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DIPLOMATS WORLD

The Only Diplomatic Magazine in Bangladesh

**Religious Harmony Under Fire: The Real Story Behind Bangladesh's
Hindu-Muslim Relations Amidst Growing Protests**

Sustainable Blue Economy : The case of the Bay of Bengal

**Stitching crisis while tearing hopes: What's the future of Bangladesh's Garment
Industry Amid sudden worker unrest**

**Break the Silence, End the Violence – A Roundtable Discussion on
Gender-Based Violence to Celebrate 16 Days of Activism**





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A Roundtable Discussion on Gender-Based Violence to Celebrate 16 Days of Activism

Diplomat's World extends warm greetings to its readers as we reflect on a month of significant national and international developments.

At COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, Professor Muhammad Yunus, Chief Adviser of Bangladesh's interim government and Nobel laureate, presented a visionary framework for a "Three-Zero Civilization": zero carbon emissions, zero wealth concentration through social business models, and zero unemployment driven by youth entrepreneurship. Prof. Yunus urged global leaders to transcend profit-driven economic systems, which he described as perpetuating unsustainable consumption, and to adopt zero waste and need-based living. During his visit, he engaged in 20 bilateral meetings, reinforcing Bangladesh's role as a global advocate for sustainable and equitable development.

Upon completing the interim government's first 100 days, Prof. Yunus addressed the nation, highlighting the formation of six commissions to spearhead institutional reforms. He also addressed the UN General Assembly and held meetings with numerous global leaders, including U.S. President.

In a significant milestone, Pope Francis and Prof. Yunus launched the Pope Francis-Yunus 3Zero Club in Rome. With over 4,600 clubs worldwide, this initiative aims to empower marginalized youth to develop sustainable solutions for global challenges. Prof. Yunus hailed the partnership as a beacon of hope for fostering inclusivity and transformation.

At the Bay of Bengal Conference recently held in Dhaka, Prof. Yunus emphasized the strategic importance of the region. Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad also participated, advocating for economies that equitably share technological and economic benefits. Meanwhile, Bangladesh's Foreign Affairs Adviser, Touhid Hossain, addressed the prolonged Rohingya crisis. He highlighted the Bay of Bengal's geopolitical significance, noting that China's reliance on Myanmar for access to the region and India's Kaladan project complicates regional diplomacy, as these powers prioritize strategic interests over resolving the crisis.

This issue of Diplomat's World offers insights into critical global topics, from climate change and regional geopolitics to innovative global partnerships, presenting readers with thought-provoking perspectives.

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



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RELIGIOUS HARMONY UNDER FIRE: THE REAL STORY BEHIND BANGLADESH'S HINDU-MUSLIM RELATIONS AMIDST GROWING PROTESTS

Nazinur Rahim

For centuries, the Indian subcontinent, particularly the region we now know as Bangladesh, has been a beautiful mosaic of religious coexistence. The lands of Bengal, rich in culture and tradition, have long been a place where Hindus and Muslims lived side by side, bound by a shared history and values that transcended religious divides. This remarkable harmony, shaped by mutual respect and deep-rooted cultural bonds, has defined Bengal's identity for generations. Even today, despite the occasional ripples of tension, that spirit of togetherness endures.

But recently, there has been a shadow cast over this legacy.

Modern-day Bangladesh, a country proud of its diversity, has seen unrest, particularly within its Hindu community. Protests, sporadic violence, and tragic incidents have raised questions about the safety and well-being of religious minorities. Are we witnessing the disintegration of this time-honored harmony, or are these challenges being amplified by outside forces and political agendas? As someone deeply familiar with Bangladesh's history of religious unity, I believe the answer lies somewhere in between—but more importantly, I believe the country's future remains firmly rooted in hope and resilience.

A Long Tradition of Coexistence
The Bengali region, now Bangladesh, has long been a symbol of religious coexistence, where Hindus and Muslims live side by side, sharing festivals and customs. In rural Bengal, it was common for Muslim families to assist with Durga Puja preparations, while Hindus participated in Eid celebrations. This was more than just peaceful coexistence; it was a mutual appreciation of each other's traditions and humanity. Even the violent partition of India in 1947, which split Bengal into East (later Bangladesh) and West Bengal, could not entirely break these bonds. East Bengal, later Bangladesh, emerged as a bastion of cultural pluralism.



The spirit of unity during festivals reflects Bangladesh's shared cultural heritage

When Bangladesh gained independence in 1971, it was a fight not just for political freedom but to preserve the shared cultural identity of its people. Under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's leadership, the new nation embraced secularism, enshrined in its 1972 constitution. For decades, Hindus and Muslims in Bangladesh continued to live together in relative peace, a rare example of religious tolerance in the region.

However, recent years have seen a shift, with rising concerns within the Hindu community, particularly after the recent regime change. Why is there suddenly a sense of insecurity among Hindus? What has sparked the feeling of being left behind?

Political Opportunism and False Narratives

The political landscape in Bangladesh has undergone a significant transformation following the end of Sheikh Hasina's 15-year rule. With the ascension of Dr. Muhammad Yunus as Chief Advisor, Bangladesh's governance has seen a paradigm shift toward greater transparency, inclusion, and reform. However, not everyone is

pleased with these changes, particularly those who benefited from the previous government's patronage. Opportunistic groups, some with vested interests tied to the former regime, are attempting to stir unrest by fueling religious tensions, exploiting the insecurities of minority communities like the Hindus.

For over a decade, under the previous administration, certain political figures and organizations gained significant power and financial backing. Many of these figures are now out of favor, left to confront the loss of their influence. To regain relevance, some have chosen to

weaponize religion, crafting narratives of victimhood to destabilize the Yunus administration. These elements cleverly exploit the sensitive issue of minority rights, turning it into a political tool to agitate the Hindu community, spreading fear and confusion.

Organizations like ISKCON and other religious spokespersons have taken advantage of this volatile environment, amplifying claims of Hindu victimization. However, a closer inspection reveals that these narratives are more politically motivated than rooted in reality. The sudden surge in demands and accusations from Hindu groups raises questions: Why now? Why the abrupt shift in rhetoric?

The question of why the Hindu community suddenly feels left alone can be traced back to these opportunists who have emerged after the regime change. By fostering narratives of fear and victimhood, they are positioning themselves as defenders of Hindu rights, hoping to regain the political ground lost after the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government. The community should critically



Generations of cooperation and coexistence define rural Bengal's harmony.



Mosque and temple standing side by side, Bangladesh's enduring symbol of harmony

examine the motives behind these newfound “champions” of their rights.

There has also been a concerted effort to create friction between Bangladesh and India over the Hindu issue. Recently, ISKCON and other Hindu nationalist groups have been at the forefront of this campaign, positioning the Hindu community as perpetual victims. They have gone as far as to encourage international interventions, with some even suggesting that India should step in. However, Dr. Yunus's administration has consistently maintained that Bangladesh is fully capable of protecting its citizens, regardless of faith.

The tragic death of Assistant Public Prosecutor Saiful Islam during a clash between security forces and followers of Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, a spokesperson for the Bangladesh Sammilita Sanatani Jagran Jote, highlights the dangerous path these tensions are taking. While the death was deeply unfortunate, it is being used as a tool by radical elements to further inflame the situation. Dr. Yunus's government has

remained firm in its stance that such incidents, while regrettable, do not reflect the broader safety of the Hindu community.

Despite the noise, Bangladesh's government, under Dr. Yunus, has refused to bow to pressure to ban ISKCON, stating that Hindus remain safe in the country and that the government is committed to protecting all its citizens, regardless of their religion. Shafikul Alam, press secretary to Dr. Yunus, reiterated this recently, stating unequivocally that Hindus are "safe in Bangladesh." He dismissed claims of widespread violence and unrest as part of an

"industrial level disinformation campaign" aimed at destabilizing the country. Alam also criticized India's involvement in commenting on what he described as an "internal matter," underscoring Bangladesh's sovereignty and ability to manage its own affairs.

It's important to note that the Yunus government has implemented measures to ensure the safety and security of all its citizens, including the Hindu minority. Security has been increased around temples during major festivals, and there have been efforts to strengthen the legal framework to protect minority rights. While isolated incidents of violence and unrest may occur, they do not reflect the broader reality of life for Hindus in Bangladesh today. In fact, these incidents are often the result of local disputes or the actions of politically motivated groups, not a systemic campaign of persecution.

Beyond religion, it's essential to recognize that much of the unrest is tied to broader socio-economic challenges. Land disputes, poverty, and economic



Protecting diversity, ensuring safety and security for all communities



An interfaith dialogue event, with leaders from Hindu, Muslim, and other communities engaging in conversation with mutual respect

inequality often form the backdrop to these incidents, with religion used as a convenient pretext for violence or unrest. Addressing these underlying issues is crucial to ensuring long-term stability and harmony.

The Yunus administration's focus on economic reforms, job creation, and reducing corruption is key to this effort. By addressing the root causes of inequality and discontent, the government is working to create an environment where all citizens, regardless of religion, can thrive. Economic stability, after all, is one of the strongest foundations for social harmony.

For the Hindu community, it is vital to remain cautious of those

who seek to manipulate them for political gain. The sudden rise in demands and the victim narrative pushed by certain groups must be questioned. Why has the tone shifted so dramatically after years of relative peace? Why are these organizations pushing for international intervention now, when Bangladesh has always been a place of religious pluralism and coexistence?

Rather than falling into the trap of fear and division, the Hindu community—and all citizens of Bangladesh—should continue to embrace the spirit of unity that has defined the nation for so long. The Yunus government is working to preserve this harmony, and while challenges remain, there is every reason to

believe that the future can be one of peace and prosperity for all.

Bangladesh stands at a critical juncture, with forces both internal and external seeking to exploit religious divisions for their own gain. The Hindu community, as well as other minorities, must remain vigilant and resist the false narratives being pushed by opportunists. Rather than giving in to fear, it is crucial to question the motives of those who seek to agitate and divide.

At the same time, the government must continue its efforts to promote unity, protect all citizens, and address the socio-economic issues that often lie at the heart of unrest. Dr. Yunus's government is committed to preserving the nation's legacy of religious coexistence, and with continued vigilance and collective effort, Bangladesh can remain a beacon of hope for religious harmony in the region.

In the end, Bangladesh's strength has always been its diversity. By holding onto the values of unity and shared identity, the country can move forward, ensuring a safe and prosperous future for all its people—regardless of religion.

Nazinur Rahim
Executive Editor
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SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY: THE CASE OF THE BAY OF BENGAL

Prof. Dr. Mohd. Aminul Karim

The blue economy has been evolving since the days of the Green Economy. Its message is yet to be crystallized and formalized by all stakeholders. The Green Economy project that had been launched thirty years ago, as mentioned, had been turning out to be exorbitantly expensive, which the marginalized could not afford so there is a need to invest and explore the blue economy for the “greatest good for the greatest number.” The blue economy is an ocean-based green economy. It is a new growth engine that should also ensure its own sustainability in order 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.

