



Bangladesh High Commission, New Delhi

BOUNTIFUL BANGLADESH

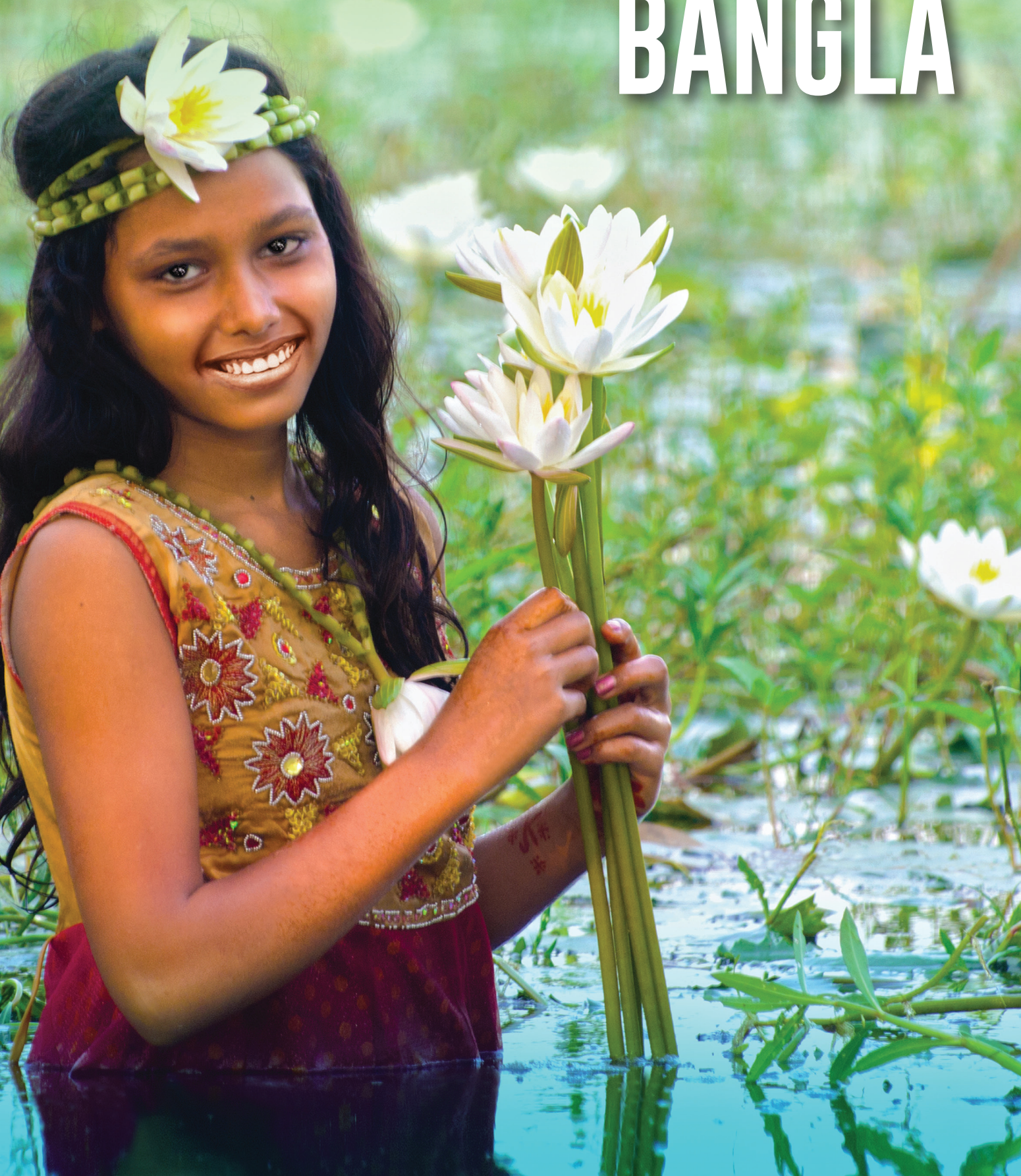
AN OCEAN OF OPPORTUNITES



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Bangladesh High Commission, New Delhi

Welcome to India

03-06 October 2019

*Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina
Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh*

Long Live Bangladesh- India Friendship



BOUNTIFUL BANGLADESH

AN OCEAN OF OPPORTUNITES

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EP-39, Dr S RadhaKrishnan Marg,
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Email : info@elets.in ;
Website: www.eletsonline.com

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Farid Hossain
Minister (Press)
Bangladesh High Commission, New Delhi
Email : faridtish.hossain@gmail.com

PRODUCER

Dr Ravi Gupta
ravi.gupta@elets.in

SR ASSISTANT EDITOR

Souvik Goswami

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Vivek Ratnakar

DESIGN & CREATIVES

Shweta Sharma
Gopal Thakur

CONCEPT & COORDINATION

Krishna Mishra
krishnamishra@elets.in





HIGH COMMISSIONER

HIGH COMMISSION FOR THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
NEW DELHI



Message

It is our great honour and pleasure to welcome Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina on her visit to India from 3rd to 6th October 2019. We bring out this special supplement to mark the momentous occasion. This visit is significant, as it is Premier Sheikh Hasina's first visit to India after her re-election in December 2018 and after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's re-election in May 2019. We are confident that the visit will lead to further strengthening of bilateral cooperation.

Bangladesh and India are linked by shared history, traditions and culture. At the same times, our interests are interwoven and based on shared vision for the betterment of our two nations, and deepening of the bonds of friendship between the two countries.

Under the charismatic and visionary leaderships of our Honourable Prime Ministers, Sheikh Hasina and Shri Narendra Modi, Bangladesh and India have made impressive strides in the past few years. Bangladesh-India relations are passing through a "Golden Chapter" or "Sonali Adhyay" and have emerged as a "role model" for "Neighborhood Diplomacy". Both the countries are exploring newer ways to further nurture their relations through enhanced participation in various spheres including connectivity, trade and investment, infrastructure development etc., while ironing out their differences through a comprehensive dialogue process.

I believe the visit of our Hon'ble Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina will further provide the required impetus for all-round economic cooperation and connectivity between our two countries and beyond. The excellent rapport shared by both the Prime Ministers would be a catalyst for the greater benefits of our two peoples, who are bounded by a common destiny.

Long live Bangladesh-India Friendship.

Sd/-

Date: 30 September 2019

(Syed Muazzem Ali)

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SHEIKH HASINA: A Spirited Visionary Leader Shaping New Bangladesh

Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, assumed the office on January 7, 2019 for the fourth time after her party Bangladesh Awami League-led grand alliance won the December 30, 2018 11th Parliamentary elections. She has earlier served as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh from 2014-18, 2009-2014, and from 1996-2001 when her party acquired majority in the General Election held on June 12, 1996.

Before becoming a Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina played a crucial role in establishing democracy in the country when she won from three constituencies in the parliamentary election in 1986 and was elected leader of the opposition. Following the election of 1986, a constitutional process began in the country ending the martial law. She led the historic mass movement in 1990 that toppled the government of Ershad who resigned on December 6, 1990.

Following the election in 1991, Sheikh Hasina became leader of the opposition in the country's 5th parliament. She steered all the political parties towards changing the presidential system of government into a parliamentary one. Sheikh Hasina initiated a mass movement against the voter-less election by BNP in 1996 and forced the government of Khaleda Zia to quit power on March 30, 1996.

Sheikh Hasina is a staunch crusader against fundamentalism, militancy and terrorism. Assuming the office on January 6 in 2009, her government enacted laws leading to constitute the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) for the trial of crimes against humanity done during the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971. The tribunal

began the investigation and prosecution of the suspected war criminals and a number of verdicts has been given and executed.

The eldest of five children of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Sheikh Hasina was born on 28 September 1947 at Tungipara in Gopalganj district. She graduated from the University of Dhaka in 1973. She was elected vice president of the Students Union of the Government Intermediate Girl's College when she contested as a candidate from Students League. Later, she served as secretary and then as president of college unit of Student League.

She was also a member of Students League in Dhaka University and became the secretary of Rokeya Hall unit. She actively participated in all mass movements from her student life. Her father, Bangladesh's independence hero, along with the members of his family was brutally assassinated on the fateful night of August 15, 1975. Sheikh Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana were the only survivors as they were in West Germany at that time.

Later, she went to the United Kingdom from where she started movement against the autocratic rule in 1980. Sheikh Hasina was unanimously elected as president of Bangladesh Awami League in 1981 in her absence while she was in forced exile. She finally returned home on May 17, 1981 ending her six years in exile. Sheikh Hasina faced the wrath of the rulers on her return as she launched movement to restore democracy in the country.

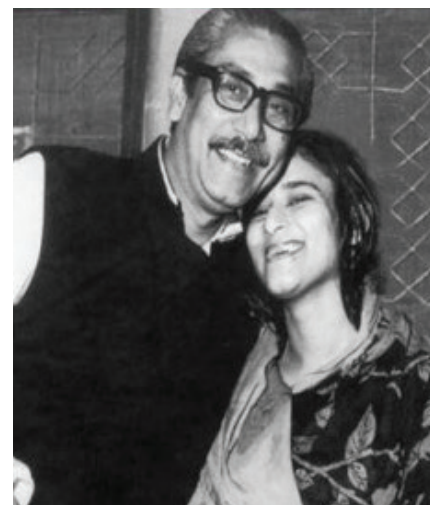
She was detained time and again, and at least 19 attempts have been

made on her life so far. Notable attempts to assassinate Sheikh Hasina include firing by police on November 10, 1987 during a 'gherao' programme of the Secretariat.

Police opened fire targeting Sheikh Hasina and charged batons in front of Chittagong Court Building on January 24, 1988 during rule of president Ershad. At least 30 leaders and workers of Awami League were killed in that incident. Twice she was targeted with gunfire while delivering speech at Laldighi Maidan. Her car came under gunfire while returning from the public meeting at Laldighi Maidan.

Miscreants fired on September 11, 1991 while she was visiting a polling centre in the capital's Kalabagan area. A series of gunshots hit her carriage at Ishwardi railway station while she was traveling by train in 1994. In 2000, two bombs weighing 76 kgs and 84 kgs were planted at Kotalipara helipad, and at her place for public meeting in a bid to kill her. She survived as the bombs were detected prior to her arrival.

The gravest attempt made on Sheikh Hasina's life was on August 21, 2004. On the day, a dozen of Arges





grenades were charged on her rally at Bangabandhu Avenue. Although Sheikh Hasina narrowly escaped, her hearing capability was impaired as a consequence of the attack.

However, she continued her struggle and remained undaunted to ensure people's right to food, vote and other fundamental rights ignoring numerous obstacles, including threat on her life. Under her leadership, people of Bangladesh achieved democracy and freedom of speech. Bangladesh earned the dignity of a lower middle-income country. The country achieved tremendous success in socio-economic fronts during her tenure.

In 1996-2001 term, Sheikh Hasina's government achieved laudable successes in many fields, the most significant being the 30-year Ganges Water Sharing Treaty with India; the Peace Accord on Chittagong Hill Tracts; construction of Bangabandhu Bridge; and ensuring food security.

She also introduced beneficial programme for farmers and social safety nets for the distressed, landless and deprived people. These include allowances for distressed women,

widows, disabled and freedom fighters; Ashrayan for the homeless and "One house-One farm" scheme. During her term in 2009-13, Sheikh Hasina's government's achievements included

She continued her struggle and remained undaunted to ensure people's right to food, vote and other fundamental rights ignoring numerous obstacles, including threat on her life. Under her leadership, people of Bangladesh achieved democracy and freedom of speech. Bangladesh earned the dignity of a lower middle-income country.

increased power production capacity to 13,260 MW; GDP growth over 6%; elevation of 5 crore people to middle-income group; resolving maritime boundary dispute with Myanmar and India, digital centers at all union parisads; distribution of free text books among the students up to secondary level, distribution of agri-cards and scope to open bank accounts with Tk 10 only for farmers, slump in poverty level to 24.3 percent in 2013-14 which was 38.4 in 2006; and adoption of her peace model by UN resolution.

Since 2014, her government's landmark achievements include the following: elevating the country to lower middle-income status, adoption of Land Boundary Agreement by Indian parliament resolving the 68 years long border dispute; raising per capita income to USD 1,602; decreasing poverty rate to 22.4 percent, raising forex reserve over USD 32 billion. Different reputed universities and institutions across the world conferred various degrees upon her for the outstanding contribution to peace building, upholding democracy and socio-economic development. ■

Awards & Accolades Conferred on the Hon'ble Prime Minister



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receiving UNICEF award titled 'Champion of Skill Development for Youth' for Bangladesh's great success in youth skill development on September 26, 2019

Dr Kalam Smriti International Excellence Award, 2019

Vaccine Hero Award, 2019

Global Women's Leadership Award, 2018

Planet 50-50 Champion Award, 2016

Sustainable Development Award, 2015

United Nation's Champion of the Earth Award 2015 in policy leadership category

Visionary Award by Global South-South Development Expo-2014

Achievement in Fighting Poverty Award, 2013

South- South Award, 2011

Millennium Development Goals Award, 2010

The International Telecommunication Union's ICTs, 2010

Indira Gandhi Peace Award, 2009

Pearl S Buck Award, 1999

Head of State Medal in 1996-97 by the International Association of Lions Clubs

Medal of Distinction in 1996-97 and 1998-99

UNESCO's Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize, 1998

CERES Medal by FAO

Mother Teresa Award

MK Gandhi Award

Paul Harris Fellow

Indira Gandhi Gold Plaque in Kolkata

Paul Haris Fellow by the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International,

Global Diversity Award in the UK

Two South-South Awards

UNESCO "Tree of Peace" award

Award for Regional Leadership in Women's Political Empowerment

by Women in Parliaments Global Forum

Doctor of Literature by Kazi Nazrul Islam University of West Bengal, India



PM SHEIKH HASINA'S VISIT TO BRING INDO-BANGLADESH CLOSER

Indeed, the relations between India and Bangladesh have now reached the "best ever" stage, under the dynamic leadership of our two Prime Ministers Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi. It has gone beyond the strategic partnership level and now encompasses all aspects of our bilateral cooperation.

