid Hossain, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the meeting, the Hon'ble Adviser congratulated Ambassador Saidani on his appointment and expressed a warm welcome.

The discussions focused on strengthening bilateral ties between Bangladesh and Algeria, particularly in the areas of energy, education, trade, investment, and agriculture. Ambassador Saidani proposed the creation of an Intergovernmental Joint Committee between the two nations to foster discussions on common interests. He also suggested the possibility of a high-level bilateral visit to further enhance cooperation.

The two sides explored the signing of several Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and agreements, including on Air Services between Dhaka and Algiers, as well as an exchange program between the Foreign Service Academies of both countries.

Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to advancing bilateral mechanisms, including holding the next round of Foreign Office Consultations in Algiers at the earliest opportunity.

RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR PRESENTS CREDENTIALS TO BANGLADESHI PRESIDENT, AIMS TO STRENGTHEN BILATERAL TIES



On December 30, 2024, H.E. Mr. Alexander Khozin, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation, formally presented his credentials to H.E. Mr. Mohammed Shahabuddin,

President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, in a ceremonial event at the Bangabhaban.

During their meeting, the two leaders discussed the prospects of enhancing bilateral relations between Dhaka and Moscow, highlighting opportunities for deepening cooperation in various fields.

In a note written in the President's Office guest book, H.E. Mr. Khozin expressed his optimism for the future of Russia-Bangladesh relations. "It is my sincere hope that during my tenure the bonds of friendship between Dhaka and Moscow will continue to thrive and strengthen through the mutually beneficial cooperation between our nations," he remarked.

The presentation of credentials marks a significant step in furthering diplomatic ties and collaboration between the two countries.

FOSA HOSTS INTERNATIONAL CHARITY BAZAAR IN DHAKA TO SUPPORT HUMANITARIAN CAUSES



The Foreign Office Spouses' Association (FOSA) organized a vibrant day-long International Charity Bazaar at the Foreign Service Academy on Bailey Road to raise funds for humanitarian efforts.

Justice Zinat Ara, chairman of the Bangladesh Law Commission, inaugurated the event as the chief guest, with Foreign Secretary M Jasim Uddin as the special guest. FOSA's chief patron, Jahanara Siddiqui, and president, Shayla Parveen, also addressed attendees, emphasizing the significance of international collaboration for charitable initiatives.

Justice Zinat Ara lauded FOSA's role in fostering cultural exchange and empowering communities, saying, "Today's fair showcases a unique collaboration



missions, advancing welfare-oriented initiatives."

The bazaar featured stalls representing Bangladesh and countries such as China, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Russia. Traditional Bangladeshi Jamdani sarees, jute items, and international delicacies like Turkish dolma and baklava were among the highlights.

Funds raised from the event will benefit vulnerable communities, continuing FOSA's mission to promote social welfare through global partnerships.

The event drew ambassadors and dignitaries from various nations, enhancing the spirit of international camaraderie.

INDIA-BANGLADESH ARMED FORCES UNITE TO COMMEMORATE 53RD LIBERATION WAR ANNIVERSARY



The Indian and Bangladeshi Armed Forces jointly celebrated the 54th anniversary of the Liberation War of 1971 on Bijoy Diwas, reflecting their shared history and enduring friendship.

In Kolkata, events began with a wreath-laying ceremony at Vijay Smarak by Muktiyoddha Maj Gen Abdus Salam



Chowdhury (Retd) and Brig Gen Md Aminur Rahman, attended by the Governor of West Bengal. The delegation also engaged with the GOC-in-C Eastern Command and met Indian veterans and dignitaries.

In Dhaka, Indian veterans joined a reception hosted by Bangladesh's President at Bangabhaban. They interacted with Bangladesh's service chiefs and senior dignitaries, sharing memories of their united fight with Bir Muktiyoddhas during the 1971 Liberation War.

Both nations reaffirmed their deep-rooted bond, forged in the spirit of justice, freedom, and equality, underscoring their commitment to peace and harmony.

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