The Concept of Environmentally Sustainable and Socially Equitable Blue Economy

The blue economy sounds hollow if it does not adhere to the principles of sustainability and equity as mentioned. These two aspects make the blue economy so unique from the traditional economy. There are few priority areas to “chart a course” to ensure an environmentally sustainable

and socially equitable blue economy.

First, sustainability and equity need to be given priority in all international negotiations and instruments as regards oceans and their development. There are multiple global agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations SDGs as highlighted, the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These important documents commit their resolve to ensure sustainability and equity. Second, we need to address the gaps that exist in the current legal and governance frameworks to



Topographic Map of the Bay of Bengal. (Source: Figure 1 from sediment thickness in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea compared with topography and geophysical settings by GMT | semantic scholar)

provide sufficient funding for capacity building and ensuring accountability. Third, national governments need to develop guidelines that will ensure equitable treatment of local populations and share the growth generated through blue growth. Protect the access rights of coastal and indigenous populations, including women, to fisheries and other industries in the coastal areas. Fourth, sustainability and social equity can be better ensured through inclusive governance at all scales like government, civil society, and private sector. Civil society should include scientists, media, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), marginalized groups, women, youth, volunteers, etc. They should be involved in decision-making over how the oceans will be developed and maintained. Responsibility should also be delineated in case there is damage to environmental and social issues.

The Bay of Bengal Realms and Its Blue Economy Potentials

The Bay is crucial, from a geopolitical perspective, as an entry point to India's Northeast, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan, and Kunming of China. There are reported allegations of maritime security threats like human, arms and drug trafficking, insurgencies, and human displacements that even involve both South and Southeast Asia.



Sustainable Fisheries is a Pillar of Bangladesh's Blue Economy for Food Security and Livelihood

The Rohingya refugees of over one million, originating in the Rakhine state of Myanmar, are now getting shelter in the overpopulated country such as Bangladesh. These refugees also make desperate attempts, through the Bay, to move to more advanced economies such as Indonesia and Malaysia. The human, drug, and arms trafficking now abound in the makeshift, overcrowded camps in the Cox's Bazar of Bangladesh. These refugees are also greatly responsible for the destruction of forests including different species like wild elephants, and thus causing ecological imbalance along the coast of the Bay.

Blue Economy in Bangladesh: Its Opportunities and Challenges

To Bangladesh, the blue economy relates to fisheries, maritime trade and shipping, energy, ecotourism, coastal protection, mangrove restoration, shipbuilding, salt production, ship-breaking, maritime safety, and surveillance for economic development. That said, these potentials are under threat as there is accumulation of plastic waste,



Bangladesh's Shipbuilding Industry Strengthening the Economy and Connecting Global Trade Routes

existence of dead zone, and gradual depletion of the mangrove forest on the shores of the Bay, huge depletion of water resources in the common rivers as India withdraws waters by building dams upstream, thus most of these resources are withdrawn upstream. Bangladesh suffers greatly, environmental degradation wise, being a lower riparian country. There are even reports of indication of desertification in the western part of Bangladesh.

Opportunities

Fisheries in the Bay

The service of the oceans is critical in ensuring food security for humans and animals and this has led to the establishment of fisheries industries, as a case in point. The emerging industries are aquaculture and mariculture, which are land variants and natural maritime variants respectively. Now the experiences of land variants are to be shifted to the



The Sundarbans, Protecting the World's Largest Mangrove Forest for Biodiversity and Coastal Protection.

industrialization of oceans directly.

Hydrocarbon and Related Other Resources

These resources are related to energy. Without energy, no nation can grow to its desired level. The blue economy provides a great opportunity to extract this critical energy component. Petroleum and gas discoveries are discernible, mostly in the Godavari and Mahanadi deltas in India, and to the east of Saint Martin's Island in Myanmar. Bangladesh is also likely to discover such resources in its vicinity, provided serious exploration is done. This has lately triggered Bangladesh to go for international tender, as mentioned, for extraction of these resources, especially oil and gas.

Transportation

International trade will come to a standstill without safe and uninterrupted sea lanes of communication. Large oil tankers that originate in the Persian Gulf pass through the Bay of Bengal before transiting through the Malacca Strait. The shipping routes passing through the Bay are the shortest between the Persian Gulf and countries such as China, Japan, South Korea, and the Pacific Rim.

Mangrove Forests

The Sundarbans Forest, located in the southwest of Bangladesh, adjoining the Bay of Bengal, is the largest mangrove forest in the world as mentioned. The Sundarbans has an exceptional level of biodiversity—of late, there are reports of losing its biodiversity, especially its Royal Bengal Tigers—in both the terrestrial and marine



Addressing Marine Pollution to Safeguard the Bay of Bengal and Ensure a Sustainable Future

environments.

Shipbuilding Industries

The ship-building industry in Bangladesh is now export-oriented, apart from meeting the needs of inland waterways transport. Bangladesh can boast of one of the largest inland water transport networks in the world covering an area of 24,000 kilometers with 1000 landing ports and 21 inland river ports. Bangladesh can increase its GDP by 1%, along with foreign trade by 20% if the inland waterway transport logistic system is made more efficient and competitive, as suggested by the Asian Development Bank (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh, 2019).

Ship-Breaking Industries

This related industry is, in a way, booming in Bangladesh since the 1980s. This causes damage to seas and oceans, environmentally. But a developing country such as Bangladesh has no choice but to go for this industry. It provides important raw materials to steel industries, which is critical for a developing economy like Bangladesh.

Policy Development and Governance Issues

Policy development and governance structures are evolving but not yet up to the desired scales. There are complications involved here as there are interstate issues

involved here. As per SDG 14, affected countries are honor-bound to prevent and significantly reduce all types of marine pollution, including marine debris and litter by 2025. So, there is an urgent need to increase national capacity building and craft regional binding and nonbinding legal frameworks for a sustainable blue economy in the Bay.

Sustainability and social equity should be ensured while developing marine-related industries. Gender justice should also be ensured. The Bay of Bengal, as the crux of discussion in this chapter, is the largest Bay in the world. It is one of the 64 ecosystems of the world. This Bay is a subsystem in the broader Indian Ocean/Indo-Pacific region. Sea lanes of communication pass through this Bay that carry substantial geopolitical and geoeconomic implications. It has huge plastic pollution, the presence of dead zone, overfishing, cyclones and tidal bores, sea level rise that tends to devour one-third of Bangladesh by the end of this century, damage to mangrove forests, etc. problems. There are opportunities like there are a good number of seaports in all the coastal countries, availability of abundant good quality fish and oil and gas, much less intercountry jurisdictional overlaps, etc.

Prof. Dr. Mohd. Aminul Karim

Former Commandant, National Defense College, Bangladesh
Former Visiting Professor, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur

BRAZIL CELEBRATES 202ND INDEPENDENCE DAY IN DHAKA, CALLS FOR STRONGER TIES WITH BANGLADESH

The Brazilian Embassy in Dhaka marked Brazil's 202nd Independence Day with a grand reception at a city hotel on Friday evening. The event brought together political leaders, government officials, diplomats, and dignitaries from diverse fields.

Speaking on the occasion, Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Farida Akhter emphasized the need for Brazilian investment in Bangladesh to strengthen bilateral economic ties. Addressing Brazilian Ambassador Paulo Fernando Dias Feres, she remarked, "I urge you to secure the first investment during your tenure."

Ambassador Feres expressed satisfaction with the current state of Bangladesh-Brazil relations, noting that three Brazilian trade missions visited Bangladesh in the past year, highlighting growing interest in exploring economic opportunities. "The relation is in good shape and it is ready to move forward," he said.

Despite Brazil's recognition of Bangladesh in 1972, economic engagement between the two countries has been limited. However, the first-ever visit of Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira to Bangladesh in April this year signaled a renewed focus on collaboration.

The celebration underscored the shared commitment to strengthening ties and creating opportunities for mutual growth in the years ahead.





BANGLADESH-KOREA PARTNERSHIP: ADVANCING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND BILATERAL COLLABORATION

H.E. Mr. Park Young-sik

It has been more than three months since the formation of the interim government on August 8, 2024, and despite various challenges and uncertainties, they have done commendable jobs to improve the business environment for foreign investors. I am confident that their unsparing efforts will bear fruitful outcomes.

As we are all aware, Korean companies have been a long-standing partner of Bangladesh, contributing significantly to the growth and success of the RMG industry. In recent years, we have witnessed remarkable

developments in diversifying areas of cooperation beyond the RMG, industry, particularly in manufacturing and infrastructure development sectors.

Looking to the future, Bangladesh is marching towards graduation from the LDC status in 2026. This journey presents both immense opportunities and challenges. Bangladesh has shown great potential, as evidenced by the tripling of Bangladesh's per capita income over the last decade. However, the post-LDC graduation phase will require considerable efforts from both the government and the private sector to overcome a lot of challenges that Bangladesh will face in the coming years.



H.E. Mr. Park Young-sik, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Bangladesh, meets with H.E. Professor Dr. Muhammad Yunus, Chief Advisor of the Bangladesh Interim Government, in a dialogue of vision and purpose, strengthening bilateral ties and exploring avenues for economic collaboration



Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, Advisor to the Ministry of Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources in Bangladesh's Interim Government, graces the 2024 Foundation Day of the Republic of Korea as the Chief Guest, hosted by the Korean Embassy in Bangladesh

Graduation from LDC means that Bangladesh should focus not just on the quantity, but on the quality of its economic growth. The quality must be driven by innovation, knowledge, and technology-areas where foreign companies can make substantial contributions. This is why Bangladesh needs foreign direct investment. However, the FDI

inflow to Bangladesh is the lowest in terms of the GDP ratio. Bangladesh is 0.75%, while India is 1.7% and Vietnam is 4.7%. How to increase FDI is a key focus of today's discussion. In this regard, I would like to offer a few points.

Firstly, I welcome the new policy initiatives being actively pursued

under the interim government. However, the most crucial factor is the effective implementation on the ground. Arbitrary enforcement and intervention by tax and customs officials in economic zones, export processing zones or high-tech parks hinder foreign companies from maintaining stable and reliable operations.

Secondly, exposure to global competition without adequate preparation could undermine the existing manufacturing sector. Therefore, the Bangladesh government must focus on strengthening the foundation and boosting productivity in this sector. High tariffs on raw materials and intermediate capital should be reduced to promote the domestic manufacturing sector. If domestic production costs remain higher than those of imported goods, foreign companies do not feel the real necessity to invest in Bangladesh.