By Syed Muazzem Ali *



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be representing Bangladesh at the India Economic Summit in New Delhi from 3 to 4 October 2019. The Bangladesh Premier will also meet her Indian counterpart Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in bilateral format after the Summit on 5th October 2019. The visit is very significant as this will be Premier Hasina's first visit to India after her re-election in December 2018 and also the first visit after Prime Minister Modi was re-elected to office in May 2019. There have been a series of visits

in last five years, both at Prime Ministerial and Presidential level between Bangladesh and India. All these visits are the manifestation of the current level of our partnership, which is "all encompassing" and goes "far beyond the strategic partnership" touching upon "virtually all areas of human endeavour". We hope this visit of our Prime Minister would further strengthen our existing excellent level of bilateral cooperation.

Bangladesh and India are closest neighbors, as we share the longest

border between us. It is a matter of happiness for us that during recent years our cooperation has expanded in multifaceted areas. Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself has underscored that Bangladesh-India relations is passing through a "Golden Chapter" or "Sonali Adhyay" and has emerged as a "role model" for "Neighborhood Diplomacy" and countries in other parts of the world should follow this model for developing their "Neighborhood relations". Indeed, the relations have now reached the "best ever" stage,

under the dynamic leadership of our two Prime Ministers Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi. As noted earlier, it has gone beyond the strategic partnership level and now encompasses all aspects of our bilateral cooperation. We are confident that the reelections of both the Prime Ministers with landslide victories in the latest respective national elections will enable us to further consolidate and expand the ever-increasing bilateral ties, based on shared vision and mutuality of interest.

Bangladesh-India bilateral cooperation had begun in the battle fields of 1971. The emotional bonds stemming from the invaluable contributions of the Government and the people of India during Bangladesh's War of Liberation, led by our Father of Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, remain a dominant factor in the country's political, cultural and social wave. It may be mentioned here that, as a gesture from Bangladesh in recognizing the supreme sacrifices made by the Indian martyrs for the liberation of Bangladesh, a special "Sommanona programme" was jointly organized by the Government of India and Bangladesh during the last summit level visit of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India.

A stable, strong and friendly neighborhood is a necessity for any country, big or small, and especially in

our region where several armed terrorist groups are eager to exploit differences between the two countries to further their own objectives. Since assumption of power for the second time in 2009, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has consistently tried to improve mutual trust and cooperation and she has brought a change in our mindset in our bilateral ties. There is now a greater recognition on both sides that the destinies of our two neighboring countries are inescapably intertwined and we must grow together. Our stability and prosperity are inextricably linked with each other.

Happily, on the other hand, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after assumption of office in his first term little over five years ago, had also expressed his keen desire to promote all-round bilateral cooperation. His historic visit to Bangladesh in June 2015 has taken our ties to newer heights. Sixty eight years after the partition of 1947, and forty-one years after the conclusion of the Indira-Mujib Border Accord of 1974, the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) between the two countries was concluded and ratified. Premier Narendra Modi had demonstrated how a long-standing complex bilateral issue could be resolved unanimously through consultation, compassion, and consensus-building. The successful

conclusion of the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) also signaled fulfillment of the vision of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who had taken the initiative soon after the independence of Bangladesh.

During the last Summit level meetings in 2017, our two Prime Ministers Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi have taken our bilateral ties to a new level which is well beyond the "strategic partnership". The Eleven Agreements and Twenty-four MoUs signed during the visit virtually encompass every important sector in our bilateral cooperation namely security, trade, connectivity, energy, civil nuclear agreement, defence and introduction of new bus and train services etc. In addition to the two earlier Lines of Credit (LOCs), India also extended a fresh LOC to Bangladesh during the visit to the tune of \$5 billion which also includes \$500 million for defence purchase. Our Private sectors also made their valuable inputs when they signed MoUs for the investment to the tune of \$13 billion primarily in the energy sector. There is hardly any area which doesn't reflect in the overall Bangladesh-India bilateral relations.

Security and Terrorism: Security has been a crucial area of cooperation between our two countries which has been consolidated in recent years. It may be recalled that the security issue had bedeviled Indo-Bangladesh ties in the past. Since assumption of power in 2009, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has firmly controlled the situation and did not allow any terrorist activities, or any terrorist group, to use Bangladesh soil to launch any attack against India or any other neighboring country. Likewise, Bangladesh received full cooperation from India. Since then, security cooperation has been the high point of our cooperation and it is based on our reciprocal desire not to tolerate terrorism in any form and not to allow our soil to be used for this purpose. This has significantly strengthened good





neighborly ties between the two countries. Peace, however, does not come free and we have to be vigilant as various insurgent elements are active in our neighborhood.

Energy cooperation: Cooperation in the energy sector is the hallmark of our renewed engagements. There is a positive momentum in cooperation between our two countries in the power sector and the achievements in the past six years have been highly encouraging. Currently, India has been supplying 1160 MW of power to us. We have also started cooperation on renewable energy and nuclear power. Several projects in the power sector have been included in the new line of credit of \$4.5 billion which was announced during the visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India in April 2017. Agreements worth nearly \$13 billion of Indian investment were also signed during the visit, which is mainly in the power and energy sectors of Bangladesh. In addition to these various bilateral initiatives, we are also working on sub-regional cooperation on energy sector in our existing sub-regional and regional platform like BBIN, SAARC, BIMSTEC

etc. I am confident it would bring solidity in our bilateral ties and thus making our bilateral cooperation irreversible.

Bilateral and Sub-regional Connectivity: Connectivity is another vital area of cooperation between our two countries. As we are painfully aware, South Asia is the least connected region in the world and whatever connectivity was established during the colonial period, were disrupted in the past. Currently, we are working to restore road, rail, and coastal shipping links that had existed in the pre-partition period. At the same time, new land ports and better infrastructure are built to facilitate greater trade. Our people have achieved much higher purchasing power and hence, we are now working on air connectivity between Bangladesh and other North-Eastern cities on a top priority basis.

It is heartening to note that Prime Minister Modi has not only expressed his interest in strengthening Bangladesh-India bilateral ties but has also viewed these cooperative ties as a catalyst for regional and sub-regional integration, progress and stability. Bangladesh also figures prominently in

Prime Minister Modi's 'Look and Act East' policy and both countries are working on strengthening sub-regional connectivity among Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and North-East India under the BBIN as well as inter-regional cooperation with South East Asian countries under the aegis of BIMSTEC and ASEAN.

Water sharing issues: Bangladesh and India share 54 common rivers and the issue of water sharing during the lean season has been an important issue as it has a direct impact on the food production and quality of life of our teeming millions. Ganges Water Sharing Agreement is being successfully implemented. The two countries, now, have been working for a solution for an interim water sharing agreement of Teesta River. The Union Government of India has been undertaking internal consultations with the Government of West Bengal and Prime Minister Modi has assured our Prime Minister that the agreement would be finalized soon. Bangladesh is eagerly looking forward to an early conclusion of the Agreement as it would open up newer opportunities for cooperation. The Joint River

Commissions of our two countries are constantly engaged in joint consultations on different other water related issues.

Trade & Investment: The volume of bilateral trade has steadily grown during the past years. The balance of trade, however, is still largely in India's favor. The volume of trade between two countries is nearly 10 billion dollars. In 2018, Bangladesh was India's eighth largest export destination with 8.8 billion dollars export and our export to India was about 1 billion dollar. However, these are mostly primary products. It should be our common endeavour to bring in qualitative and quantitative changes in our trade exchanges. We would like to see trade and investment together in this regard. The most practical course of action would be to set up a series of "buy-back" projects, where Indian big companies could set up their industries in Bangladesh and the produces could be re-exported to India. Incidentally, such projects do exist in US-Canada and US-Mexico borders. To this end, several Indian mega companies like Hero-Honda, Tata group or CEAT Tire companies have set up such projects in Bangladesh. These are small projects, but, we need much bigger projects in joint venture. We seek substantial investment from Indian

investors in three exclusive Economic Zones in Bangladesh that have been offered to India. We are now emphasizing on all-round economic cooperation between our two countries.

Lines of Credit: India has offered three Lines of Credit to the tune of US\$8 billion at a highly concessional rate to Bangladesh. The First line of credit (LoC-1) has been fully utilized, while implementation of various projects under the Second Line of Credit (LoC-2) is underway. These credits have enhanced capacities in vital areas such as roads, railways, bridges, inland waterways connectivity. Under the 3rd Line of Credit (LoC 3), the Indian government has given 5 billion US\$ to Bangladesh. In the meantime, infrastructural development of Land Customs Stations/Land Ports is continuing for boosting smoother exchange of goods.

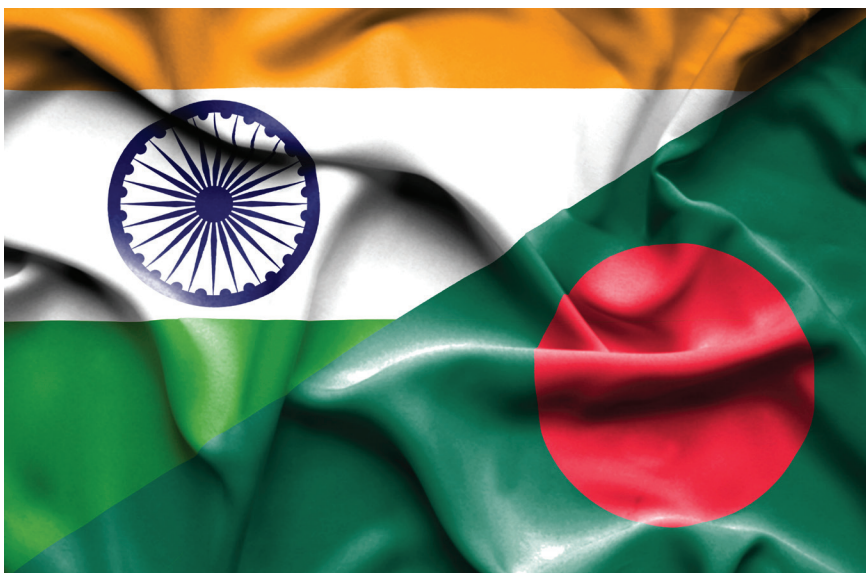
Defence engagements: Defence Engagement between Bangladesh and India has been steadily developing in the recent years. During the visit of our Hon'ble Prime Minister to India in 2017, five MOUs were signed on Defence cooperation, covering fields of general cooperation, training exchange and procurement of equipments, defence financing, medical cooperation and

knowledge sharing between the top defence institutes of both the countries. Both the countries are now working for the operationalization and implementation of those MoUs.

People-to-People Contact: People-to-people contact between Bangladesh and India has increased manifold during recent years and the highest number of tourists coming to India in 2017 were Bangladeshis. Likewise, a large number of technically qualified Indian nationals are currently engaged in Bangladesh's health, IT, banking and other service sectors. Cultural teams from both the countries do participate in various cultural programmes, book fairs, film festivals in each other's capital. A good number of Bangladeshi students are also studying in India.

In conclusion, I would say the developments in the recent years have taken our bilateral relations to a new multi-dimensional, multi-faceted and comprehensive platform and it is expected that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's forthcoming visit and his meetings with the highest political level in India would give a new impetus to our ever increasing bilateral ties.

Long live Bangladesh-India Friendship! ■



***Syed Muazzem Ali** is the High Commissioner of Bangladesh to India. A former Foreign Secretary of the Government of Bangladesh, Mr. Ali was a founding member of the Bangladesh Mission in Washington DC, where he was serving the Pakistan Embassy in 1971 before declaring his allegiance to the Government of Bangladesh. He has worked for the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the South Asian region and beyond. A Science graduate from Dhaka University, he was directly involved in working towards US recognition of Bangladesh as well as the US, World Bank and UN participation in the massive reconstructions efforts in war-ravaged Bangladesh (1971-1975). Mr. Ali has also served in Bangladesh Embassies in Warsaw (1975-1978), and New Delhi (1986-1988), and in the Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York (1982-1986). He was Consul General in Jeddah (1988-1991) during the Gulf War, and later served as Bangladesh Ambassador to Bhutan (1991-1992), Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Turkmenistan (1995-1998), France and Portugal (1998-2000).



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LDC GRADUATION OF BANGLADESH

Moving Towards a Smooth Transition

Macro and trade situation in Bangladesh remains healthy with strong GDP growth and poverty reduction, as a result of broad-based growth... Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is beginning to rise, reserves remain comfortable, and imports are growing quickly.

By Dr. K A S Murshid*



There are 12 Asian LDCs in our region but these vary enormously in terms of income, human assets, type and nature of economic vulnerability, demographic patterns, dependence on agriculture, poverty and inequality, and stage of structural transformation. A number of these countries were initially selected for graduation in the 2015 triennial review of the CDC (namely, Bhutan, Nepal, Timor Leste and Solomon Islands) and a few more were approved for graduation in 2018 (including Bangladesh).

Three specially designed indices are used to assess eligibility for graduation based on income, human assets and economic vulnerability: GNI per capita (which is a moving target – was set at \$1242 per capita in 2015), HAI and EVI (indices reflecting human and economic vulnerability) were set at 66 or above and 32 or below.

The Progress

Bangladesh has made good progress in terms of meeting all the three graduation thresholds. It met the economic vulnerability criteria well in advance and

the income criterion by 2018. The HAI index was also met well in advance. In other words, Bangladesh is the only LDC to meet all three criteria although for purposes of graduation, meeting any two are enough. This reflects Bangladesh's solid performance against the criteria set.

Macro and trade situation of Bangladesh remains healthy with strong GDP growth and poverty reduction, as a result of broad-based growth. Despite recent worries about the slowdown of exports and remittances, and pressure on the

domestic currency and on the balance of payments, the outlook remains very positive. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is beginning to rise, reserves remain comfortable, and imports are growing quickly.

At the sectoral level, agricultural growth is slowing down, the pace of industrialisation needs to be faster with diversification and new sources of growth, which also depends on productivity, human capital development and skilling of the labour force. The short and medium term challenges relate to lowering transactions costs, further economic reforms, investment in energy and infrastructure to create the incentives to raise private investment from 23% of GDP to 28-30%. The poverty rate has declined to 23%.

How significant are LDC benefits?

In principle, there are three types of benefits that are most frequently discussed:

1. Benefits of duty free-quota free market access (so called DFQF)
2. Benefits related to concessional finance received due to the LDC status
3. Benefits from an array of general support measures (general ISM).

General International Support Measures (ISM)

These are numerous, usually of minor significance and principally relates to LDC contributions to the UN budget (which is capped), some travel funds for delegates to the UN, a number of scholarships and fellowships, assistance in developing a transition strategy, research opportunities, and so on. It would not be a fruitful inquiry to indulge into a detailed case-by-case analysis of general ISM for each country, mainly due to very limited usage and access, and severe lack of data. What is clear however is that access is made difficult by complex procedures and poor information, and are often simply not worth the trouble, especially for a

country like Bangladesh. If these measures are to have greater impact it is necessary to make these more transparent and easily accessible.

Concessional Finance

The world ODA architecture has undergone huge changes in the last 50 years. Traditional donors and multilateral bodies, including the UN are no longer the only actors in the world of ODA. Important new actors have now emerged including South Korea, China, Russia and India. Much of the ODA is multilateral, e.g. by the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) – but these follow their own rules and classifications for their ODA rather than those suggested by UN. For example, the World Bank has its own classification system (low income, middle income, etc.), which it uses to decide on lending terms including concessional finance. Unfortunately, this classification does not correlate so well with the UN classification in terms of LDC, Developing Countries and advanced countries – which introduces additional confusion if not complexity.

Much of the ODA remains bilateral, by both the Asian donors as well as others. These flows are determined by a host of factors of which LDC status could be one – but does not have to be. In other words, 'buy-in' to the LDC classification is not as strong as it might

have been (or actually was in the past).

If we examine the geographical distribution of ODA, we find that the following countries were the top ten beneficiaries in 2015 (in absolute, USD terms):

1. Afghanistan
2. India
3. Vietnam
4. Ethiopia
5. Indonesia
6. Pakistan
7. Syria
8. Kenya
9. Jordan
10. South Sudan

In other words, Bangladesh does not figure in this list. In per capita terms, Bangladesh receives the least ODA in the Asian LDC group (World Bank 2015).

Market Access

Market access is probably the most important LDC benefit for members, especially those who have begun to emerge as significant exporting countries for manufactures. This is certainly true for Bangladesh.

Total net official development assistance is worth around 2.57 billion dollars (2015). The largest bilateral donor is Japan who provided \$8.93m as grant aid, \$34.4m as technical cooperation assistance and \$422m as loans (2015). USAID and other US agencies provided a total of \$239.14m in 2016 – primarily spent on the health





sector. The remaining aid flow originated mainly from multilateral sources, EU and UK. To put this in perspective, total ODA represents 1.32 % of GDP and 7.37 % of exports of goods and services. Technical cooperation grants amount to 0.92 % of GDP (2015). In other words, aid dependence is low but remains useful at the 'margin'. However, the bulk of ODA is unrelated to LDC status while some of the technical cooperation and grants are possibly related to LDC membership. Graduation will not therefore affect aid flows to Bangladesh significantly.

Bangladesh benefits from a variety of preferential market access arrangements, and many of these are in fact attributable to its LDC status. The most important of these is its access to the EU market under the "Everything but Arms" (EBA) initiative, which provides DFQF treatment to its RMG exports. Under EBA all exports from Bangladesh are eligible for duty free treatment, subject to compliance with product-specific ROO. Inclusion of Turkey in the EU Customs Union also means that Bangladesh has similar access to the Turkish market as well. Access to the EU market has played a crucial role in

the continued and sustained success of the sector.

Other countries also provide access under various GSP measures including Canada, Japan and the US – although the US has withdrawn GSP privileges citing labour standard issues including the right to form trade unions.

Bangladesh is poised for graduation and fully expects to cross the final review in 2021. The main worry for Bangladesh is the increased duty its exports will face in EU, and to an extent in other less important trade destinations. The Bangladesh government is worried although the private sector seems confident it can weather the change. Estimates of 'loss' available seem to indicate a drop in exports of 6.5-7 % (UNCTAD 2016).

Bangladesh's graduation strategy should be to improve its trade competitiveness and remove many of the inefficiencies and costs that still plague manufacturing and exports, including port congestion, poor roads, bottlenecks with energy supplies, improving labour skills etc. At the same time it needs to aggressively begin negotiations with existing partners as well as to seek out new export

destinations including India, China, South Africa, Latin America while making more effort to diversify into new, higher value exports. Bangladesh's advantage is that it has a strong private sector, which is able to respond to global opportunities. However, as the success of RMG has shown, this requires policy innovation and government support, including export incentives and pro-private sector regulatory framework. Measures to invest in mega infrastructure projects and 100 Special Economic Zones will go a long way in addressing these constraints. ■



* **Dr. Khan Ahmed Sayeed Murshid**, is Director General at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS). He has a Ph.D. in Economics from Cambridge University and specializes in a number of areas

of research including food policy, food markets, rural credit markets, mobile financial services, value chain finance and human development. He has published extensively in top development journals and combines extensive research experience with familiarity with a wide range of development settings, including Bangladesh, sub-Saharan Africa, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Pakistan, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

Sheikh Hasina Special Initiatives

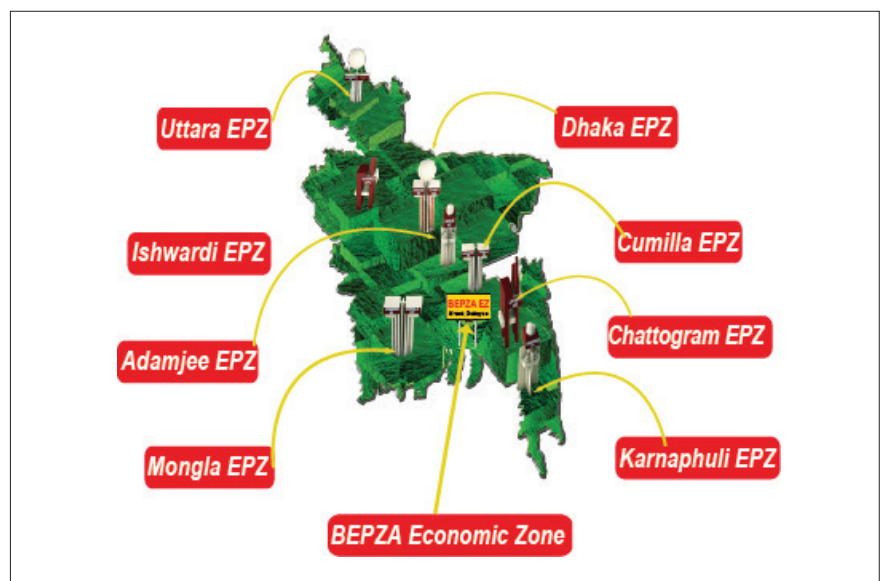


BEPZA: Creating Investment Friendly Bangladesh

BEPZA's story is one of the pride and honour in Bangladesh. A story that has been weaved by the utilitarian planning and brilliance in execution, by toils and sweat, by an undeterred will to face and defeat odds. The eight EPZs, setup in far-flung corners of the country, resulted in regional reduction of poverty, enhancement of employment and transfer of technology.

By Major General S M Salahuddin Islam, BP, SPP, ndc, psc*

Bangladesh—a rising economic power in Southeast Asia is experiencing exponential growth in all her micro and macroeconomic indicators under the courageous and pragmatic steps taken by the Government headed by the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA), one of the entities under the Prime Minister's Office is playing a pivotal role in ushering Bangladesh to its goal of becoming a Middle Income Country by 2021 and Developed Nation by 2041. The phenomenal success of BEPZA in converting a principally agro-based economy to an industrially advanced economy has been lauded



all over the world.

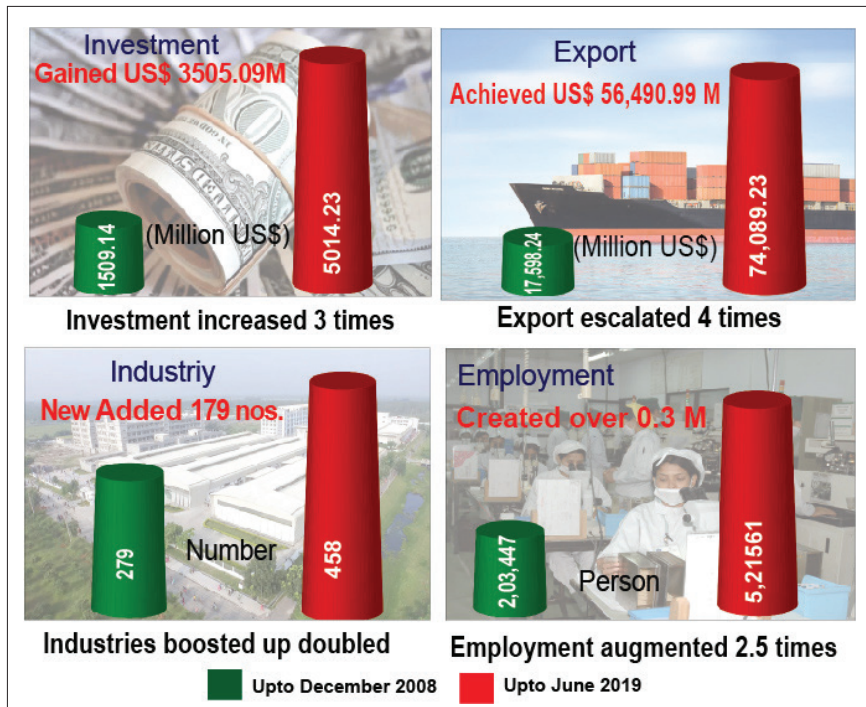
BEPZA started its journey with the mandate to establish and operate Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in Bangladesh. To materialize the mandate BEPZA initially established Chattogram EPZ, very near to Chittagong port as pilot basis. Observing its astounding success BEPZA has farsightedly established seven more EPZs across the country namely Dhaka, Mongla, Cumilla, Uttara, Ishwardi, Karnaphuli and Adamjee EPZ. Most of the EPZs were established by the prudent decision of the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Promotion of local and foreign investment, boost up export including product diversification, enhancement of employment opportunities as well as workers welfare and transfer of technology & skill development and women empowerment are the main objectives of BEPZA. BEPZA achieved a remarkable success in the last few years keeping mind of those objectives and under the guidance of the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who is the Chairman of BEPZA Board of Governors.

Success Scenario

BEPZA's story is one of the pride and honour in Bangladesh. A story that has been weaved by the utilitarian planning and brilliance in execution, by toils and sweat, by an undeterred will to face and defeat odds. The eight EPZs, setup in far-flung corners of the country, resulted in regional reduction of poverty, enhancement of employment and transfer of technology collectively which brought in an incredible economic boon for the country—a synergy played at its best.

Last 10 year plus tenure of the present Government under the dynamic leadership of Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, BEPZA experienced a growth unmatched in most places. During this period the authority eyed more than threefold increase in the flow of investment



(from US\$ 1.5 billion to US\$ 5 billion), escalated export figures (from US\$ 17.5 billion to US\$74 billion), doubling the number of enterprises and the creation of more than three hundred thousand new jobs culminating to a staggering 525 thousand workers in the EPZs.

BEPZA has already accommodated over 650 enterprises of 37 countries in its tiny 2307.27 acres of land. In this small area, the authority created enormous opportunities for the investors and offered to explore it. The major countries are: South Korea, China (including Taiwan & Hong Kong), Japan, India, UK, USA, Pakistan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Canada, The Netherlands, Germany, Singapore, etc. There were many obstacles. However, the strong determination of BEPZA to move forward has knocked out all of them. All the zones are pulsating with more than half a million energetic workforce among them 66% are female-giving a renewed hope, strength and self-respect to countless female workers who are making extraordinary contribution to their own lives in particular and the nation in general. Moreover, they are producing

world famous brand products in their skilled hands. BEPZA has been contributing around 20% to the national export and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of the country every year.

Investment-Friendly Atmosphere

The geo-regional locations of EPZs give a comparative advantage which providing easy connections to the rest of the world. Competitive wage level of trained workforce provides highly productive workflow. Further, BEPZA provides fully serviced plots and standard factory buildings including infrastructure and utility facilities to the investors for setting up industry at moderate cost.

BEPZA has allowed to setting up hi-tech eco-friendly service oriented industries in order to ensure maximum protection of environment. It has introduced and encouraged the use of green energies-Solar Panels & Solar Street Lights, installation of LED light, introducing Waste Heat Recovery System, Power Plants, Central Effluent Treatment Plants (CETP), Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and Tree

Plantation. BEPZA is not only trying to make its EPZs green but also encouraging the enterprises of EPZ to go green. Mentionable that, top 10 LEED Platinum Certified green factories of the world 7 are in Bangladesh and top most rated environment-friendly 2 are in EPZs.

Infrastructure and Services

BEPZA provides infrastructure facilities readily available to the investors. The authority provides fully serviced plots and standard factory buildings for setting up industry under a 30 year agreement on renewable basis. Apart from these plots, investors may also take ready Standard Factory Building (SFB). All the utility connections such as electricity, water, internet & telecommunication are available in the zones.

From the very inception, BEPZA offers 'One Window Same Day Service' to the investors. Recently, the Government has formulated One Stop Service (Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority) Rules 2019 to provide 76 types of required services under one umbrella. Investors need not to go one department to another to get investment/operational paperwork done which would help simplify doing business procedures,



reduce cost of doing business for the investors of EPZs.

Workers-Owners-Management Synergy

The EPZ sets the best example of harmonious relationship i.e. Workers-Owners-Management synergy. This amicable cohesive relation has also raised the satisfaction level of working inside the EPZs. The workers of EPZ get more wages and benefits than outside factories. In the last 10 years, wages of the EPZ workers' have been increased thrice under the direction of the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Furthermore, workers enjoy a 10% annual increment on basic along with various allowances & benefits. Besides, BEPZA has its own Medical Center, Public School & College, Day Care Center and Canteen facilities for the workers and their children. The working environment in the enterprises of the EPZs is quite satisfactory.