Gyeongbokgung (Korean: 경복궁; Hanja: 景福宮; lit. Blessing Scenery Palace), also known as Gyeongbokgung Palace, was the main royal palace of the Joseon dynasty. Built in 1395, it is located in northern Seoul, South Korea



Gangwon Province, famed for hosting the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, boasts South Korea's premier ski resorts. Explore Yongpyong, the oldest and largest, or High 1, featuring a casino and revolving restaurant. Winter festivals like the Hwacheon Sancheoneo Ice Festival offer ice fishing and sledging, while the Taebaeksan Snow Festival showcases colossal ice sculptures

Thirdly, I would like to reiterate the importance of having a mechanism for regular discussions on the business climate. I hope these discussions will continue regularly. Through today's

session, we have gained valuable insights, and one-stop services will be a crucial platform for resolving difficulties. However, we can still encounter difficulties but we can address them through regular discussions.



Nami Island is well-known worldwide as the filming location of the hugely popular Korean TV drama, Winter Sonata

Fourthly, both countries can foster bilateral cooperation and collaboration in new sectors such as Footwear, ICT, pharmaceuticals, shipbuilding, the blue economy and deep-sea fishing, agriculture and agricultural machinery, climate change, and carbon trading schemes. Korean companies have cutting-edge technologies, while Bangladeshi companies have the potential to initiate new ventures. I believe that innovative investment combined with technology and capital will flourish in Bangladesh.

Finally, I want to emphasize that Korea has always been invested in Bangladesh and will continue to be so, even without FTA. Korea is not India, China or the US; we have no strategic interests beyond our economic cooperation. As I mentioned in my previous presentation, both countries are currently discussing the initiation of negotiations for the bilateral Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). If concluded, this EPA will significantly enhance bilateral trade & Investment in ways that benefit both nations. Over the last fifty years, collaboration in the RMG sector has been a driving force behind our bilateral relations. It is my strong hope that the Bilateral EPA could serve as the next motor engine to propel our partnership to new heights in the next fifty years.

Thank you

H.E. Mr. Park Young-sik
Ambassador
Republic of Korea to Bangladesh

UAE EMBASSY CELEBRATES 53RD UNION DAY IN DHAKA WITH GRANDEUR

The Embassy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Bangladesh marked the 53rd Union Day of the UAE with a grand celebration in a prestigious five-star hotel in Dhaka. Hosted by H.E. Abdulla Ali AlHmoudi, UAE Ambassador to Bangladesh, the event showcased the enduring bilateral ties between the two nations.

The occasion was graced by A. F. Hassan Ariff, Adviser to Bangladesh's interim government, as the Chief Guest. Representing the Ministry of Lands and the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, he commended the UAE's progress and its growing partnership with Bangladesh.

The event drew a diverse audience, including heads of diplomatic missions, high-ranking military and civil service officials, journalists, civil society members, political leaders, and key stakeholders. Guests applauded the UAE's achievements and its contributions to global and regional development.

Ambassador AlHmoudi highlighted the strong UAE-Bangladesh relationship and emphasized the shared commitment to prosperity and cooperation. The celebration concluded with cultural performances and a showcase of the UAE's rich heritage.





OMAN: A LEGACY OF HARMONY AND PEACE, DRIVING REGIONAL STABILITY AND GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

H.E. Mr. Abdul Ghaffar Al Balushi

Each 18th of November offers an opportunity to reflect on Oman's achievements—from our rich history to the Renaissance of 1970 and the progress of recent years. I focus harmony, which remains at the core of Oman's identity.

For centuries, Oman has been a crossroads for diverse peoples, united in shared dreams. Harmony has guided our nation, enabling our achievements under His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, along with the dedication of Oman's people.

The Sultanate of Oman's foreign policy is clear, consistent and transparent. It is guided by the



The head of state of the Sultanate of Oman is His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik

principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and the pursuit of mediation and dialogue in resolving disputes and conflicts. We seek to promote the values of peace and harmony among nations.

On such basis and principles, Oman has consistently called upon the international community to intensify efforts to stop the military escalation in the Middle East, and has urged all parties to comply with international law, the

United Nations Charter and to respect the principles of peace and justice for all.

Palestine is at the forefront of our diplomatic agenda. The Sultanate of Oman policy is unwavering in its support for the Palestinian people in their struggle to obtain their rights in accordance with international law. We call upon Israel to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories so an independent Palestinian state with East

Jerusalem as its capital can be established as stipulated by Security Council resolutions.

The Gaza Strip as I speak is being obliterated. The Sultanate of Oman reiterates its call for an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the lifting of the siege imposed on the innocent population, and the creation of safe passages for the delivery of humanitarian aid. The Sultanate of Oman also calls for a ceasefire in Lebanon, and the return to the path of a just and comprehensive peace in the region through dialogue and peaceful means.

The world today is facing increasing challenges in the maintenance of its security, economic growth, and environmental sustainability. This comes as a result of the increase in conflicts and wars that have directly degraded people's lives, security and stability. We, in the Sultanate of Oman, believe that solutions to these challenges cannot be achieved through military interventions, sanctions, marginalization and double standards, but rather through understanding and dialogue in a spirit of justice and cooperation to achieve collective security and global stability.

Oman and Bangladesh enjoy firm political, economic and cultural common bonds. We are two nations who strive to live in peace with their neighbours, we highly value harmony and tolerance internally, and we both seek to generate economic growth to ensure the wellbeing of our people. In such a spirit and context, both sides have worked hard to find synergies



Oman on track to meet UN's Sustainable Development Goals



Stunning Coastal and Desert Landscape in Oman

between our countries to further the common bonds we enjoy.

As a country that hosts a community of almost 700 thousand Bangladeshi workers that remit approximately One

billion dollars a year and a country that has signed two long-term agreements to supply Bangladesh with LNG, Oman is keen on seeing Bangladesh enjoy peace, stability, and economic prosperity. In this regard, I look forward to



Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque in Oman

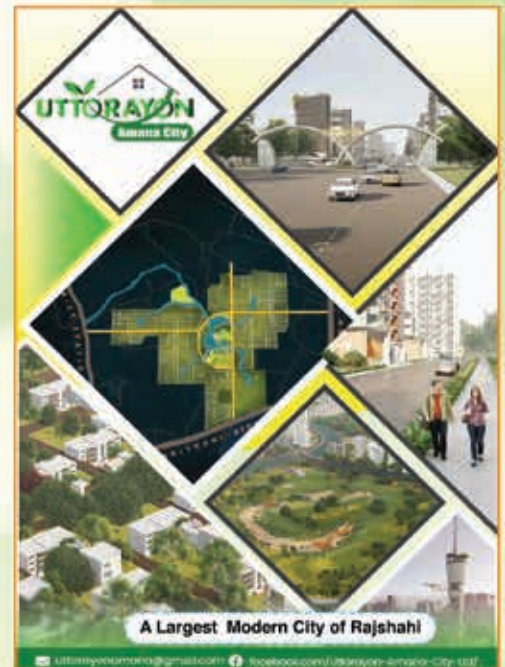
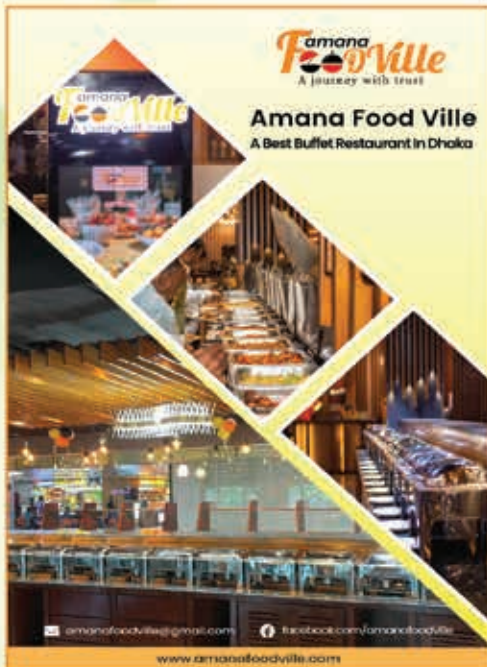
working with officials in the transitional government to strengthen our bilateral ties and enhance them further in all fields.

Domestically, Oman's Vision 2040 is our roadmap to sustainable development, focusing on economic growth, social progress, and the empowerment of all citizens. We are committed to fiscal stability, social welfare, and creating opportunities for youth and women to shape our future.

Oman is also a leader in clean energy, with ambitious projects to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. We are investing heavily in green hydrogen, aiming for significant production by 2030 and 2050, positioning Oman as a key player in the global green transition.

In conclusion, as we move steadily and confidently in our march of building the future, we are inspired by our glorious history and well-established values to continue efforts to realizing our great ambitions. At the same time, we affirm that the Sultanate of Oman will continue to play an active role in building a world of peace and stability through promoting the values of dialogue, understanding, international cooperation, and joint action with all countries to achieve a bright future for all.

H.E. Mr. Abdul Ghaffar Al Balushi
Ambassador
Sultanate of Oman to Bangladesh
& Members of the Diplomatic Corps



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JAPAN'S ENDURING COMMITMENT TO ITS LONGSTANDING FRIENDSHIP WITH BANGLADESH

Shahed Akhtar

On September 24th, 2024, Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh, H.E. Iwama Kiminori, delivered an insightful speech at the Bangladesh Foreign Service Academy, reaffirming Japan's unwavering support for Bangladesh during its crucial transitional phase under the interim government led by Professor Mohammad Yunus and his esteemed Advisors.

The Ambassador's remarks, delivered at a discourse organized by the Association of Former Ambassadors (AOFA), were attended by a distinguished audience of diplomats, scholars, and trainee officers underscoring Japan's enduring relationship with Bangladesh as it navigates a

critical juncture in its political and economic history.

In his speech, Ambassador Iwama emphasized Japan's readiness to support Bangladesh as it transitions under new governance. He made it clear that Japan remains fully committed to engaging with all stakeholders of the interim government to assess the nation's immediate needs and long-term goals. Ambassador Iwama reiterated Japan's intention to respond to the specific needs of Bangladesh, offering support based on the evolving priorities of the government and the people.

Strengthening Bilateral Ties: Key Sectors of Cooperation
Japan's deep engagement with

Bangladesh was further highlighted through Ambassador Iwama's commitment to strengthen cooperation across a broad range of sectors, including business, defense, and people-to-people exchanges. He underlined Japan's long-standing position as a reliable partner, working in close alignment with Bangladesh to enhance economic stability, improve governance, and foster deeper security collaboration.

Ambassador Iwama drew attention to the robust presence of Japanese companies in Bangladesh, with over 300 firms actively operating in the country. Despite the security concerns accompanying the current



Ambassador H.E. Iwama Kiminori delivering his speech at the Foreign Service Academy in Dhaka, reaffirming Japan's steadfast commitment to Bangladesh

transitional period, none of these companies have opted to withdraw, reflecting Japan's confidence in Bangladesh's resilience and potential for economic growth. However, the envoy underscored the importance of further improving the business environment in Bangladesh, particularly in areas such as bureaucratic efficiency and governance. He pointed out that bureaucratic complexities remain a significant obstacle to attracting additional foreign investment, a key ingredient for Bangladesh's continued development.

Economic Growth and Investment: The Role of Japan

The Ambassador's speech also delved into the economic partnership between Bangladesh and Japan, underscoring Tokyo's enduring support for Bangladesh's economic growth. He noted that Japan remains committed to fostering trade relations and encouraging investment through mechanisms such as the Public-Private Joint Economic Dialogue (PPED). This ongoing dialogue between the two countries has played a pivotal role

in identifying areas for enhanced cooperation, particularly in addressing infrastructural and regulatory bottlenecks that impede foreign investment.

One of the central points of Ambassador Iwama's address was the ongoing negotiations for the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between Japan and Bangladesh. The EPA aims to solidify the already strong trade and investment ties between the two nations by reducing tariffs and fostering a more conducive environment for bilateral trade. This agreement, once finalized, is

expected to serve as a cornerstone for future economic collaboration, providing a platform for sustained growth and mutual benefit.

From Development Assistance to Strategic Partnership

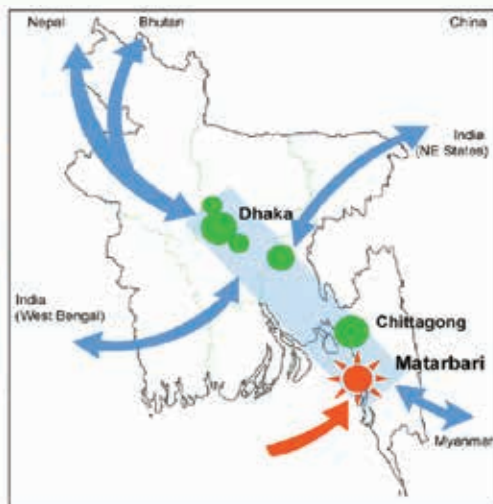
The Ambassador's speech highlighted the evolution of Japan-Bangladesh relations from a focus on development assistance to a broader strategic partnership. For decades, Japan has been a key development partner for Bangladesh, providing substantial aid for critical infrastructure projects and socio-economic development. However, the relationship has now matured into a more dynamic partnership, centered on trade, investment, and regional security cooperation.

A recent example of Japan's continued commitment to Bangladesh's development is the exchange of notes between the two governments for a grant of 575 million yen under Japan's Official Security Assistance (OSA) framework. This grant is aimed at strengthening Bangladesh's economic cooperation with Japan, further solidifying the economic ties that have underpinned the relationship for decades.



49 participants, including former Bangladeshi Ambassadors, academics, representative of business society, and journalists, attended the lecture and discussed the bilateral relations between Japan and Bangladesh, and other international issues.

Energy & Power	Supplying reliable energy & power for industries
Transport	Fostering connectivity as a regional node and hub
Investment Climate	Promoting domestic & foreign direct investment
Others	Enhancing sustainable socioeconomic development



BIG-B Initiative, Japan and Bangladesh's shared vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, emphasizing economic connectivity and regional stability

Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) Strategy and Bangladesh's Indo-Pacific Outlook

In his remarks, Ambassador Iwama also underscored the alignment between Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy and Bangladesh's Indo-Pacific Outlook. Both countries share a vision of inclusiveness, regional cooperation, and the importance of maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The Ambassador emphasized that Japan's FOIP strategy is not only about securing maritime stability

but also about promoting economic connectivity and inclusive growth across the region, which aligns closely with Bangladesh's own regional aspirations.

Japan's FOIP strategy, which advocates for a rules-based international order, is increasingly relevant as Bangladesh seeks to play a larger role in regional and global governance. The Ambassador reaffirmed Japan's commitment to supporting Bangladesh's efforts to maintain peace and stability in

the region, which are vital for the prosperity of both nations and their neighbors.

Security and Defense Cooperation

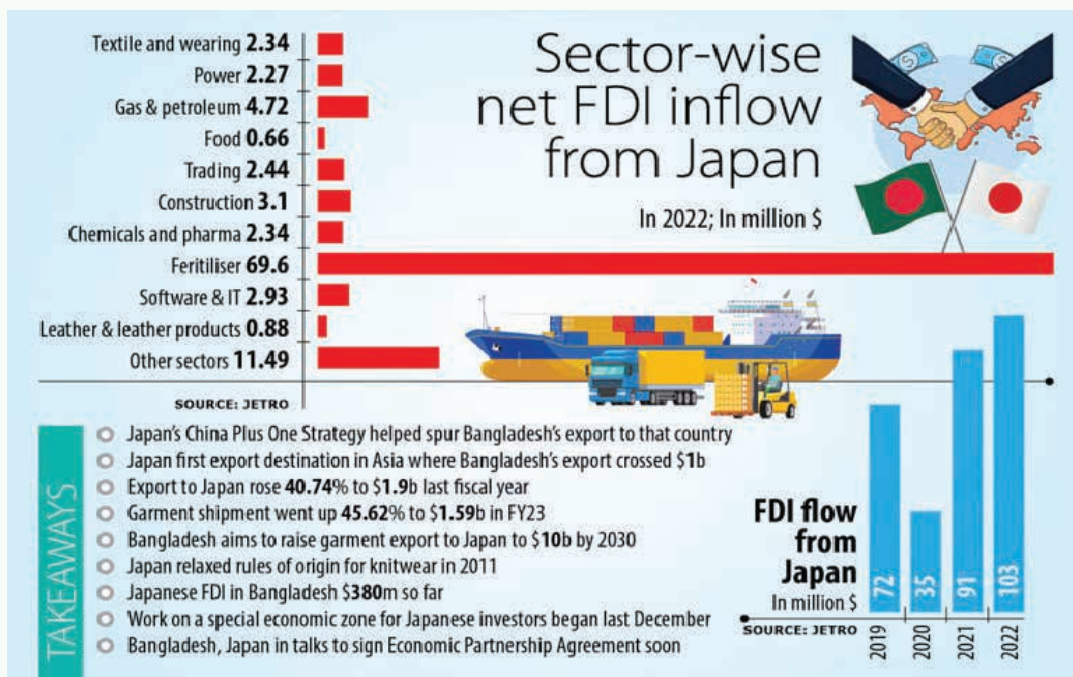
Turning to the issue of security, Ambassador Iwama expressed optimism that the security situation in Bangladesh would stabilize as the country moves through its transitional period. He emphasized Japan's close monitoring of the situation and reassured the audience that updates are regularly communicated to Tokyo. Japan has been actively involved in strengthening Bangladesh's security infrastructure, particularly through defense cooperation and capacity-building initiatives.

The Ambassador mentioned Japan's efforts in facilitating visits to Bangladesh's National Defense College and expressed Japan's intention to expand collaboration in the defense and security sectors. This includes not only high-level defense dialogues but also practical cooperation in areas such as maritime security,

counterterrorism, and cybersecurity. These efforts reflect the growing recognition of security as a critical pillar of the bilateral relationship, alongside economic and cultural ties.

Fostering People-to-People Exchanges

One of the key themes of Ambassador Iwama's speech was the importance of fostering closer people-to-people ties between Japan and Bangladesh. He





Strengthening cultural and educational exchanges. Students and professionals from Bangladesh and Japan fostering mutual understanding and collaboration

highlighted the various educational and cultural exchanges that have brought the two nations closer together over the years, including student exchange programs, academic collaborations, and cultural initiatives. The Ambassador reiterated Japan's commitment to deepening these connections, recognizing that people-to-people exchanges form the foundation of long-term diplomatic relations.

Ambassador Iwama also pointed to initiatives such as the National Defense College tour as examples of how these exchanges are not limited to the civilian sphere but extend to the defense and security sectors as well. By facilitating greater interaction between military and security professionals from both countries, Japan aims to foster mutual understanding and cooperation that will benefit the broader strategic relationship.

JETRO and the Business Environment in Bangladesh

The speech also featured remarks from Yuji Ando, the Bangladesh representative of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), who stressed the importance of improving Bangladesh's business environment. Mr Yuji Ando highlighted the need for the interim government to reduce bureaucratic red tape, improve governance, and tackle issues such as corruption, which continue to hinder foreign investment.

Ando's remarks echoed the Ambassador's concerns about bureaucratic inefficiency, suggesting that Bangladesh could streamline its government structure to make it more conducive to business. He noted that the country currently has 45 ministries and numerous authorities, which contribute to the complexity of the regulatory

environment. By simplifying this structure, Bangladesh could make itself more attractive to both foreign and domestic investors, thereby accelerating its economic development.

Japan's Role in Bangladesh's Future

As Bangladesh continues to navigate its transitional phase, Japan's steadfast commitment to the country offers a beacon of stability and support. The relationship between the two nations, now elevated to a strategic partnership, is marked by shared interests in regional stability, economic development, and security cooperation. The ongoing negotiations for the EPA are a testament to the strong economic ties that bind the two countries, while the alignment of their Indo-Pacific strategies highlights their shared vision for regional peace and prosperity.

Japan's involvement in Bangladesh's transition under the interim government will be crucial in shaping the country's economic and political landscape in the years to come. Whether through continued investment, defense cooperation, or people-to-people exchanges, Japan remains a key partner for Bangladesh as it seeks to secure a brighter future for its people.

The seminar concluded with a lively discussion, reflecting the depth of interest and engagement from the Ambassadors many of whom are deeply invested in the future of Bangladesh-Japan relations.

Shahed Akhtar

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



CELEBRATING ALGERIA'S GLORIOUS LIBERATION REVOLUTION: 70TH ANNIVERSARY MARKED WITH GRAND RECEPTION IN DHAKA

On the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Glorious Liberation Revolution of Algeria, H.E. Dr. Abdelouahab Saidani, Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria in Bangladesh, along with Madam Excellency Mrs. Meriem Saidani, hosted a grand reception on Friday, 1st November 2024, at Le Meridien Dhaka.

The event witnessed the attendance of distinguished guests, including members of the Advisory Council of the Interim Government of Bangladesh, heads of diplomatic missions, high-ranking officials from the armed forces and civil service, top business leaders, journalists, cultural personalities, members of civil society, and Algerian distinguished citizens in Bangladesh, who added to the glory of the event through their participation.

In his address, Ambassador Dr. Saidani highlighted the historical significance of Algeria's Liberation Revolution and its role in shaping the nation's sovereignty and development. He expressed gratitude for the enduring friendship between Algeria and Bangladesh, emphasizing opportunities for further collaboration in trade, culture, diplomacy and all sectors.

The reception featured glorious history of Algeria and an exhibition showcasing Algeria's glorious revolutionary history and achievements over the decades. The gathering fostered dialogue and strengthened bilateral ties among the diverse attendees, underscoring the importance of Algeria's legacy in global liberation movements.

The evening concluded with a warm expression of camaraderie, marking the event as a memorable celebration of unity, freedom, and shared aspirations.