Product Diversification

BEPZA also executes diversification plan and shifts the lion share of our export earnings from garments to other sectors i.e. Leather Goods,

Electronics Products, Toys, Optical Frame & Sunglasses, Bamboo made Coffin, Wig & Fashion Hair, Hair Accessories, Tent, Sleeping Bags, Travel Goods, Battery, Motor Parts, Bicycle, Car Seat Trim Cover, Key Chain, Medal, LED Products, Lens, Jewelry, Camping Furniture, Golf Shaft etc. BEPZA is relentlessly working for fulfilling this mission by sanctioning new projects of diversified items rather than traditional one. This pioneering role in product diversification encouraged many investors to establish factories to produce their goods.

Trade Stimulus

Bangladesh, as a member state of SAARC, gets benefit from South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA). Under SAFTA, investors of the country enjoy duty-free access to India and other member countries. Bangladesh also enjoys tariff and quota free access under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) to the EU countries for all its products (apart from arms and armaments). The country enjoys tariff-free access for exports of manufactured products to Canada,

PACKAGE OF INCENTIVES

Fiscal

- 5-7 years Tax holiday (on certain conditions)
- Duty free import of raw materials, machinery, equipment and construction materials
- Duty free export of finished goods
- Relief from double taxation
- Exemption from dividend tax for tax holiday period
- Full repatriation of profit, capital and establishment

Non-Fiscal

- No ceiling on foreign and local investment
- 100% foreign ownership permissible
- Enjoys GSP benefits in EU countries, Japan, Australia, Canada
- Foreign currency loan from abroad under Off-Shore Banking Unit (OBU) facilities
- Medium/long term external borrowing facilities
- Non-Resident Foreign Currency Deposit (NFCDD) allowed for 'A' Type industries
- Operation of FC account by 'B' and 'C' Type industries allowed
- 100% backward linkage, raw materials, accessories are allowed to sell for export oriented industries inside and outside EPZs
- 10% sale of finished products except garments; sale of defective finished goods and surplus raw materials to Domestic Tariff Area (DTA) is allowed

Booming BEPZA EZ: Your Next Investment Destination



Australia, New Zealand, Japan and other developed countries under GSP. Furthermore, Bangladesh belongs to the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) and therefore enjoys reduced tariffs on exports of certain goods to China. All these facilities helped Bangladesh to achieve the second highest export growth globally over the past decade (2008-2018) and the highest among the South Asian nations. Meanwhile, Bangladesh maintained the title of the second largest garment exporter worldwide after China.

Uttara, Mongla, Ishwardi EPZ-Close Proximity to India

Uttara, Ishwardi & Mongla EPZs of Northern & Southern region of the country, established by the visionary decision of the Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, are very close to the Indian border. These EPZs became the hub of producing diversified items and created a shining example of how a visionary decision can change the lifestyle of any region through socioeconomic development. Investors of these three EPZs enjoy 50% subsidized tariff on land and factory building. There are abundant of easily trainable workforce.

Moreover, export-import procedure with India using land port is very easy. Indian entrepreneurs can avail the opportunities by investing in these three EPZs.

BEPZA EZ-Smart Zone of the Future

EPZs of BEPZA have earned good reputation in the world. Base on this achievement, the government is going to establish 100 Special Economic Zones across the country. BEPZA has been allowed to set up BEPZA Economic Zone at Mirsharai, Chattogram considering the experience and expertise in establishing and operating EPZs successfully. The development of the zone on 1150 acres of land is progressing very fast. This will be an eco-friendly green zone. BEPZA has a plan to develop 618 nos. of industrial plots of each size of 3600 square meters. The authority is expected to attract 4.5 billion investments by 300-350 industries where 0.5 million employment opportunities will be created. All the facilities will be readily available in the Zone at moderate cost.

BEPZA's share of the FDI and export will rise significantly with the operation

of BEPZA Economic Zone. So, it is high time for the investors to jump in to the prosperity bandwagon through investment and active involvement in BEPZA Economic Zone.

BEPZA has proved itself as the best facilitating & service providing organization in Bangladesh in terms of attracting investment, acceleration & diversification of export and generation of employment. BEPZA welcomes all potential entrepreneurs to utilize their foreign investments in the EPZs and BEPZA Economic Zone because it is the right place to gain optimum profit. ■



***Major General S M Salahuddin Islam**, BP, SPP, ndc, psc is the Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA). He was commissioned in the Corps of Infantry with 17th BMA Long

Course in 1987 and posted to 21st Battalion of the East Bengal Regiment. Before joining BEPZA, he was commanding 105 Infantry Brigade at Jashore Cantonment. Prior to that, he served at Bangladesh Infantry Regiment Center as Deputy Commandant and also commanded 88 Infantry Brigade as brigade commander. He has also served at the UN mission as contingent member in Mozambique. He was selected as observer at UN mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo and also contingent commander of BANBAT- 1.

BANGLADESH TAKING BIG STRIDES TO EMERGE AS A GLOBAL INVESTMENT DESTINATION



To sustain and augment the growth, every initiative is being taken to transform Bangladesh as a 'Middle-Income Country' (MIC) by 2021; a 'Developed Country' by 2041; and a 'safe, climate resilient and prosperous Delta' by the end of this century.

By Md. Sirazul Islam*

Bangladesh or 'Bengal', in the medieval world, was famous for her ingenious commodities prepared by the most talented craftsmen reaching to the farthest parts of the globe. Since time immemorial the spirit of creative entrepreneurship was embedded in her social and economic fabric. The global consumers were tempted to have the finest commodity of Bengal.

However, with the time the economic reality of Bengal has headed in a different direction. The pragmatic and visionary leadership of Bangladesh has now changed the landscape of the country to an unprecedented milieu, which was never anticipated. New York Times in 2012 commented on Bangladesh as 'an unlikely corner of Asia-Strong Promise of Growth'. But now in 2019, we see Bangladesh

emerging as the 13th largest economy in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the Asia-Pacific region, leaving behind the likes of Singapore and Hong Kong as per the Asian Development Bank.

To sustain and augment the growth, every initiative is being taken to transform Bangladesh as a 'Middle-Income Country' (MIC) by 2021; a 'Developed Country' by 2041; and a 'safe, climate resilient and prosperous Delta' by the end of this century. All the policy prescriptions and institutional focus are aligned to these goals. Massive reforms in the existing structure have been undertaken to streamline the economic growth and make the investment climate best in this region. The outcome is acknowledged by investors and associated agencies alike.

During this journey, Bangladesh has achieved the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and has undertaken massive and inclusive initiatives to attain the "17 Sustainable Development Goals" of 2030 Agenda, or 'SDGs' for Sustainable Development of UN declaration. To achieve these goals, the role of private sector is going to be most crucial as a key partner of government in the implementation process of SDGs.

In the national perspective, the Government of Bangladesh has focused on sustainable and inclusive growth of the country. For that, the 7th Five Year Plan (2016-2020), Perspective Plan (2010 – 2021), SDG Action Plan (2016-2030) and Delta Plan 2100 have been laid down to attain targets focusing on promoting resource and energy efficiency,

The following figures describe what the unprecedented development of Bangladesh has achieved since our independence:

Parameters	What were we?	What are we now
Literacy Rate	29.23% (1981)	73% (2017 Est.)
Per Capita (USD)	129.71 (1971)	1,827 (June, 2019)
GDP Growth	4.62% (1976)	8.13% (2019)
Export (USD)	0.4 Billion (1976)	41 Billion (2018/19)
FDI (USD)	7 Million (1977)	3,613 Million (2018)
Forex Reserve (USD)	7.5 Billion (2009)	31.94 Billion (May, 2019)
Electricity Gen. Capacity (MW)	3,362 (2009)	21,282 (2019 April)

sustainable infrastructure, sustainable production and consumption, providing access to basic services, green and decent jobs, and above all ensuring better quality of life for all.

Bangladesh as an ideal investment destination: Bangladesh has created her niche based on her unique competitive edge. The following are mention worthy.

Industrious Competitive Workforce: Bangladesh offers a well-educated, highly adaptive and industrious workforce with the competitive wages and salaries in this region. About 57.3% of the population is under 25, providing a youthful group for engagement. The country is enjoying demographic dividend and the working force is able to meet global standards.

Strategic Location, Regional Connectivity and Worldwide Access: Bangladesh is strategically located next to India, China and ASEAN countries. The economic corridors in the South and South East Asian region such as BCIM, BIMB are taking tangible shape and becoming a hub of opportunity for Bangladesh. Bangladesh is actively considering creating economic corridor in its north and southern area thus gradually integrating into the global value chain.

Macroeconomic stability: The country has been enjoying macroeconomic stability for a decade now. The foreign exchange rate and exports are stable

and the inflation is well within the tolerable range. The country rating in terms of risk perception is also stable. Moody's has sovereignly rated Bangladesh as 'Ba3' and Standard and Poor's as 'BB-' for consecutively six times.

Strong Local Market and Growth: In addition to the country's global presence in terms of export potential, Bangladesh offers the domestic market of the population of 160 million and regional market access of around 3 billion people. With its rising per capita and brand consciousness, the foreign investors are also eyeing the untapped local market.

Energy: Since 2009, the energy production has grown on a mammoth scale. Currently, the installed capacity

is around 21,000 MW and by the end of 2021 it will be near to self-sufficiency. We are expecting that it will reach 23000 MW. The investors from India have invested hugely in the power sector.

Competitive Incentives: Bangladesh offers the most liberal FDI regime in South Asia, allowing 100% foreign equity ownership with unrestricted exit policy, almost all the sectors are open for foreign investment without any quantitative restriction, remittance of royalty and repatriation of equity and dividend. We offer generous tax holiday, reduced tax rate for ICT sector, bond facility, export incentives and other fiscal incentives.

Export and Economic Zones: Bangladesh offers export oriented industrial enclaves with infrastructural facilities and logistical support for investors both local and foreign investors. As of now there are 8 export processing zones operating in Bangladesh in various parts of the country.

Economic Zones: Bangladesh has started developing 100 Economic Zones (EZ) in the country to create structured and balanced investment. These will be heterogenous as well as





country and sector specific. The vision is to create 10 million employment opportunities and export of USD 40 billion.

As of now 88 EZs are earmarked. Among these 55 will be under Government initiated, 29 under private sector developed, 2 under PPP model, 4 under G2G modalities and 3 will be built as tourism park.

Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA): To promote sustainable and inclusive investment development in Bangladesh a new agency was created named 'Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA)' from the merger of the Board of Investment and the Privatization Commission responsible for divestment of state-owned enterprises. The agency, apart from its regulatory and promotional activities, also looks actively into the following:

- Facilitate the prospective investors,
- Creation of true one stop service for the investors,
- Endeavour to improve the ratings of Bangladesh in various indicators such as 'Doing Business report of World Bank', 'Global Competitive Index' of the World Economic Forum and others.

Acclamation on Bangladesh: Global

agencies are attesting the achievements of Bangladesh. Agencies such as Citi Investment Research & Analysis, Goldman Sachs, The International Monetary Fund (IMF), The Wall Street Journal (WSJ), JPMorganChase, Morgan Stanley, New York Times, HSBC, McKinsey & Co, The Deutsche Bank AG, Germany, The World Bank, PWC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) has spoken unequivocally on the unprecedented growth spree of Bangladesh.

Promotion and Protection of Investment: According to Industrial Policy 2016, investment in all sector of the economy are allowed and there is no restriction on the amount of share

of the investment. Foreign investors are eligible to take advantage of a wide range of generous tax concessions and other fiscal incentives and facilities.

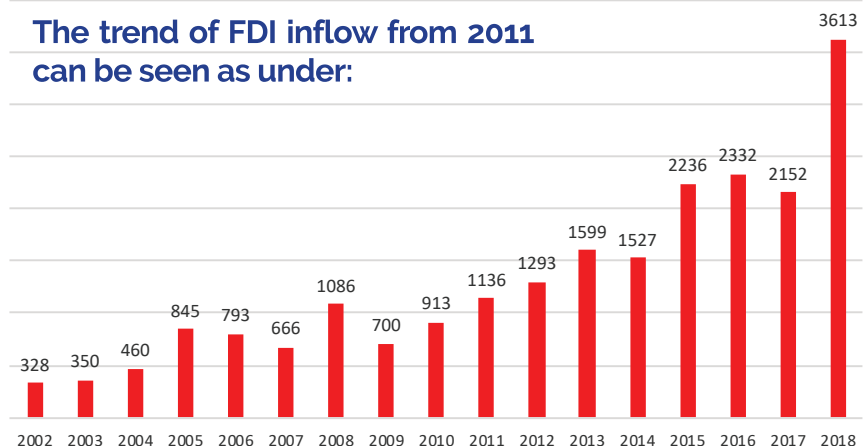
Foreign investment in Bangladesh is secure vis-à-vis nationalization and expropriation. The Foreign Private Investment (Promotion and Protection) Act 1980 ensures full protection to foreign investors. Furthermore, Bangladesh is a signatory to MIGA, OPIC, ICSID, WAIPA, WIPO and WTO. Bangladesh has signed bilateral investment treaties with 32 countries and Double Taxation Treaty (DTT) with 28 countries. Bangladesh has signed both these treaties with India.

Investment position of Bangladesh:

Since 2009 Bangladesh is receiving FDI on a steep trend with a CAGR of 20% since 2009 till 2018. Starting form 900 million USD in 2009, it has reached 3613 million USD in 2018 which is 68% higher than the last year. This year the FDI stock stands at 17 billion USD which was 14 billion USD in last year registering 21% growth over last year.

Regulatory Improvement: Bangladesh is striving in all areas to improve the existing regulatory regime. According to Ease of Doing Business (EODB) and other global rankings the position of Bangladesh's lies in the moderate tier. But Bangladesh has taken extensive measures to ensure that the country will elevate to the top tier of the

The trend of FDI inflow from 2011 can be seen as under:





rankings by 2021, the year to become the Middle-Income Country (MIC). BIDA and other agencies has already started focused and massive initiatives to improve the EODB and other rankings thus the doing business for the investors much easier and convenient.

One-Stop Services: The One-Stop Service (OSS) puts all investment facilitation mechanisms under a single umbrella, aimed at easing the regulatory regime to boost investment for the nation's economic development. The OSS will be a cloud-based portal

based on the best practices which an investor can access from anywhere and at any time.

As of now 15 client services have been made online. In the shortest possible time, another 135 services of 34 agencies will be included in this OSS system. This will enable the investors to obtain services from one place and in one click.