STITCHING CRISIS WHILE TEARING HOPES: WHAT'S THE FUTURE OF BANGLADESH'S GARMENT INDUSTRY AMID SUDDEN WORKER UNREST

Ms Marzia Sultana

The recent labour unrest that has gripped Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector since August 29, 2024, has created a sense of urgency and uncertainty in the country's most significant economic sector. In a significant escalation of labour unrest, workers from two garment factories in Gazipur's Konabari area—Islam Group and Tushka Group—staged strikes to press for various demands.

The strike began at 8:00 AM as employees gathered in front of

the factory gates, leading to a heavy presence of law enforcement, including the Army, BGB, RAB, Industrial Police, and Gazipur Metropolitan Police, to maintain order.

Islam Group workers presented a 21-point list of demands, including the dismissal of certain factory officials over alleged misconduct, full-service benefits, and a 63% basic salary increase. They also called for attendance bonuses, tiffin and night shift

allowances, and a 5% annual salary hike. Meanwhile, Tushka Group workers had their own set of 16 demands.

Additionally, the unrest extended to Dhaka's Mirpur area, where garment workers clashed with police and military personnel, leading to the detention of five individuals accused of escalating the violence. On 31st October, garment workers took to the streets in Dhaka's Mirpur-14 and Kachukhet areas and clashed with police and



Striking garment workers surround a group of Bangladesh soldiers outside a factory in Gazipur, Sept. 2, 2024

military personnel, throwing stones and setting fire to two army and police vehicles.

These unrests, which has led to factory closures, violent protests, and clashes between workers and authorities, presents a pivotal moment for the industry and raises several pressing questions.

- Why is there such a massive protest right now? Why it didn't happen before?
- Are the labourers of Bangladesh truly deprived of? If so, what can be done to resolve the situation peacefully? And, if not, what is fuelling this unrest?
- Are labour unions genuinely representing workers, or is there an underlying agenda that threatens the future of the RMG sector?

We will explore the multifaceted reasons behind the sudden labour unrest, assess the broader implications for the RMG industry, and discuss potential solutions to safeguard its future.

A Sector at a Crossroads

The Bangladesh RMG sector, which accounts for over 80% of the country's export earnings and employs millions, has always been a symbol of economic success and global competitiveness. However, in recent months, it has faced significant challenges. The ongoing protests, which began in August, have escalated to a point where entire industrial zones like Ashulia and Gazipur

have witnessed violence, looting, and arson. This disruption has alarmed international buyers, with some already redirecting orders to competing countries like Cambodia and Vietnam.

The timing of these protests could not be worse. After a period of political instability in July 2024, the industry was hoping to recover following the formation of an interim government in August. However, as the peak winter order season approached, the sector was thrown into chaos, jeopardizing contracts and damaging Bangladesh's international reputation as a reliable garment exporter.

What is Driving the Unrest?

At the heart of the protests are demands for better wages, improved working conditions, and greater job security. Workers argue that the wages they currently earn are insufficient to meet the rising costs of living. Additionally, they claim that many factories fail to provide adequate benefits, such as meal allowances, and that workloads have become unbearable. These grievances, combined with



10,000 garment workers protest over three months of withheld salaries since August 5 due to political unrest

delays in wage payments and the alleged blacklisting of dismissed workers, have ignited widespread anger.

But are these the only reasons for the unrest?

According to some factory owners, the protests are not solely driven by genuine worker grievances. They point to external factors, including

they claim is adding fuel to the fire. These groups, they argue, are exploiting the unrest to exert pressure on factory owners, further complicating the situation.

Are Bangladesh's Labourers Truly Deprived?

To understand whether Bangladesh's RMG workers are genuinely deprived, it is

pace with inflation and the increasing cost of basic necessities.

Moreover, while the government and factory owners have made strides in improving working conditions—particularly in the aftermath of tragedies like the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013—many workers still report unsafe and exploitative environments. Instances of forced overtime, harassment, and denial of benefits are not uncommon, contributing to the sense of frustration and resentment among workers.

The fact that the government recently accepted all 18 demands of the RMG workers in late September, including wage adjustments and benefits, suggests that there is indeed some legitimacy to the workers' grievances. However, the problem lies in the implementation. Many factories have been slow to communicate and implement these new directives, leading to further unrest. In some areas, factory owners have outright refused to comply with the government's orders, exacerbating the situation.

Political Agendas or Genuine Representation?

Another critical question is whether the labour unions and protest leaders are genuinely representing the workers' interests or if there are hidden agendas at play. In Bangladesh, labour unions have a complicated history. While they have been instrumental in advocating for workers' rights, they have also been accused of



Advisers to the interim government, including Labour Adviser Asif Mahmud Sajib Bhuiyan and Home Affairs Adviser Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, meet with union and BGMEA leaders to address ongoing labour unrest.

political manipulation, as a significant cause of the unrest. It is argued that various political groups have infiltrated the protests, using workers' discontent as a tool to destabilize the industry. This claim is not entirely unfounded; Bangladesh's political landscape has often seen labor issues being politicized, especially in times of political transition.

Factory owners also highlight the involvement of vested interests within the scrap and rejected-items business, which

essential to examine their working conditions and the compensation they receive. The minimum wage for garment workers in Bangladesh, while low by Western standards, has increased over the years. However, it still falls short of what many consider a living wage. The cost of living in Bangladesh, particularly in urban areas where most garment workers reside, has risen significantly. This has led to growing dissatisfaction among workers, who feel that their wages are not keeping



Bangladesh's RMG sector at work, maintaining its global reputation for affordable, quality garment production amid current challenges

being co-opted by political parties and other external actors.

Some observers believe that the current wave of unrest is being manipulated by political factions aiming to destabilize the RMG sector for their own gain. The fact that the RMG sector is the largest contributor to Bangladesh's economy makes it a prime target for political exploitation. By inciting unrest in such a crucial industry, political groups can pressure the government and factory owners while advancing their agendas.

There is also the issue of international influence. With Bangladesh set to graduate from its Least Developed Country (LDC) status in the coming years, the global competition for garment orders is intensifying. Some industry insiders fear that international competitors may be encouraging unrest in Bangladesh to weaken its position in the global market.

While there is no concrete evidence to support this theory, the timing of the unrest—during the peak order season—has raised suspicions.

The Way Forward: Dialogue and Reform

Regardless of the underlying causes, it is clear that the current approach to managing the unrest—relying on security forces and temporary factory closures—is not a sustainable solution. A more comprehensive strategy is needed, one that addresses the root causes of worker discontent while safeguarding the industry's future.

Firstly, there needs to be a renewed focus on dialogue between workers, factory owners, and the government. Workers must be given a platform to voice their concerns, and factory management must take these concerns seriously. Allowing workers to unionize freely and exercise their bargaining rights

could be a step towards reducing external confrontations. If disputes can be resolved within factory premises, rather than spilling onto the streets, the industry will be in a much better position to maintain stability.

Secondly, the government's role in regulating and monitoring the sector must be strengthened. While the government has made efforts to address workers' demands, more needs to be done to ensure that factory owners comply with directives. The creation of an inter-ministerial committee to profile struggling factories and address wage arrears is a positive step, but it must be accompanied by strict enforcement of labour laws.

The Risk of Losing International Orders

Perhaps the most immediate concern for Bangladesh's RMG sector is the risk of losing international buyers. Reports have already emerged that some buyers are shifting their orders to countries like Cambodia, Indonesia, and Vietnam due to the instability in Bangladesh. This is a serious threat to the industry, which relies heavily on timely deliveries and maintaining the confidence of global brands.

If the unrest continues, Bangladesh risks losing its competitive edge as a low-cost garment producer. To prevent this, the industry must prioritize stability and compliance with international labour standards. Global buyers are increasingly concerned not only with the price and quality of garments but also with the ethical conditions under which they are



Inside a bustling garment factory in Dhaka, where millions of workers contribute to Bangladesh's top export industry

produced. Ensuring fair treatment of workers and upholding labour rights is no longer just a moral obligation—it is a business imperative.

Make the RMG Sector a National Priority

The RMG sector is the backbone of Bangladesh's economy, and its

future is at stake. If the country is to maintain its position as the world's second-largest garment exporter, it must address the challenges it faces head-on. This means not only resolving the current unrest but also taking proactive measures to strengthen the industry for the long term.

Bangladesh must invest in diversifying its product range, embracing innovation, and upgrading technology in the garment sector. The industry must also focus on enhancing the skills of its workforce to remain competitive in an increasingly automated global market.

While the current unrest presents significant challenges, it also offers an opportunity for reform. By addressing the legitimate concerns of workers, rooting out political interference, and ensuring compliance with labor standards, Bangladesh can safeguard its RMG sector and continue its growth trajectory. Now is the time for all stakeholders—workers, factory owners, and the government—to come together and work towards a solution that benefits everyone. The future of Bangladesh's economy depends on it.

Ms Marzia Sultana

Policy Analyst

Associate Editor, Diplomats World



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University

Gazipur, Bangladesh : Center of Excellence in Higher Education

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- ❖ Bangladesh College of Agricultural Sciences (BCAS): 1979-1983
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22 November 1998

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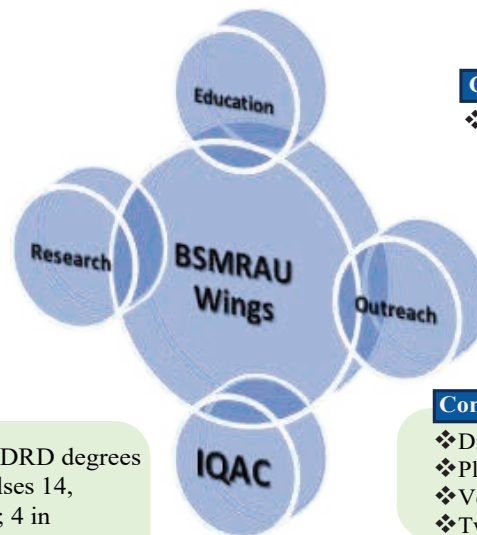
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Unit

- ❖ Seed Science and Technology (SST)
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Achievement

- ❖ 345 PhD, 2476 MS, 2507 BS/DVM and 113 PGDRD degrees
- ❖ 89 crop varieties ((cereals 06, vegetables 48, pulses 14, oilseeds 05, fruits 07, spices 01, and flowers 08); 4 in pipeline
- ❖ More than 20 improved agricultural technologies (jackfruit grafting, CRISPR based wheat blast diagnostic kit, smart milk lab, IOT based smart irrigation and soil moisture management, I-Vet app, wheel/power operated multirow sprayer etc.)



Program

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- ❖ PhD

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- ❖ PGDRD with RDA

Current Students

❖ BS/DVM: 1343; MS: 597; PhD: 32 Foreign Students: 48

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- ❖ Prime Minister National Tree Plantation Award 1st Prize-2015
- ❖ Annual Performance Agreement (APA) Award by the UGC (1st Position For 3 Consecutive Years, 2021-2023)



EMBASSY OF KOREA HOSTS RECEPTION FOR NATIONAL FOUNDATION DAY 2024 IN DHAKA

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Dhaka hosted a grand reception on the occasion of National Foundation Day 2024. The event, held under the gracious hospitality of H.E. Mr. Park Youngsik, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Bangladesh, and Mrs. Koo Jakyung, brought together a vibrant gathering of dignitaries, diplomats, and friends to celebrate Korea's rich heritage and its enduring friendship with Bangladesh.

The reception showcased the spirit of unity, collaboration, and shared aspirations that define the bilateral relations between Korea and Bangladesh. Guests were treated to warm hospitality, meaningful conversations, and cultural exchanges, reflecting the deep ties and mutual respect between the two nations.

In his address, Ambassador Park Youngsik highlighted the long-standing partnership between the Republic of Korea and Bangladesh, emphasizing the commitment to further strengthening ties in areas of trade, investment, and cultural exchange.

The evening was a testament to the thriving Korea-Bangladesh friendship, as attendees expressed their gratitude for the celebration and the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue.





SOUTH ASIA AND BANGLADESH: NEW DIPLOMATIC POSSIBILITIES UNDER TRUMP'S SECOND TERM

AKM Sayedad Hossain

The unthinkable has happened—Donald Trump is back in the White House. His return has sent ripples through global diplomacy, with South Asia, a region of immense economic potential and geopolitical significance, once again under the lens of Trump's unpredictable foreign policy. Amid these shifting tides, Bangladesh stands poised to seize new opportunities under Trump's second administration, leveraging its diplomatic agility, economic resilience, and visionary leadership.

Trump's Return: A Game-Changer for South Asia

Trump's "America First" mantra, characterized by bold and often transactional policies, signals

significant changes in global trade and diplomacy. This time, his agenda may be even more calculated, with a focus on countering China's growing dominance in the Indo-Pacific region. For South Asia, this could open doors for smaller nations like Bangladesh, which have long balanced their geopolitical relationships with major powers.

India will undoubtedly remain central to Trump's regional strategy, but Bangladesh's unique position—as a growing economy and a key player in the Indo-Pacific—offers it a chance to step into the spotlight. Under the pragmatic leadership of Nobel laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus, Bangladesh has the potential to

navigate this complex geopolitical environment with finesse.

Dr. Yunus: A Visionary Leader

Dr. Muhammad Yunus's leadership has ushered in a period of transformative change for Bangladesh. Following the peaceful student-led transition of 2024, Yunus has focused on economic reform, social justice, and sustainable development. His approach, rooted in dialogue and inclusivity, contrasts sharply with Trump's hard-nosed policies but also offers opportunities for alignment, particularly in trade and development.

The United States is one of Bangladesh's largest buyers of ready-made garments (RMG), a



The Indo-Pacific is a region where Trump's foreign policies and Bangladesh's strategic ambitions intersect

cornerstone of its economy. While Trump's trade policies may seem protectionist, Bangladesh could negotiate deals that appeal to Trump's economic sensibilities, emphasizing fair trade and innovation. This pragmatic approach could strengthen bilateral relations and ensure mutual benefits.

Economic Diversification: The Need of the Hour

Bangladesh's reliance on RMG exports, while significant, cannot sustain its long-term economic aspirations. Trump's anticipated trade policies, including significant tariffs on Chinese goods and at least a 10-20% tariff on other imports, could disrupt global trade flows. However, these shifts also present opportunities for Bangladesh to diversify its economic base.

Emerging sectors such as technology, clean energy, and sustainable agriculture hold immense potential. Under Dr. Yunus's guidance, Bangladesh could position itself as a leader in these industries, attracting foreign

direct investment (FDI) and fostering innovation. This strategic pivot would not only mitigate risks associated with global trade uncertainties but also redefine Bangladesh's economic identity.

Navigating Geopolitical Tensions: U.S., China, and Beyond

Bangladesh's diplomatic balancing act between the U.S. and China will face heightened scrutiny under Trump's second term. While Chinese investments through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) have driven significant development in

Bangladesh, maintaining strong ties with the U.S. remains critical for trade and security.

Trump's focus on the Indo-Pacific presents an opportunity for Bangladesh to enhance its strategic importance. By emphasizing its commitment to regional stability, maritime security, and counterterrorism, Bangladesh can align itself with U.S. priorities without alienating China. This nuanced diplomacy will be key to sustaining Bangladesh's growth and stability.

Trade Strategies for Bangladesh Under Trump's Policies

Trump's likely imposition of tariffs offers both challenges and opportunities for Bangladesh. Analysts predict a 60% tariff on Chinese goods and a 10-20% tariff on all other imports. These measures could disrupt global supply chains but also open doors for Bangladesh to strengthen its trade relationship with the U.S.

Key Strategies:

1. Proposing Reciprocal Trade Agreements:

Bangladesh could offer zero-duty access to U.S. products in exchange for tariff-free access for Bangladeshi exports. This



Bangladesh's RMG sector remains the backbone of its economy, offering opportunities to deepen trade ties with the U.S



Under the leadership of Nobel laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus, Bangladesh is charting a path toward inclusive growth and diplomacy

approach, particularly for the RMG sector, could solidify Bangladesh's position in the U.S. market.

2. Reducing Tariff Barriers:

Current U.S. tariffs on Bangladeshi goods average 15.70%. Negotiating reductions to single-digit rates would enhance competitiveness and boost export revenues.

3. Leveraging Trade Surplus:

With a \$6 billion trade surplus with the U.S., Bangladesh has leverage to negotiate favorable terms, ensuring continued growth in exports.

4. Pursuing Bilateral Agreements:

As Bangladesh prepares to graduate from its Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2026, securing bilateral trade agreements like a Bilateral Free Trade Agreement (BFTA) or Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership (STIP) will be crucial.

5. Positioning as an Alternative Manufacturing Hub:

A U.S.-China trade war could prompt American companies to diversify their supply chains.

Bangladesh's competitive labor costs and growing infrastructure make it an attractive alternative.

Security and Stability in the Indo-Pacific: A Bangladeshi Perspective

The Indo-Pacific region is becoming a focal point of strategic competition, where the balance of power is influenced by key global and regional actors. For Bangladesh, positioned at the crossroads of South and Southeast Asia, this strategic location presents both opportunities and challenges in contributing to regional security and stability.



Strengthening U.S.-Bangladesh trade ties with the key focus amid shifting global trade policies under Trump

Strategic Engagement with the United States

Former U.S. President Donald Trump's Indo-Pacific policy focused on military strength, freedom of navigation, and regional alliances. Bangladesh, with its contributions to international peacekeeping, counterterrorism, and maritime security, has potential to be a proactive player. Strengthening defense ties with the U.S.—through joint exercises, capacity-building, and intelligence sharing—can enhance Bangladesh's role in addressing regional threats, such as piracy and transnational crime, while ensuring the security of vital sea lanes in the Bay of Bengal.

However, a military-centric approach could exacerbate regional rivalries, particularly between China and the U.S. Bangladesh must carefully navigate these dynamics to avoid being drawn into great power competition.

The Socio-Economic Dimension of Security

Security is not just the absence of conflict but the presence of conditions that foster peace. Dr. Muhammad Yunus's focus on



Focusing on clean energy and sustainable development as Bangladesh's roadmap to a resilient economy

social justice, equitable economic opportunities, and sustainable development aligns with this broader definition. Economic inequality, social exclusion, and environmental degradation often lead to instability, which extremist ideologies and organized crime exploit.

Bangladesh's progress in poverty alleviation, women's empowerment, and disaster resilience offers a model for inclusive development. Investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure are vital for building a resilient society capable of facing both internal and external challenges. Bangladesh's innovative social enterprises, inspired by Dr. Yunus, can catalyze change, creating opportunities and fostering social cohesion.

In the Indo-Pacific, where socio-economic disparities and

climate vulnerabilities are prominent, Bangladesh's approach can serve as a model for other nations facing similar challenges. Integrating development with security policies ensures that immediate threats are addressed while laying the foundation for long-term stability.

A Balanced Path Forward

Bangladesh's strategic approach lies in balancing defense partnerships with socio-economic initiatives. By strengthening defense collaborations, Bangladesh can enhance its regional standing while maintaining its non-aligned foreign policy. At the same time, prioritizing development-oriented security ensures that Bangladesh remains a stabilizing force in the Indo-Pacific.

Positioning itself as both a security contributor and an

advocate for inclusive development, Bangladesh can play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the Indo-Pacific. Its actions, combining military strength and social progress, can demonstrate how nations in the Global South navigate complex geopolitical realities while prioritizing the well-being of their citizens.

Preparing for the Future: Opportunities Amidst Challenges

Trump's second term presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities for Bangladesh. By embracing economic diversification, strategic diplomacy, and sustainable development, Bangladesh can navigate this complex landscape and emerge stronger. The potential benefits include enhanced market access, increased FDI, and a more resilient economy.

Trump's return to the White House has reshaped the global order, but for Bangladesh, it represents a horizon of possibilities. Under the visionary leadership of Dr. Yunus, Bangladesh can redefine its role on the world stage, leveraging its strengths to build a future of innovation, resilience, and global engagement. The path ahead is fraught with uncertainties, but with the right strategies and a commitment to sustainable growth, Bangladesh is well-positioned to thrive in this new era.

AKM Sayedad Hossain
Associate Editor
Diplomats World



OMAN NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATED IN DHAKA, HIGHLIGHTS PEACE EFFORTS AND STRENGTHENING TIES WITH BANGLADESH

The 54th National Day of the Sultanate of Oman was celebrated in Dhaka on November 18, with a grand reception hosted by the Omani Embassy. Adviser for Law, Justice, and Expatriates' Welfare Dr. Asif Nazrul, speaking as the chief guest, highlighted the strengthening economic ties between Bangladesh and Oman, with two-way trade reaching \$240 million and remittances totaling \$923.75 million in 2023.

Oman's Ambassador, Abdul Ghaffar Al Balushi, reiterated Oman's call for peace in the Middle East, advocating for a ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon, lifting the Gaza blockade, and establishing a Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. He emphasized Oman's foreign policy of non-interference and promoting harmony and dialogue among nations.

The event was attended by diplomats, military and civil officials, business leaders, journalists, and civil society members, showcasing the robust relationship between Bangladesh and Oman.





BREAK THE SILENCE, END THE VIOLENCE – A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE TO CELEBRATE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

Sheikh Nazia Hasan

In a powerful call to action, global and local stakeholders gathered at the "Break the Silence, End the Violence" roundtable, an event co-hosted by UNOPS Bangladesh, the Royal Danish Embassy, and DIPLOMATS WORLD. The event marked a pivotal moment in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV), aligning with the international 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign. Held at the Foreign Service Academy on November 25, 2024, the roundtable brought together voices from the government, international agencies, civil society, and survivors to raise awareness, promote advocacy, and reinforce commitments to ending violence against women and girls in Bangladesh.