Economic relations with India: The economic relation of Bangladesh with India is time tested. There was proven productive value chain existed in the earlier centuries between these two

countries. To strengthen this relationship, both the countries has taken cohesive initiatives. To facilitate the investors Bangladesh has signed Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) and Double Taxation Treaty with India. In recent years many Indian enterprise has invested in Bangladesh and engaged in commercial and infrastructure building activities. These agencies includes NTPC Limited, MRF Limited, Air India Limited, Export-Import Bank of India, Tata Motors Limited, Comviva Technologies Ltd., ICICI BANK LIMITED, WIPRO LIMITED, Mahindra & Mahindra Limited, Ircn International Limited, IL & FS Technologies Limited, Pidilite Industries Ltd., ONGC Videsh Ltd., State Bank of India, Larsen & Toubro Limited, Shapoorji Pallonji And Company Private Limited, AFCONS INFRASTRUCTURE LIMITED, Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, WAPCOS LIMITED, Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd etc. ■

The investments from India since 2011 can be seen as under: (in million USD)

Year	Total FDI	FDI inflow	FDI stock of Investment
2011	1136.38	25.74	166.24
2012	1292.57	28.43	209.42
2013	1599.16	45.01	256.36
2014	1551.28	70.59	289.46
2015	2235.39	102.70	327.29
2016	2332.72	79.20	479.19
2017	2151.56	114.65	516.71
2018	3613.30	121.46	570.11

The unprecedented growth, the macroeconomic stability, the stable and pragmatic leadership has placed Bangladesh into a unique place and it is increasingly becoming a preferred choice for the investors. The vision that is envisioned with the concerted effort of the nation to attain that is taking the country to become a MIC by 2021 and developed country by 2041. Now it is the prudent choice of the investors to participate in this journey.



***Md. Sirazul Islam** is the Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority

INVEST IN BANGLADESH



STABLE DEMOCRACY

5 TO 10 YEARS OF TAX HOLIDAY

THE NEXT ASIAN TIGER

INSTANT STARTING OF BUSINESS

HIGHEST FDI GROWTH

POWER CONNECTION IN 28 DAYS

FOCUS ON INFRASTRUCTURE

CONSTRUCTION PERMIT IN 60 DAYS

100 SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES

IMPROVING BUSINESS CLIMATE

COUNTRY-WIDE HI-TECH PARKS

SKILLED WORKFORCE

CASH INCENTIVES UP TO 20%

DUTY/QUOTA-FREE ACCESS
TO EU MARKET

ONLINE ONE-STOP SERVICE

EXPORT PROCESSING ZONES

STRONG LOCAL MARKET

TARIFF CONCESSIONS

NO DOUBLE TAXATION

**"WE INVITE YOU TO INVEST IN BANGLADESH.
YOU WILL HAVE THE FULL SUPPORT OF MY GOVERNMENT."**

- SHEIKH HASINA
HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER

 **+918179804281**
Commercial Counsellor
in New Delhi

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 www.bida.gov.bd

 info@bida.gov.bd



BIDA
BANGLADESH INVESTMENT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



ACI Godrej Agrovet Private Limited



Poultry Feed



Day Old Chicks





Cattle Feed



Fish Feed

ACI Godrej Agrovet Private Ltd. was established as a Joint-venture company formed by Godrej Agrovet Ltd. a reputed company belonging to Godrej Group of India and ACI Limited, Dhaka, a highly respected conglomerate of Bangladesh. ACI Godrej Agrovet Private Ltd. is a reputed and quality focused Poultry, Fish, Cattle, and Shrimp Feed manufacturing and Day Old Chicks producing and marketing company in Bangladesh.

Over the years, the company has developed and nurtured a close relationship with the farmers by providing them innovative and cost efficient products. The Company strives to use its expertise in nutrition to deliver better performance to its farmers. The company gives a lot of emphasis on working closely with the farmers & educating them on world-class farming practices.

The company has also put up a state-of-the-art green field floating fish feed project at Rajshahi. This is one of the largest plants in South-East Asia with a rated capacity of 400 MT per day.



FISHERIES: A Vital Piece of Bangladesh's Blue Economy

The fisheries sector plays a vital role in the national economy of Bangladesh in terms of income-generation, employment opportunities and nutrition. However Blue Economy, which allows utilisation of marine environment and its resources in a sustainable manner, is a relatively new concept for Bangladesh. The government has, therefore, developed a comprehensive plan to utilise the ocean resources and achieve the SDG goal 14 that commits countries to the protection of oceans and the lives that depend on it.

By Towfiqul Arif *

Fisheries sector plays an important role in the economy and food security of Bangladesh. Natural conditions and geographical location have endowed Bangladesh with huge fisheries resources with the potential to boost fisheries production. The country's fisheries resources are divided into two major groups: inland fisheries and marine fisheries. Inland fisheries occupy an area of 4.58 million hectares and marine capture covers 166,000 sq km. The potential of the inland fishery of Bangladesh is considered to be one of the highest in the world. Out of 4.05 million hectares of open water fisheries, the floodplains with an area of 2.8 million hectares offer tremendous scope and potential for augmenting fish

production by adopting the aquaculture-based enhancement techniques.

The fisheries sector plays a vital role in the national economy in terms of income-generation, employment opportunities and nutrition. It serves as an important source of animal protein (58%) and the second highest foreign exchange earner ($\pm 7\%$) for the country, contributing a whopping 3.7% to the GDP.

Bangladesh has a 710-km-long coast line along the northern edge of the Bay of Bengal, which is a highly potential area for sustainable blue economy activities. Most of the country is low-lying, about 10 metres above Mean Sea Level (MSL). However Blue Economy, which allows utilisation

of marine environment and its resources in a sustainable manner, is a relatively new concept for Bangladesh. The concept embodies broad aspects of policy for sea usage including common heritage of high seas for better use of sea areas for mankind and sustainable development of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Highlighting the significance of Blue Economy on September 1, 2014 at the 'Global Workshop on the Blue Economy' in Dhaka, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that marine-based economic activities and administration of ocean and its assets could be gamechanger for a coastal nation like Bangladesh. Based on the Prime Minister's vision, the Government of Bangladesh has developed a

comprehensive plan to utilise the ocean resources in order to achieve the SDG goal 14 that commits countries to the protection of oceans and the lives that depend on it. Accordingly the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock of Bangladesh has taken some initiatives:

Stock Assessment of Marine Fisheries Resources

Bangladesh has four potential fishing grounds with 475 species of fin fish, 36 species of marine shrimp, 21 species of marine crabs and 12 species of mollusks and many more untapped and undiscovered living resources. The principal fish species include Hilsa (shad), Bombay Duck, Ribbonfish, Round Scad, Spanish Mackerel, Catfish, Threadfin, Croaker, Pomfret, Eel, Red Snapper, Grunter, Shark, Ray and Shrimp. Most of the fishes are trans-boundary in nature within Bangladesh and Indian water.

The country's research and survey vessel RV Mean Sandhani is carrying out the stock assessment to promote Blue Economy. With the assistance of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and Institute of Marine Research under the programme of EAF Nansen, an acoustic survey was conducted in the Bay of Bengal with the research vessel R.V. Dr. Fridtj of Nansen during 2-17 August, 2018.

Exploring Tuna and Tuna like Fish

The Bangladesh government took steps to become a member of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) to explore tuna at the outward boundary of its 200 nautical miles. After securing the membership of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, now the global ocean is open for Bangladeshi licensed companies to fish Tuna and other Tuna-like pelagic fish species. The government has taken a fresh move to find foreign cooperation with tuna-rich countries under Government-to-Government

partnership to catch tuna fish in the deep-sea.

Conservation and Management of Marine Resources

Both industrial trawlers and artisanal boats exploit living resources in the Bay of Bengal. So coherent and consistent regulatory framework and strong national infrastructures are needed to conserve the marine resources. During 2000, the government declared 698 sq km area in the Bay of Bengal as a "Marine Reserve Area" as part of its conservation and management measures. Besides, the government has declared 3,188 sq km area adjacent to Nijhoom Deep Island at Hatia upazila as a Marine Reserve (MR). More significantly, the government has decided to impose a 65-day ban (from May 20 to July 23 every year) to ensure breeding and protection of all fish species in the EEZ since 2015

Promotion of Mariculture

Mariculture provides nutritional security to the food basket, contributing to agricultural export and engaging millions of people in different activities. In Bangladesh, mariculture has been practiced successfully for shrimp, crab and seaweeds culture since mid 1980's. Along with the wild catch, a substantial amount culture-based fishery also contributed to the national economy. As per the recent data, about 24% of this originates from coastal brackish water aquaculture which is favored by climate and several physical factors, and is growing at a rapid pace in Bangladesh. Recently, a pilot project of Oyster culture has been initiated. This may open a significant opportunity for pearl culture, which could usher in a new era for innovation-led blue economic growth in Bangladesh.

In this regard, a crab hatchery has been established at Cox's Bazar to promote crab culture. Extension of

sea-weed culture is another intervention to promote socio-economic condition of our coastal community. About 120 seaweeds have been identified with detailed taxonomic information on Bangladesh coast, of which 10 are commercially important. Culture technology of some seaweeds like *Hypnea* species, *Enteromorpha intestinalis*, *Padina tetrastromatica*, *Caulerpa racemosa* etc, using horizontal net and line methods, has been developed.

Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute (BFRI) scientists have succeeded in breeding and crablet production of mud crab, *Scylla* species in the hatchery with a survival rate of about 6%, which will increase culture and export potentialities of live crabs. BFRI has also developed breeding and culture technology of Green back mullet, *Chelon subviridis* as new culture species in the coastal areas. Breeding and culture techniques of Seabass, *Lates calcarifer* in net cages has also been initiated.

Healthy oceans are essential for global food security, livelihoods and economic growth. The oceans cover some 72 percent of the Earth's surface, and are both an engine for global economic growth and a key source of food security. Bangladesh is home to the world's largest contiguous mangrove ecosystem bounded by the Bay of Bengal which supports the potential fishing grounds of the country within EEZ. Ecosystem services (goods and services) of this region provide livelihoods and food to millions of people. Oceans-supported fisheries products generate significant revenue for most coastal communities. It provides and supports employment opportunities across ethnicity and supplies vital animal protein to food-deficit communities. ■



•Towfiqul Arif is Joint Secretary (Blue Economy), Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Bangladesh

BIMSTEC: Fostering Win-Win Cooperation & Integration in Bay of Bengal Region

BIMSTEC has been serving as an effective platform to facilitate regular exchanges among the Governments of Member States, thereby narrowing down differences and creating common grounds for cooperation. BIMSTEC has held four Summits, 16 Foreign Minister level meetings, three National Security Chiefs' Meetings and 19 Foreign Secretary level meetings since its inception.

By M Shahidul Islam*

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, better known by its acronym BIMSTEC, is an inter-governmental organisation that brings together seven Member States surrounding the Bay of Bengal, namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. As stipulated in the Bangkok Declaration of 1997, BIMSTEC's primary objective is to create an enabling environment for rapid

economic development through identification and implementation of specific cooperation projects in the sectors of trade, investment and industry, technology, human resource development, tourism, agriculture, energy, and infrastructure and transportation.

Drawing its members from South and Southeast Asia, BIMSTEC constitutes a bridge between South and Southeast Asia and represents a reinforcement of relations among

these countries. BIMSTEC with a population of more than 1.6 billion and a combined GDP of US\$ 3.4 trillion is one of the fastest growing regions in the world.

Since its inception, BIMSTEC has been evolving constantly to transform itself into an efficient platform of regional cooperation and integration in the Bay of Bengal region. Beginning with six sectors of cooperation, the number of sectors of cooperation under BIMSTEC has increased in the





subsequent years to 14 covering such diverse areas as trade and investment, transport and communication, technology, tourism, energy, agriculture, fisheries, counter-terrorism and transnational crime, environment and disaster management, climate change, public health, poverty alleviation, culture and people-to-people contact.

While the initial focus of BIMSTEC was to implement project-based cooperation, the organisation gradually began to lay down legal framework for cooperation and build institutions, and carved its distinct identity as a grouping of Bay of Bengal nations. BIMSTEC has concluded some landmark agreements like Framework Agreement on BIMSTEC Free Trade Area (2004); BIMSTEC Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organised Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking (2009); and MOU to establish BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection (2018).

In 2014, BIMSTEC established its

permanent secretariat in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which gave a formal structure to this regional forum. Four specialised centres namely, BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate (India); BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory (Bhutan); BIMSTEC Energy Centre (India); and BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (Sri Lanka) are at various stages of operation.

BIMSTEC received fresh impetus at the BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat held in Goa, India on 16th October 2016, when the leaders reiterated their strong political commitment to make the organisation stronger, more effective and result-oriented. Since then, efforts have been redoubled to conclude new agreements to enhance trade and connectivity, including Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters, BIMSTEC Motor Vehicle Agreement and BIMSTEC Coastal Shipping Agreement.

The Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) and its Working Groups have

resumed negotiations to finalise the constituent agreements of the Framework Agreement on BIMSTEC FTA. The 21st TNC Meeting held in Dhaka, Bangladesh in November 2018 reached agreement on a number of core elements related to the Agreement on Trade in Goods, and its Rules of Origin and Product Specific Rules (PSR). Besides, other trade facilitation agreements are also being negotiated to remove non-tariff barriers to trade.

BIMSTEC recognises that a well-established transport network is a prerequisite for reaping the benefits of a free trade area, including the promotion of trade and investment, as well as progress in other areas of cooperation such as tourism, people-to-people contact and cultural exchange. Most Member States have taken initiatives towards implementation of the 167 projects that were identified by the ADB-assisted BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study (BTILS) of 2014 in order to address

the missing links to establish greater physical and economic connectivity between South and South East Asia.

BIMSTEC is currently developing the BIMSTEC Transport Connectivity Master Plan with a vision to promote seamless connectivity between and across BIMSTEC countries, through the use of different transport modes, to achieve enhanced transport and trade linkages for faster and more inclusive growth.

BIMSTEC has been serving as an effective platform to facilitate regular exchanges among the Governments of Member States, thereby narrowing down differences and creating common grounds for cooperation. BIMSTEC has held four Summits, 16 Foreign Minister level meetings, three National Security Chiefs' Meetings and 19 Foreign Secretary level meetings since its inception. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit has further emphasised the need to hold regular meetings of various levels of BIMSTEC mechanism.

Efforts are underway to rationalise and consolidate BIMSTEC's operational modalities and institutional structure. The Forth Summit agreed to adopt a BIMSTEC

Charter in the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit to be held in Sri Lanka, decided to explore the possibility of establishing a BIMSTEC Development Fund (BDF), and review and rationalise the existing 14 sectors of cooperation to eventually reduce their numbers to enhance focus of the organisation. As part of strengthening the BIMSTEC Secretariat, the number of directors has been increased to seven, to be filled by one director from each Member State.

The organisation is increasingly aligning its activities with the efforts of its Member States to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit reiterated BIMSTEC's commitment to the eradication poverty in the Bay of Bengal Region by 2030 in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and called for gearing up efforts of all sectors to contribute to the over-arching goal of poverty alleviation. BIMSTEC is in the process of establishing closer collaboration with the UN system, Asian Development Bank and the World Bank in this regard.

Historically, the Bay of Bengal used to be a centre for global maritime

trade, and a hub of commercial and cultural exchange. BIMSTEC is striving to restore the historical connectivity in order to promote trade and investment, tourism, people-to-people contact and cultural exchange to contribute to the sustainable development of this region. With renewed political commitment of the Member States and the urge to put in place focused institutional structure, BIMSTEC has generated new hope.

Indeed, the time for BIMSTEC has come, and the organisation is poised to play a greater role in promoting peace, prosperity and sustainable development in the Bay of Bengal region. ■



***M Shahidul Islam** is the Secretary General of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), a regional organisation comprising seven Member States lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity. Joining Bangladesh Foreign Service in 1988, Mr Islam has served in many countries including India, US, Switzerland, S. Korea, France, Algeria and Romania as a career diplomat. Mr Islam holds a Masters in International Relations from the University of Dhaka and a Post-Graduate Diploma in International Relations from the International Institute of Public Administration, Paris, France.

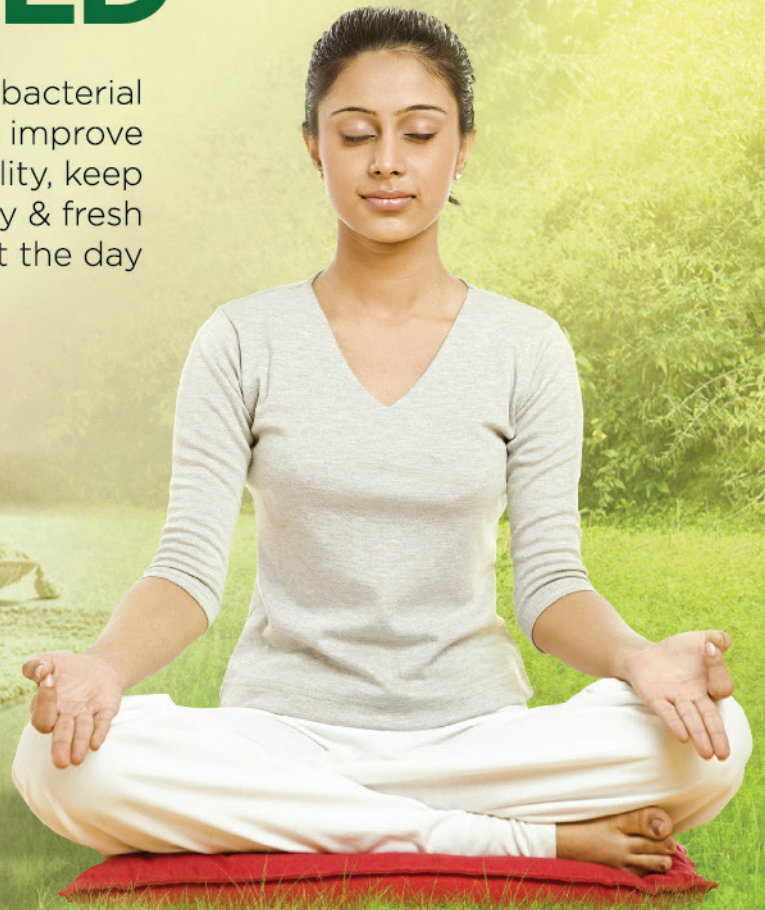




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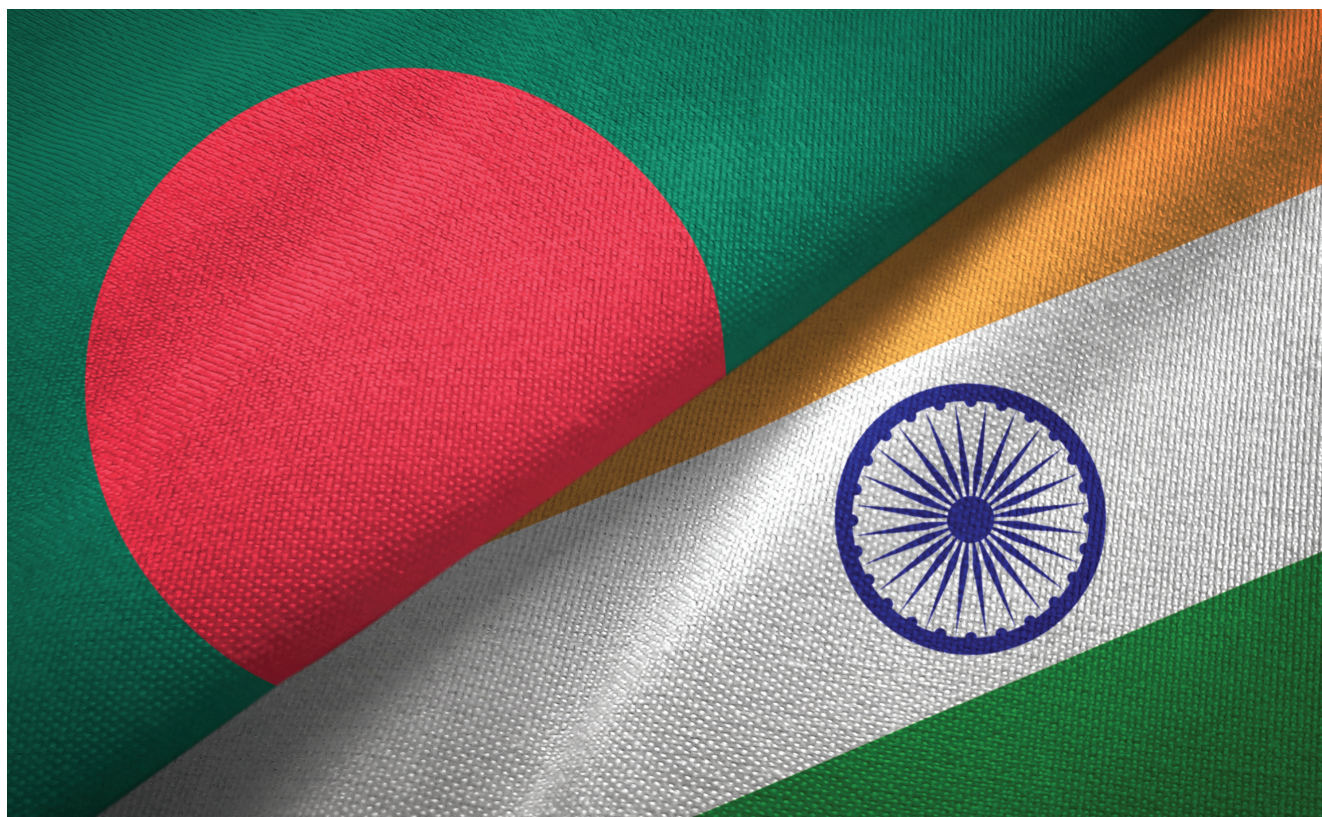


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STRENGTHENING INDO-BANGLA TRADE & ECONOMIC RELATIONS

By Jahangir Bin Alam *



Relationships between Bangladesh and India remain cordial and friendly since the emergence of the former as an independent and sovereign state, although there have been some occasional downturns caused due to lack luster attitudes of the policy making machine on both sides of the isle, particularly the military and quasi military governments in Bangladesh that usurped power after the tragic August 1975 change over till the country's return to a democratic process in 1991.

Perhaps, it won't be impertinent here to say that India played a pivotal role in the creation of Bangladesh.

Huge number of refugees took shelter in the bordering states of India who were taken care of by the local Indians and the government of India. We in Bangladesh gratefully acknowledge this fact.

Bangladesh is a developing democratic polity in the Westminster model. Secular, but not a theocratic state. The country is a moderating influence in a consistently volatile and often mutually hostile South Asian scenario.

Currently, the bilateral relationships between Bangladesh and India are very warm and friendly after the Awami League led government under the able leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh

Hasina took responsibility of running the affairs of Bangladesh in 2008 and has been growing from strength to strength ever since. Very recently, the High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das very rightly termed the relationship to be passing through a golden era.

Bangladesh's economic growth has been tremendous, especially during the last decade thanks to the pragmatic and focused socio economic policies pursued by the incumbent government. Macro-economic and most of the social indicators are very stable and on the rise which has been receiving kudos from global players.

The International Monetary Fund

(IMF) has projected Bangladesh's economic growth to be 7.6 percent this fiscal year and according to HSBC Global Research, Bangladesh economy has consistently grown in excess of 6% a year for the past decade. Its GDP had grown 7.9% in the fiscal year 2017-2018, making it the fastest growing economy in Asia.

Furthermore, according to a recent report of Asian Development Bank (ADB), Bangladesh has achieved the fastest growth among the Asia-Pacific economies comprising of 45 countries. The bank projected the country's growth to be 8.0 percent in the FY2019 and FY2020 terming it a new record.

According to a recent UNCTAD report, the flow of foreign direct investment into the country recorded substantial rise in 2018 which is in contrast with the decline in global FDI inflow.

In this era of globalization and liberalization no country can prosper remaining in isolation. Mutual cooperation between countries, especially with their immediate neighbours is critical for economic development. Bangladesh and India being close and friendly neighbours need to strengthen their economic ties

further for mutual benefits of their two peoples.

Strengthening Bangladesh's economic ties with India in general and its north-eastern states in particular is vital for development of sustainable growth of this region.

Over 15 percent Bangladesh's total imports come from India. The balance of trade between Bangladesh and India is heavily tilted in favour of the latter and this is offset by the former's surpluses with other countries. India's imports from Bangladesh account for less than one percent of its total imports. Interestingly, informal trade between the two countries amounts to 3-4 percent of official trade.

India's exports to Bangladesh increased from US\$1 Billion in 2001-02 to US\$ 10 billion plus in 2018-2019. According to rough estimates another US\$ 3 Billion worth of goods are being brought into Bangladesh through informal channels.

However, Bangladesh's overall exports to India reached US\$ 1.07 billion during July – April period of the current fiscal year (FY 2018-19) making a 53 percent growth.

India has granted duty free access of all products excepting wine and

tobacco from five least developed SAARC member countries including Bangladesh to its domestic market.

This epoch making decision of India has helped boost Bangladesh's exports to India to a large extent positively impacting reduction in the existing negative trade imbalance for Bangladesh. However, unfortunately, Bangladesh's exports to India continue to face hindrances due to some non-tariff and para-tariff barriers which still exist in India.

The trade imbalance could be reduced to a large extent if greater numbers of Indian investors come forward to invest in Bangladesh taking advantage of the country's conducive investment climate and export their products to India and other countries of the world.

Around 74 Indian manufacturing and service companies have significant presence in Bangladesh. To name a few large ones are – Asian Paints, Marico, Tata Motora, Ashoke Leyland, TVS auto, Hero Motors, Maruti Suzuki, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Autos, Ion-Exchange Environment Management, Kelyn Ltd. VLCC Healthcare, Tharmax Ltd., Godrej Household Products, Godrej Agrovet, Indofil Industries, Emami, Sun Pharmaceuticals, LIC of India, Arvind, Simplex Infrastructure, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Larsen & Toubro etc.

Besides above, few more large Indian companies e.g. Adani Group and Reliance Power have plans to invest in Bangladesh.

It may be noted that in recent years India has extended US\$ 8 billion plus worth Lines of Credit to Bangladesh at very simple rate of interest for upliftment of the country's infrastructure and economy.

Bangladesh has a big market in India, especially in its North Eastern Region for many of its products such as – bricks, cement, processed food and food products, agro-based products, fish and fish products, melamine products, ceramic products, toiletries and cosmetics, CI sheet, light





engineering items etc. because of its geographical proximity and lower transportation cost. Although Bangladesh's exports to India's north-east region have grown substantially than it used to be few years back, there still remains ample scope for growth provided the exporters and importers get necessary fiscal and infrastructural support from both sides of the divide.

Tripura, Meghalaya, Assam and their adjoining states in the north-east India have significant natural resources that could find markets in Bangladesh. Items like timber, fruits, bamboo, bamboo chips, spices etc. are to name a few. Besides, the region could profitably export its excess power to power hungry Bangladesh.

There are immense possibilities of investment and expansion of trade for Bangladeshi entrepreneurs in the trillion dollar economy of India which has recently removed the barriers so far existed for Bangladeshi investments there. Time has come for the dynamic Bangladeshi entrepreneurs to spread their tentacles and invest in the industrial and service sectors of India, especially in its north-eastern region.

Many Bangladeshi entrepreneurs are now willing to invest in India, particularly in its north-east to avail the

attractive incentive packages offered by the respective states of the region. It may be noted here that renowned Bangladeshi entrepreneurs – PRAN RFL have already started implementing their investment plans in Tripura keeping an eye on the markets in its neighbouring states. Few others are contemplating follow suit.

India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IBCCI) is closely working with national trade bodies of India like; the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCI), MCC Chamber of Commerce and Confederation of West Bengal Traders Association (CWBT) towards further development of trade and investment between the two countries, especially in the backdrop of Bangladesh's agreement to allow transit and transshipment of Indian goods through its territory. To this end, at the initiative of IBCCI, there has been several exchange visits of business leaders from both the countries during the last several years.