Mashfee Binte Shams

In her remarks as the chief guest, Mashfee Binte Shams, rector at Foreign Service Academy, stressed the importance of multi-stakeholder action.

"Achieving gender equality is central to the SDGs. Addressing GBV requires an inclusive

approach that engages communities, strengthens institutional responses, and empowers women economically and socially."



Lt. Gen. (Retd) Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman

Lt. Gen. (Retd) Mohammad Mahfuzur Rahman played a pivotal role as the moderator of the "Break the Silence, End the

Violence" roundtable, guiding the discussion with a strategic vision and deep understanding of the multifaceted issue of gender-based violence (GBV). As a retired senior military officer, Md. Mahfuzur Rahman brought a unique perspective, emphasizing the importance of collective action, discipline, and coordination in tackling such a pervasive problem.

Throughout the session, Md. Mahfuzur Rahman expertly navigated the discussion through key topics that were critical to understanding and addressing GBV. He facilitated a balanced conversation, ensuring that every speaker had the opportunity to share their insights while weaving together the various viewpoints into a cohesive narrative.

Md. Mahfuzur Rahman a prominent figure in Bangladesh's military history, reflected on the role of peacekeeping missions and law enforcement in protecting vulnerable groups, especially women and children, in conflict zones. He stressed the need for more women in peacekeeping roles and highlighted Bangladesh's National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), which has made significant strides in this area.

He summarized several panelists' points, reinforcing the idea that laws and policies, while important, are not enough to end GBV. Instead, education, awareness, and community engagement are key to altering mindsets that perpetuate violence.

Moreover, Md. Mahfuzur Rahman drew attention to the need for

stronger institutional responses to GBV. Summing up the discussions from law enforcement officials like Additional Superintendent of Police Sultana Esrat Jahan and other experts, he underscored the importance of creating more survivor-centered systems within the police and judiciary.



Dr. Marufa Akter (Keynote Speaker)

Tackling Socio-Cultural Barriers

Dr. Marufa Akter, Associate Professor at the Department of Global Studies and Governance at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), delivered the keynote address, focusing on the socio-cultural barriers that perpetuate GBV. She argued that while legal frameworks exist, they are often undermined by deeply ingrained societal norms.

"Addressing gender-based violence requires more than just laws—it demands a shift in cultural attitudes and practices," said Dr. Akter. She advocated for leveraging innovative solutions, such as education programs and media campaigns, to challenge harmful gender stereotypes and foster respect and equality for women and girls. Her insights into the intersection of culture

and violence shed light on the importance of addressing the root causes of GBV.



Sudhir Muralidharan

Setting the Stage: A Global Commitment

Sudhir Muralidharan, Country Representative for UNOPS Bangladesh, set the tone in his opening remarks, emphasizing the collective responsibility in tackling GBV. "At UNOPS, we firmly believe that breaking the silence surrounding gender-based violence is essential for achieving sustainable development. Through collaboration, we can create systems that empower survivors and ensure no one is left behind," Muralidharan said, reaffirming the organization's commitment to supporting Bangladesh in fostering a society where women and girls are safe, respected, and empowered.

His message underscored the importance of not just awareness, but concrete actions and collaborations at all levels of society. Muralidharan also highlighted how addressing GBV aligns with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly gender equality and peace.



H.E. Christian Brix Møller

Denmark's Support: A Long-Term Partnership

H.E. Christian Brix Møller, Ambassador of the Royal Danish Embassy in Bangladesh, echoed similar sentiments in his remarks, emphasizing Denmark's long-standing partnership with Bangladesh in promoting gender equality. "The commitment to ending violence is central also to our partnerships in Bangladesh," said Møller. He reflected on Denmark's decades-long efforts through Danida programs aimed at promoting women's participation in decision-making processes, enhancing access to education, and addressing harmful practices like child marriage. He further emphasized Denmark's current strategic focus on gender-responsive labor market governance and creating safer workplaces for women.

"Ending violence is not just a moral imperative but also crucial for development and social progress," Møller added, emphasizing the need for comprehensive, gender-responsive policies across sectors.



Lt. Gen. (Retd) MD Aminul Karim

Similar Voices from Different Stakeholders

Lt. Gen. (Retd) MD Aminul Karim, an academic of high stature covered role of men and boys in addressing GBV. One of his key contributions was highlighting the need for engaging men and boys as allies in the fight against GBV, a theme that resonated across the panel. "We cannot win this battle without addressing the root causes of violence, many of which are tied to harmful gender norms. Men and boys must be part of the solution," Md. Aminul Karim said, stressing that gender equality is not a women's issue alone, but a societal one.

He also focused on shifting societal norms, emphasizing that sustainable change will require challenging and transforming deep-seated cultural attitudes toward women and gender roles. Md. Aminul Karim also advocated for a comprehensive approach that includes media, schools, and families as spaces for initiating this cultural shift.

"Our institutions need to be more accessible and responsive to the needs of survivors. Training, sensitivity, and

accountability must be at the heart of law enforcement and judicial processes," Md. Aminul Karim stated, urging for ongoing reforms to make the system more trustworthy for victims of violence.



Major General (Retd) Shahidul Haque

Major General (Retd) Shahidul Haque emphasized that gender-based violence is not just a social issue but also a national security concern. "When women are unsafe, the entire society is destabilized," he said. Both generals called for increased training and capacity-building in law enforcement to better address GBV, especially in conflict and post-conflict settings.



Sultana Esrat Jahan

Sultana Esrat Jahan, Additional Superintendent of Police,

Anti-Terrorism Unit, Bangladesh Police, delivered a stirring message about the role of law enforcement in addressing GBV. She highlighted the efforts within the police force to create a more supportive environment for survivors, including special training programs aimed at sensitizing officers to the complex needs of victims. "We must build a police force that women can trust," Jahan stressed. "Survivors need to feel that they will not only be heard but also protected when they come forward."

She also discussed initiatives like the establishment of women-friendly police stations and the deployment of female officers to investigate cases of domestic violence and sexual assault. "Our mission is to ensure that the process of seeking justice is not retraumatizing for survivors but rather empowering," she added, reflecting the police department's commitment to making justice more accessible and humane.



Ms. Mansura Amdad

Ms. Mansura Amdad, a lecturer in International Relations at the University of Dhaka, in her speech women's rights, highlighted the critical role of

civil society in pushing for legal reforms and raising awareness at the grassroots level. "We must break the cycle of silence by empowering women to speak up and by ensuring they have the support they need to do so safely," she said. Amdad's message was one of hope and resilience, focusing on community-based initiatives that empower survivors and prevent future violence.



Mrs. Lalita Silwal

Mrs. Lalita Silwal, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Nepal, shared her country's progress in fighting GBV, emphasizing cross-border collaboration in South Asia to tackle issues like trafficking and forced marriages. She mentioned that, despite a huge difference in culture, religion, and societal norms, somehow the aspects of GBV are quite similar throughout the world.



Alisha Pradhan

Alisha Pradhan from HerNet TV and HerNet Foundation underscored the transformative

role of media in combating violence against women. "Media platforms must be utilized to not only report incidents but also create safe spaces for survivors to share their stories," said Pradhan. She called for the responsible use of digital media to amplify the voices of women and girls who have been silenced for too long.



Ms. Lynn R. Gutierrez

International Perspectives and Commitments

Ms. Lynn R. Gutierrez, Charge d'Affaires of the Philippine Embassy, reflected on the international dimensions of GBV, particularly in relation to the migrant communities. "Women in diaspora, especially migrant workers, face unique vulnerabilities, and it is our responsibility to protect them through international cooperation," she remarked, pledging continued support for Bangladesh in combating GBV.



Nahid Sharmin

Nahid Sharmin, Gender Analyst at UNDP Bangladesh, brought

the conversation full circle, tying together the importance of economic empowerment and education for women as a means to combat GBV. "Economic vulnerability often traps women in abusive situations, and empowering women through education and skills training is a long-term solution to this issue," Sharmin stated.

Expected Outcomes and the Road Ahead

The roundtable discussion aimed to achieve several key outcomes, including:

1. Increased Awareness:

Participants gained a deeper understanding of the various forms of violence faced by women and girls in Bangladesh and the urgent need to address

these issues.

2. Policy Recommendations:

Concrete recommendations were put forward to strengthen legal frameworks and enforcement mechanisms to protect women and girls.

3. Commitment to Action: The event generated a renewed commitment from government officials, civil society organizations, and international partners to prioritize gender equality and implement comprehensive programs to combat GBV.

4. Strengthened Partnerships:

The discussion laid the foundation for future collaboration among stakeholders, fostering a united front in the fight against GBV.

As Bangladesh continues its journey toward achieving the

SDGs, events like "Break the Silence, End the Violence" serve as crucial reminders that gender equality is not just a goal—it is a necessity for sustainable development. By amplifying the voices of survivors and advocates, and by fostering collaboration among all sectors of society, Bangladesh can create a future where women and girls live free from violence, empowered to contribute to the nation's growth and development.

In the words of the roundtable's participants, "There is no excuse for violence against women and girls." Now is the time for collective action to break the silence, end the violence, and build a society rooted in respect, equality, and justice for all.



Sheikh Nazia Hasan
Policy Analyst
Co-ordinator, Diplomats World



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UK MINISTER CATHERINE WEST AFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR BANGLADESH'S INTERIM GOVERNMENT DURING MEETING WITH CHIEF ADVISER PROFESSOR MUHAMMAD YUNUS



The UK Minister for the Indo-Pacific, Catherine West, expressed her pleasure in meeting Honorable Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on November 18, 2024. During the meeting, Minister West reiterated the UK government's steadfast support for Bangladesh's Interim Government in its efforts to steer the nation toward an inclusive, democratic, and prosperous future.

"We are committed to standing beside Bangladesh during this critical transition," stated Minister West. She also emphasized the discussions on asset recovery and strengthening trade ties between the two nations, reflecting the UK's broader commitment to deepening bilateral relations with Bangladesh.

The meeting underscored the collaborative efforts to ensure democratic stability and economic growth, laying the groundwork for enhanced international cooperation.

THE NEWLY APPOINTED HIGH COMMISSIONER OF CANADA TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS TO THE HONORABLE PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH



On November 20, the newly appointed High Commissioner of Canada to the People's Republic of Bangladesh, H.E. Ajit Singh presented his credentials to His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Shahabuddin, Honorable President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh at a ceremony at the Bangabhaban in Dhaka.

Following the ceremony, the President and the High Commissioner had the opportunity to discuss the excellent relations between the two countries. The High Commissioner noted that it is an honor and privilege for him to represent Canada in Bangladesh.