It is encouraging that the joint efforts of IBCCI and the business

communities of India have started bearing fruits in recent times and have paved the way for increased exports of both traditional and non-traditional Bangladeshi items to the north-east and also mainland India. A good number of non-traditional items like - bricks, cement, stone chips, sheet glass, plastic products, dried fish, leather products, frozen and processed food, jute goods, agro products, light engineering products, ceramic products, furniture etc. are regularly being exported to the northeast and mainland India.

In recent times, there have been some forward looking steps taken by both the governments for further improvement multimodal connectivity encompassing transit and transshipment facilities to India as an aftermath of recent bilateral visits of Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh.

IBCCI feels very strongly that the relations between the two countries are headed for better tomorrow, and both have entered into a dynamic phase of mutual cooperation, which has been triggered off by the able and dynamic leaderships of the Prime Ministers of our two countries.

More and more interactions between the governments and the business communities of the two countries would be beneficial for both and will help usher in a new era of mutual cooperation and understanding between the two. To this end removal of pin pricks on both the sides is extremely critical.

It is needless to say that stronger trade relations between the two countries can take the overall bilateral relations to greater heights thereby bringing in economic benefits for both. ■



Jahangir Bin Alam is the Secretary & CEO of India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka.



POWER & PETROLEUM: Energising Indo-Bangladesh Bilateral Ties

India, a trusted friend of Bangladesh, has played an important role in the power and energy sectors. At present, 1160 MW power is being imported by Bangladesh from India. Similarly, in the area of oil exploration an active collaboration and cooperation between the Indian exploration agency ONGC and the Bangladesh counterpart BAPEX (of Petrobangla) may create win-win situation for both the countries.

By Dr. Badrul Imam*

Bangladesh's power and energy sectors are at a cross road of major transition from an underdeveloped to a developed one in the face of a rapid industrial growth required for transforming the nation into a middle income country. Radical changes in the power skyline are visible, whereby the sleepy villages are being transformed into major power hubs to facilitate the achievement of targeted 24,000 megawatt (MW) generation capacity by 2021 thus fulfilling the government's pledge to provide electricity to all by 2021.

Over the last 10 years, the power

generation capacity of Bangladesh has increased from 4,900 MW (in 2009) to 18,900 MW (in 2019). Also, the country is transforming from a natural gas based mono-energy status to one of a multiple energy mix with natural gas, LNG, coal, nuclear, oil, imported power and renewable, mainly solar energy. This will give the country a better future energy security, although it would make her highly dependent on imported energy (LNG, coal, gas, nuclear, oil and cross border power).

Bangladesh aspires to secure an affordable and sustainable energy source as per the UN Sustainable

Development Goal (SDG-7). This implies achieving economic means to sustain the import based energy supply. Alternatively local energy sources may be developed in earnest specially exploring the huge potential of natural gas resources in the offshore and exploiting the indigenous coal resource in the country thus offsetting the imported energy requirement.

India has been a trusted friend of Bangladesh and shows keen interest in the development issues of Bangladesh. It has played cooperative role in power and energy sectors since early years of the latter's stride

to development. In the power sector, the major role India is playing presently is in the form of cross-border power trading. At present, 1160 MW power is being imported by Bangladesh from India. This comprises 1000 MW from West Bengal through the western boarder point Bheramara-Bohrampur and 160 MW from Tripura though the eastern border point. Power import is expected to increase from Tripura point to 500 MW. Additional power import has been planned from 1600 MW coal power plant being built in Jharkhand, India. Also a regional power grid from Assam through Bangladesh to Bhutan and Nepal has also been in the planning stage to facilitate power trade.

Power import prospects from Nepal and Bhutan, both having very high hydropower potential, (potential of Nepal 42,000 MW and Bhutan 24,000 MW) have for long time attracted the attention of neighbouring countries. At present, both the countries have very little hydropower generation with Nepal generating only 2% of the potential and Bhutan only 6% of the potential.

India has invested in hydropower development in Nepal and Bhutan and engaged in power import for several years. Bangladesh has shown keen interest in importing power from both Nepal and Bhutan. Previously there was one problem for Bangladesh in initiating power import from Bhutan or Nepal through Indian territory/corridor. That is, according to Indian power import/export guideline, power import through Indian corridor had to be done through Indian agencies thus barring power trade bilaterally between Bangladesh and Nepal or Bangladesh and Bhutan. Last year India has revised the cross-border power trading regulation, thus easing Bangladesh import electricity from Nepal and Bhutan.

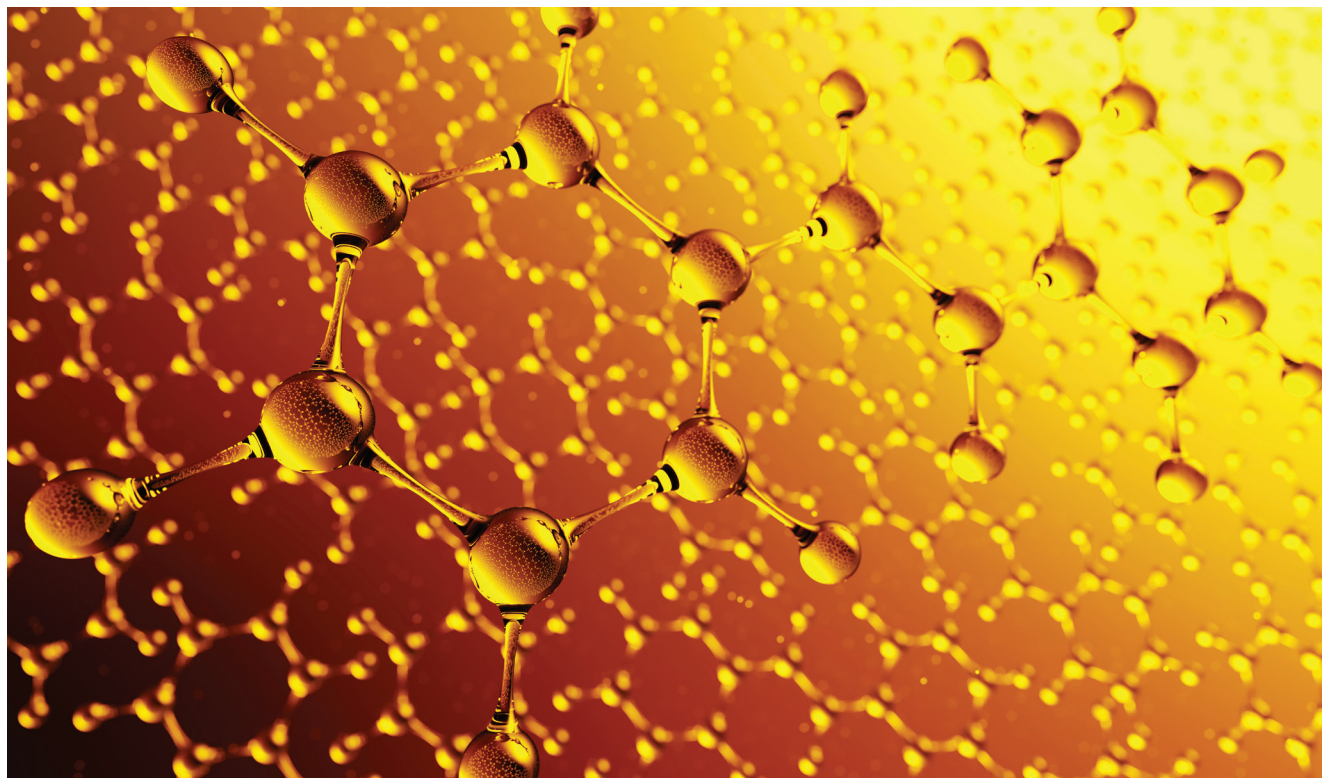
According to the revised guideline two separate states can purchase electricity from each other in which India will participate in or approve by way of tripartite agreements. Thus it will now be possible to directly import power from Nepal and Bhutan. Bangladesh, India and Bhutan have been negotiating to sign a joint venture agreement on 1125MW Kuri-1 hydropower project in Bhutan.

Bangladesh government has a plan to invest \$1 billion in the hydroelectricity project in Bhutan. Bangladesh has also signed MOU for power import trade with Nepal. Bangladesh projects that the power import from neighboring countries will increase from 1160 MW at present to about 5000 MW in 2030 and to about 9000 MW in 2041. Bangladesh, India, Bhutan and Nepal are expected to come under regional grid connection and the expected growth of cross border power trade between these countries will certainly bring mutual benefits.

India's participation in power projects in Bangladesh also includes constructing coal fired 1230 MW power plant at Rampal. The supply of diesel fuel from Indian refinery to Bangladesh, supply of LNG and building LNG based power plant are among other collaborations Indian entities have been planning and implementing in Bangladesh.

Natural gas resource has been the most important energy source supporting the economic drive for a long time in Bangladesh. The gas production over the last ten years has





increased from 1750 million cubic feet per day (mmcf/d) in 2009 to about 2850 mmcf/d in 2019. However the depletion of the known reserves will not allow the gas production growth to continue further. This has prompted the government to supplement the natural gas supply with imported LNG. This is a logical immediate measure required to keep the economy running, although the wisdom of an expensive LNG to have major share in the energy mix for long term future has been questioned by energy economist. Exploration of “yet to find” gas resource to add to the known reserve is suggestively a more viable alternative for the above.

Petroleum explorations in Bangladesh since 1950s have proved Bangladesh a natural gas rich province. Geoscientists believe that Bangladesh gas resource potentials are far greater than the presently known reserves and a large volume of “yet to discover” natural gas lie underground especially in the offshore Bay of Bengal. Historically hydrocarbon exploration in

Bangladesh has been slow and insufficient. In the land area, Bangladesh and the adjacent Indian state of Tripura share similar geological prospect for gas, as both are part of the Bengal Basin. While petroleum exploration in Bangladesh has remained immature, exploration in Tripura has achieved a higher degree of maturity. For comparison, Tripura with an area of about 10,000 sq km has drilled 140 exploration wells, while Bangladesh with a land area of 144,000 has drilled 80 exploration wells.

Exploration capabilities and expertise in India have, therefore, grown better than that of Bangladesh. An active collaboration and cooperation in exploration between the Indian exploration agency ONGC and the Bangladesh counterpart BAPEX (of Petrobangla) may create win-win situation for both. Petrobangla may include Indian exploration geoscientists in its external technical advisory body in the same way the German and the British exploration geoscientists used

to be included in the technical advisory body during 1980s and 1990s.

Looking at the offshore, the Bay of Bengal is shared by Bangladesh in the middle, India to the west and Myanmar to the east. The Bangladesh offshore has two adjacent petroliferous Basin in the Indian offshore part, i.e., Krishna Godavari basin off Andhra Pradesh and Mahanadi basin off Orissa, both of which are rich in hydrocarbon oil and natural gas. There is a good scope of government sponsored collaboration between Bangladesh and India through petroleum exploration agencies in the field of offshore exploration. State to state initiative for creating a bridge for petroleum exploration issues will bring benefit to both the countries. ■



***Dr. Badrul Imam** is a Supernumerary Professor in Department of Geology, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. His current areas of studies include petroleum geology; energy resources – oil, natural gas, coal, renewable energy; energy potentials of Bangladesh, India and Myanmar; energy crisis and solutions.

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Bangladesh would supply bulk LPG to Tripura by road, a first of its kind initiative. This would create additional trade and employment opportunities for Bangladesh and ease the availability of cooking gas in North East India.

Marketing of SERVO Lubricants:

IndianOil commenced marketing of *Servo* Lubricants in Bangladesh in 2017 and has made considerable progress in the last two years. *Servo* Lubricants with its OEM approvals has facilitated export of 2-wheelers from Bangladesh to neighbouring countries like Nepal & Sri Lanka. Associated capabilities for Technical Services and R&D support is helping industrial growth of Bangladesh.

NANOCUT LPG for Industries:

Marketing of additized LPG under the name NANOCUT would help the ship breaking and metal cutting industry in Bangladesh offering an alternative to conventional metal cutting fuel with higher thermal efficiency and better finish. NANOCUT trials in these industries have been completed.

Petrochemicals Marketing:

Bangladesh is a potential market for supply of petrochemicals from India. Trial supply of petrochemicals has been carried out in 2018 from Panipat Refinery. Regular supply of Polypropylene envisaged from Paradip Refinery would ease the supply of petrochemicals to Bangladesh with better economics.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Bangladesh Makes Impressive Progress in Partnership with UNDP



UNDP has been closely engaged with the Planning Commission of Bangladesh to strengthen alignment with the 7th Five Year National Development Plan. 14 goals (82%) are thematically fully aligned, while three goals (Goal 14, Goal 16 and Goal 17) of the SDGs (18%) and remaining are partially aligned

By Sudipto Mukerjee*

Bangladesh is one of the promising countries towards attaining SDGs on action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. As part of the UN Development System, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has put in place four dedicated streams of work to support Bangladesh in their efforts to coordination, localisation, design policy, plans and programmes for the sustainable future, access and generate finance, source and analyse data, and drive innovation and learning

– supporting in integrating 17 SDGs. These are important building blocks to guide strategies to achieve the SDGs. UNDP is proud partner of the General Economics Division of the Planning Commission to run the Secretariat for the Committee to coordinate implementation at the policy level along with monitoring and reporting SDGs status. This is in continuation of the previous UNDP, Government of Bangladesh partnership on the Millennium Development Goals in which Bangladesh's performance was praiseworthy.

Under the present partnership, UNDP has been closely engaged with the Planning Commission to strengthen alignment with the 7th Five Year National Development Plan - 14 goals (82%) are thematically fully aligned 3 goals (Goal 14, Goal 16 and Goal 17) of the SDGs (18%) and remaining are partially aligned. Thus, achievement of Plan objectives and targets will contribute towards achievement of SDGs. Bangladesh is moving steadfastly towards ensuring access of 100 per cent households to electricity well ahead of the target of (SDG 7) time

in 2025; it reached 85.3 per cent in 2017 (91% in 2018 December).

Compared to other neighbouring countries of South Asia, the improvement in sanitation and reduction in open defecation is impressive. Currently 87% of population has access to safe water sources (Target 6.1) and 61% population has access to safe sanitation. Access to improved sanitation improved by 26% while open defecation has reduced by 33%. It is also noteworthy that the average annual growth rate of GDP per employed person has already reached the 2020 target in FY2017.