Canada recognized Bangladesh in 1972, shortly after its birth as a nation, and is proud of the last 52 years of its partnership. The country has made progress to improve the lives of its citizens. The multifaceted Canada-Bangladesh relationship will continue to flourish, based on shared values of democracy, good governance, human rights, and pluralism.

BANGLADESH ARMY CHIEF MEETS WITH SINGAPORE'S NON-RESIDENT HIGH COMMISSIONER



The Chief of Bangladesh Army, General Waker-uz-Zaman, OSP, SJGP, PSC, November 12, 2024 met with the Non-Resident High Commissioner of Singapore, Derek Loh, at the Army Headquarters in

Dhaka. During the courtesy call, they exchanged greetings and discussed bilateral relations, focusing on areas of mutual interest. Topics of discussion included enhancing military cooperation, jointly building and managing hospitals to improve healthcare, promoting investments in the defense industry, and facilitating the exchange of trainees between military training institutions.

The two leaders also emphasized the importance of joint exercises in areas such as disaster management, counterterrorism, and Special Forces operations.

PROF YUNUS EXCHANGES GREETINGS WITH KHALEDA ZIA



November 21, 2024 (BSS) Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus exchanged greetings with BNP Chairperson and former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at the Armed Forces Day reception program in Dhaka Cantonment.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Standing Committee members Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, Mirza Abbas, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, and Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan were present.

Khaleda Zia made her first appearance today at the Armed Forces Day reception at Senakunja in 12 years. The last time she attended the Armed Forces Day reception was in 2012.

Begum Zia left his Gulshan residence 'Firoza' to attend the event at Senakunja of Dhaka Cantonment at 3.30 pm today and reached Senakunja around 3.45 pm, according to BNP media cell.

Upon her arrival at Senakunja, chiefs of the three services welcomed her.

During the reception ceremony, advisers of the interim government, leaders of different political parties, senior government officials, and diplomats exchanged pleasantries with her.

The BNP chairperson, party's acting Chairman Tarique Rahman, Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, and 23 other leaders, including Standing Committee members, were invited to join the event.

PRESIDENT REMEMBERS LIBERATION WAR MARTYRS ON ARMED FORCES DAY



President Mohammed Shahabuddin paid tribute to the martyrs of the Bangladesh Liberation War by placing a wreath at the Shikha Anirban (Eternal Flame) in the Dhaka Cantonment area.

The president paid the tributes to the martyrs to commemorate the Armed Forces Day on November 21. He was accompanied by the chiefs of the armed forces and other military personnel while paying the homage at 8 am.

After placing the wreath the president, who is also the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, stood there in solemn silence for a while as a mark of respect to the memories of the martyrs who made supreme sacrifices during 1971 War of Liberation.

Later, a smartly turned out contingent of the Army, Navy, and Air Force presented a salute on the occasion. President Shahabuddin also signed the visitors' book there.

On his arrival at Shikha Anirban, the chiefs of the three services and the principal staff officer (PSO) of the Armed Forces Division received the president.

Bangladesh observes November 21 as Armed Forces Day marking the day in 1971 when the army, the navy, and the air force launched a coordinated offensive against occupation Pakistani forces.

DEPUTY COMMANDER OF U.S. INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND VISITS BANGLADESH



General SM Kamrul Hasan, BSP, NDC, HDMC, PSC, PhD. The delegation also held discussions with the Commandant of the National Defence College, Lieutenant General Mohammad Shahinul Haque, OSP, BSP, NDC, HDMC, PSC. Topics of the bilateral talks included organizing joint exercises and implementing joint training programs to further enhance cooperation.

Additionally, the delegation participated in a briefing session organized by the Bangladesh Army Headquarters on humanitarian assistance and disaster management (HADR), where challenges and capabilities related to natural disaster response in the Indo-Pacific region were discussed. Key issues highlighted included preparedness for disaster prevention, capacity building, and the importance of joint efforts for rapid recovery during crises.

This visit is expected to play a significant role in reinforcing the strong bilateral ties between Bangladesh and the United States and in fostering collaboration on regional security and humanitarian challenges.

A five-member delegation led by Lieutenant General Joshua M. Radd, Deputy Commander of the United States Indo-Pacific Command (US INDOPACOM), visited Bangladesh from November 6 to 8, 2024. The high-level visit aimed to enhance bilateral relations and strengthen the capabilities of the armed forces. Key discussions focused on increasing mutual cooperation between the armed forces of both nations, enhancing professional expertise, and advancing joint humanitarian assistance and disaster management (HADR) initiatives.

During the visit, Deputy Commander General Radd met with the Chief of Bangladesh Army, General Waker-uz-Zaman, OSP, SJGP, PSC, and Principal Staff Officer of the Armed Forces Division, Lieutenant

UNGA ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON ROHINGYA CRISIS WITH GLOBAL BACKING



The UNGA's Third Committee unanimously adopted the resolution "The situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar", co-sponsored by 106

countries and jointly tabled by the OIC and EU. The resolution, inspired by Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, calls for a high-level conference in 2025 to propose a concrete plan for the voluntary, safe, and dignified repatriation of Rohingya refugees. It highlights severe human rights abuses in Myanmar and emphasizes accountability for perpetrators. Bangladesh's UN envoy Muhammad Abdul Muhith urged global action to ensure conditions for Rohingya return, reinforcing international commitment to resolving the crisis.

ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR PAYS COURTESY CALL ON BANGLADESH FOREIGN SECRETARY



H.E. Dr. Abdelouahab Saidani, Ambassador of Algeria to Bangladesh, met with Foreign Secretary Mr. Md. Jashim Uddin at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Thursday, November 21, 2024.

The meeting focused on enhancing bilateral and multilateral relations, particularly cooperation in trade, energy, education, water resources, and agriculture. Ambassador Saidani congratulated the Foreign Secretary on his appointment and thanked Bangladesh for its support on international platforms.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral mechanisms, including the early convening of Foreign Office Consultations and formation of a Joint Business Council to bolster economic ties.

FOREIGN ADVISER MR. MD. TOUHID HOSSAIN WELCOMES NEW CIRDAP DIRECTOR GENERAL, PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR GLOBAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES



Hon'ble Foreign Adviser, Mr. Md. Touhid Hossain, warmly welcomed Dr. P. Chandra Shekhara, the newly appointed Director General of the Center on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), during a meeting at the Ministry. Dr. Shekhara presented his credentials to the Foreign Adviser, marking the beginning of his tenure at the regional organization.

During the meeting, CIRDAP expressed its hope for strengthened collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh and other member states, particularly in

the context of celebrating July 6 as World Rural Development Day. The observance of this day underscores the importance of sustainable rural development in fostering an inclusive and equitable future for all.

In September 2024, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) unanimously adopted a resolution to proclaim July 6 as "World Rural Development Day," a landmark initiative spearheaded by Bangladesh. The resolution was co-sponsored by Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Peru, the Philippines, and Thailand, and was presented during the 78th UNGA session.

The Hon'ble Foreign Adviser assured Dr. Shekhara of Bangladesh's continued support for CIRDAP's activities, particularly as the host country of the regional organization. This partnership is seen as crucial for promoting integrated rural development and advancing global efforts toward achieving sustainable development goals in rural areas across Asia and the Pacific.

CHINESE EMBASSY IN BANGLADESH HOSTS GRAND "CHINESE CULTURE NIGHT" TO CELEBRATE BILATERAL TIES



The Chinese Embassy in Bangladesh hosted a spectacular "Chinese Culture Night" on November 22, 2024, in Dhaka, attracting nearly 300 distinguished guests. Among the attendees were Chinese Ambassador Yao Wen, Foreign Advisor to the Bangladeshi Interim Government Md. Touhid Hossain, and prominent figures from academia, business, and cultural institutions. The event highlighted the enduring China-Bangladesh

relationship, celebrating cultural exchanges as a bridge between the two nations.

Ambassador Yao emphasized the importance of cultural exchange in strengthening bilateral ties, announcing that 2025 would be the "Year of People-to-People Exchange," coinciding with the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations. Advisor Touhid Hossain praised China's steadfast support for Bangladesh's development and urged further collaboration.

The evening featured stunning performances by Confucius Institutes/Classrooms, including traditional Chinese dances, music, and tai chi. Guests enjoyed a showcase of Chinese intangible cultural heritage and seasonal delicacies, along with insights into China's tourism and cultural initiatives. The event culminated with award ceremonies for outstanding contributors to China-Bangladesh cultural exchanges, marking a celebration of shared history and a bright future ahead.

INVEST IN WOMEN, BOOST PROFITS: PAVING THE WAY FOR A GREENER, MORE RESILIENT FUTURE FOR BANGLADESH'S RMG SECTOR



Recently, Swiss contact Bangladesh, in collaboration with the Embassy of Sweden, hosted a workshop titled "Productivity & Green Skills for the RMG Sector." The event highlighted impactful outcomes from the PROGRESS project, emphasizing the vital role of public-private partnerships in accelerating the green

transition within Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector.

The workshop featured a panel discussion, "Driving Sustainable Change: A Dialogue on the Future of the RMG Industry," where industry leaders underscored the power of collaboration in promoting green skills, productivity, and sustainable practices across the garment value chain.

Over 100 key stakeholders, including representatives from garment factories, policymakers, and international development organizations, came together to advance sustainability efforts in the RMG sector, reflecting a shared commitment to building a greener and more resilient industry.

U.S. LAUNCHES YEAR-LONG PROGRAM TO COMBAT FINANCIAL AND CYBER CRIMES IN BANGLADESH



The U.S. government has reaffirmed its commitment to fighting financial and cybercrimes through strong regulations, advanced technological tools, and international collaboration.

In line with this goal, the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka has launched a year-long Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Threat Finance program. This initiative is a collaborative effort involving Bangladeshi law enforcement agencies, the U.S. Secret Service, and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism.

The program aims to strengthen the investigative and technical capabilities of Bangladeshi officials, enabling them to better address financial and cybercrimes. By providing specialized training and tools, this initiative is expected to significantly bolster Bangladesh's efforts in countering transnational crimes.

FIRST DIRECT CARGO VESSEL FROM KARACHI ARRIVES IN CHITTAGONG



A direct cargo vessel from Karachi, Pakistan, has reached the port of Chittagong, Bangladesh, marking the first-ever direct maritime link between the two countries.

The direct route promises to significantly streamline supply chains and reduce transit time. Carrying a diverse array of goods with an estimated 2,300 TEUs of capacity, the vessel's voyage highlights the growing demand for direct trade between the two countries.

Pakistan's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Syed Ahmed Maroof termed the direct shipping route a major step forward in enhancing bilateral trade and business ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh besides boosting a more integrated trade network across the region. He said that the initiative will not only accelerate the existing trade flows but also promote new opportunities for businesses on both sides, from small traders to large exporters.

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