Progress on expanding coverage of social protection and proportion of government expenditure on services (health, education and social protection) as share of total government expenditure are also on track. According to Global Gender Gap Index of 2017, of the seven countries from South Asia, Bangladesh has emerged as the top performer by reducing its overall gender gap to about 72% with a global ranking of 47.

Progress on reducing stunting which stood at 36.1 per cent in 2014 is virtually on track at the current rate of reduction (SDG 2: end hunger). Similarly, progress on reducing wasting which stood at 14.3 per cent is also on track. Agriculture Orientation Index with a value exceeding 0.5 compares

favorably with those of India (0.4), Sri Lanka (0.4) and Nepal (0.2).

Bangladesh has acquired credible capacity in disaster management. This is widely recognized by the world community. In facing the climate change impact, the country has made solid progress. A number of climate change related programmes, strategies, plans and actions have been formulated and mitigation measures have been operationalized.

The progress on reducing extreme poverty measured by \$1.90 a day or by national poverty line (LPL) is on track (SDG 1: end poverty). Similarly, progress on expanding coverage of social protection and proportion of government expenditure on services (health, education and social protection) as share of total government expenditure are also on track.

Healthy lives and Well-being (SDG 3) can be evident from the child related indicators, namely, under 5 mortality rate (U5MR) (31 per thousand live births) and neo natal mortality rate (NMR) (17 per thousand live births) have already reached their 2020 milestone targets ahead of time. Some of the women related targets such as number of medically-trained care providers during child birth, proportion of currently married women who use modern contraceptive method (59.2%)

are very close to reaching their targets in 2020. The proportion of female members in the Parliament at 20.3 percent (including with reservations) in 2019 is low and needs to be significantly improved. While, gender wage gap in Bangladesh is the lowest in the globe, as it came down to 2.2% in 2018 against the world average of 21.2%, overall female participation in the formal labour force remains low at 36% compared with 87% for male.

The share of manufacturing value added in GDP has been steadily increasing and has already exceeded 2020 milestone in FY2017. The proportion of population covered by mobile network has reached close to 100 per cent in case of 2G technology. In case of 3G technology the 2020 milestone has already been achieved in 2017. Bangladesh has got access to 4G technology.

Employment and quality education are the biggest challenges for Bangladesh in attaining the SDGs. It is also important to give emphasis on challenges like improving skill levels, preventing violence against women, and mitigating economic impacts of natural disasters. It is also important to give proper attention in favour of greater tolerance by way of human rights, and zero tolerance in the face of corruption. Finally, as the country continues with impressive economic growth and poverty reduction, creative policies to rein in the growing inequality are urgently required to maintain peace alongside prosperity. All of these areas will remain in focus of the UN's development cooperation in Bangladesh, bolstered by the determination of both partners to ensure an equally impressive achievement of the SDGs by 2030. ■



***Sudipto Mukerjee** is an Architect & Townplanner with nearly 25 years of international development experience. He has previously worked for the Government of India, and the UK Department for International Development. He is presently working as UNDP Resident Representative in Bangladesh.



UN Women works with private and public institutions to ensure that prevention measures on violence against women are properly adopted and monitored.

BANGLADESHI WOMEN BREAK THE GLASS CEILING

Bangladesh has broken the glass ceiling in many aspects and has become a role model to ensure women's empowerment and participation, and has created a mark of its own in terms of progress made in the sectors of entrepreneurship, education and health of women, in comparison to yester years.

By Syeda Samara Mortada*

In a report by Financial Express, a Bangladeshi national newspaper, during the period of 1996-2017, female labour force participation in Bangladesh increased from 15.8 to 36.3 percent. Bangladesh has secured the 47th position among 144 countries in 2018 in the Global Gender Gap Index and is at the top amongst all South-Asian countries.

The index, prepared by the World Economic Forum, measures education, economic participation,

health, and political empowerment in order to define a country's gender parity. Acknowledging the feat attained by Bangladesh, Political Scientist Dr Rounaq Jahan said: "Bangladesh has made consistent policy and programme interventions from the 1970s onwards to improve women's condition and reduce gender inequality".

In the primary and secondary education category, Bangladesh has topped the Gender Gap Index.

Participation of girls in primary schools has increased and reached near parity as their overall enrollment rose from 57% in 2008 to 95.4% in 2017, and to continue the efforts to this end, the government has extended its stipend programme for female students, and undertaken initiatives to make school facilities women-friendly.

Maternal mortality ratio has also decreased from 242 in 2010 to 176 in 2016 with an average annual

reduction of 4.7 percent. Over 80 percent service takers in over 16,000 community clinics nationwide, a signature project of the Prime Minister, are women and children. Additionally, the government has set up 13,000 maternity centres, 30,000 satellite clinics for child and maternal healthcare and 150,000 women are receiving healthcare support under the Maternal Health Voucher Scheme, among other more general healthcare.

Bangladesh has broken the glass ceiling in many aspects and has become a role model to ensure women's empowerment and participation, and has created a mark of its own in terms of progress made in the sectors of entrepreneurship, education and health of women, in comparison to yester years.

From sports, to politics, we have female leaders who have created a space like never before. Staring from Salma Khatun, the captain of the Bangladesh women's cricket team, to mountaineer Wasfia Nasreen, the first Bangladeshi to complete the seven summits, to Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, the current and the first

female Speaker of the Bangladeshi Parliament, there are many names to boast.

However, this was not an easy journey for most of these women given the patriarchal mindset and traditions that each of them had to break in their own ways, which is one of the key works that UN Women partakes in. But none of this would have been possible without the foresight of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, a strong advocate of gender rights.

From the 2009-10 fiscal year, the Government introduced the gender budget, now a part of 43 ministries and divisions, and every year the allocation has steadily been increasing. UN Women is currently supporting the Government further improve the system by strengthening monitoring of how this gender budget allocation is being spent. The government also has allocated Tk100 crore for the Women Entrepreneurship Fund and Tk 25 crore for Women Development Special Fund in 2019. To unlock public resources to support women's entrepreneurship and

employment, UN Women has been working with local governments in various districts with training on gender responsive planning and budgeting.

Currently over four million women are working in the Ready-made Garment (RMG) sector, the country's main foreign currency earner. UN Women has been working with several factories to provide female garment workers with soft skills training such as negotiation, communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and leadership, which helps advance in their careers. Factory management have also been trained on sexual harassment in the workplace.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's aspiration to work on gender equality can be found in her statement made at the Commonwealth Women's Forum in London in April 2018, where she stated: "We want to build a future where world peace and women empowerment remain the cornerstone to create a society free from poverty, discrimination and conflict."

UN Women is committed to supporting Bangladesh continue its journey towards gender equality and achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through supporting further development and implementation of policies and laws that end violence against women, promote equal rights of women in the family and elsewhere, and to maximize women's contribution to a peaceful and prosperous Bangladesh. ■



UN Women works to remove structural impediments that prevent women from entering the labour market, and unlocks domestic capital for women's entrepreneurship.



***Syeda Samara Mortada** is a Communications Analyst at UN Women, also known as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. She completed a master's degree in women's studies from University of York, UK, and a bachelor's degree in English from East, West University, Dhaka.



BTMA

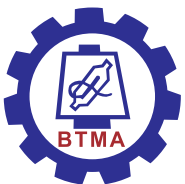
leads the nation

for a

better future

BTMA plays a pioneering role in shaping the national economy. Contributes significantly to the GDP, facilitates Government in its poverty alleviation programme and generates employment for the urban & rural populace.

The textile industry with its state-of-the-art technology, diversified yarn & fabric based and global market outreach builds future of the nation on its road to prosperity. The Primary Textile Sector (PTS) not only supports the domestic market but also supports export-oriented RMG to capture forward linkages.



BANGLADESH TEXTILE MILLS ASSOCIATION

বাংলাদেশ টেক্সটাইল মিলস্ এসোসিয়েশন

Unique Trade Centre (Level 8), 8, Panthapath, Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh
Phone : +88 02 9101508, 9130969, 8122563, Fax: +88 02 9125338
E-mail : btmasg@gmail.com, btma2@yahoo.com btma3@hotmail.com, Website: www.btmadhaka.com

a national organisation representing Yarn & Fabric Manufacturers and Textile Product Processors

PROMOTING REGIONAL PROSPERITY THROUGH SOUTH ASIA SUBREGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

SASEC's cooperation momentum has accelerated in recent years building from the significant progress of the past 18 years. The subregion's economic performance has been impressive and has been forecast to become the fastest growing subregion in Asia.

Contributed by The Asian Development Bank

The South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation Programme (SASEC) was officially launched in 2001 when four South Asian Quadrangle Countries—Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal—requested the Asian Development Bank to advance their economic cooperation initiative toward the goal of accelerated and sustainable growth. Sri Lanka and Maldives joined in 2014, and Myanmar joined in 2017. ADB is the programme's lead supporter and financier, and serves as its Secretariat.

Since its launch, the SASEC Program has adopted a pragmatic, project-based, results-oriented approach focusing on three priority areas: transport, trade facilitation, and energy. Substantial results in these areas demonstrate the strength of collaboration among the countries. Over the period 2001 to August 2019, 55 projects worth \$12.5 billion have been approved, of which ADB provided \$7.2 billion of financing.

In transport, critical multi-modal transport networks are being developed to enhance intraregional trade and investment in the subregion and, in turn, boost economic growth. Road, and rail links are being upgraded and port and airport infrastructure are being developed to



Under SASEC, road links are being upgraded while SASEC is working to improve energy access and security in the region by developing essential infrastructure.

match the needs of the region's growing economies. Priority transport projects are located in six important SASEC corridors that holistically address the subregion's modal development needs. Results in these areas have been substantial. In transport, almost 4,000 km of roads and 1,000 km of railways have been upgraded or improved and 19,000 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent unit) of port capacity have been added.

Trade facilitation initiatives are helping to speed up the time and reduce the costs of trading across borders throughout the subregion. They include modernizing customs administrations, streamlining cross-border trade regulations and procedures, policy and regulatory reforms, and improving transparency and access to information for traders. The importance of coordination in border infrastructure



planning and management has been recognized, which is also the focus of several national and regional initiatives.

Bangladesh is currently focusing on the implementation of the World Trade Organisation Trade Facilitation Agreement, and is planning to upgrade infrastructure connectivity and facilities at selected border crossing points. India plans to further develop Integrated Check Posts at select land borders with Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal with its own resources. This project will entail comprehensive development of infrastructure at the identified border points to cater to the needs of all cross border regulatory agencies and private traders. SASEC countries have also agreed to pilot a route-specific approach to identifying and resolving issues in logistics and trade facilitation along the Kolkata-Dhaka route involving three border-crossing pairs.

To realise industry-infrastructure synergies, a landmark framework Motor Vehicle Agreement between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal was signed in June 2015 to facilitate passenger, personal, and cargo vehicular traffic by reducing costly and time-consuming transshipment of people and goods at border crossings. Bangladesh, Nepal, and India have ratified the agreement, and may pilot its implementation. To further facilitate the transnational movement of vehicles, goods, and people, an electronic cargo tracking system (ECTS) has been piloted between India and Nepal with significant progress, resulting in time and cost savings and better controls.

The use of ECTS is being explored to facilitate secure transit of goods through Bangladesh, and enhanced logistic efficiency.

SASEC is working to improve energy access and security in the region by developing essential infrastructure, and promoting intra-SASEC power trade to reduce costs and import dependence. Under current bilateral arrangements, cheaper renewable power (mainly hydropower) from surplus countries like Bhutan and Nepal, are being exported to power deficit countries like Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka. For instance, Bangladesh now imports up to 500 megawatts (MW) from India under a 2013 project supported by a \$112 million ADB loan. The project has significantly improved power supply and cost, and reduced power interruptions in Bangladesh. This transfer capacity is being now further enhanced by another 500MW through an ADB financed additional intervention. Alongside bilateral arrangements, a regional power market is also being developed where power systems of all SASEC countries would be integrated through adequate cross-border transmission capacity, so that the countries can share their generation with each other.

SASEC's cooperation momentum has accelerated in recent years building from the significant progress of the past 18 years. The subregion's economic performance has been impressive and has been forecast to become the fastest growing subregion in Asia. Motivated by these factors, finance ministers of SASEC countries gathered in New Delhi in

2017 to launch the SASEC Vision—SASEC: Powering Asia in the 21st Century—marking heightened commitment and resolve to unleash the subregion's yet untapped potential for sustainable growth and increased prosperity. The strategy is to leverage the subregion's abundant natural resources to expand industrial potential and utilize the evolving connectivity infrastructure to link with gateways to regional and global markets, through regional cooperation.

Flagship initiatives in the SASEC Vision include, among others, subregional power trade for optimum utilization of energy resources, promoting SASEC as a tourist destination, and a pipeline corridor between Bangladesh and India for crude oil imports and product supply, which is currently being examined to include liquified natural gas.

Opportunities across manufacturing, agriculture, tourism, industry and energy sectors involving public and private investment identified in the SASEC Vision document could drive an estimated \$70 billion in annual additional subregional gross domestic product, create additional aggregate employment opportunities of about 20 million, and lift an estimated 14 million above the poverty line, by 2025.

The SASEC Operational Plan 2016-2025(OP) which lists ongoing and planned investment projects and other initiatives, has recently been updated to align more closely with the SASEC Vision and has prioritised projects based on project readiness and financing. The enhanced SASEC OP consisted of 111 proposed projects with a financing requirement of over \$59 billion. A total of 77 of the 111 projects with financing requirement of about \$46 billion have identified funding sources, resulting in a financing gap of about \$13 billion. ■

Perkin

OUR STRATEGIC END MARKETS



DETECTION



IMAGING



INFORMATICS



SERVICES



FOOD

- Food Quality
- Food Safety

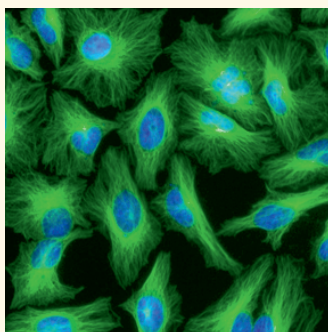


DIAGNOSTICS

- Reproductive Health
- Clinical Diagnostics
- Immunodiagnostics
- Applied Genomics

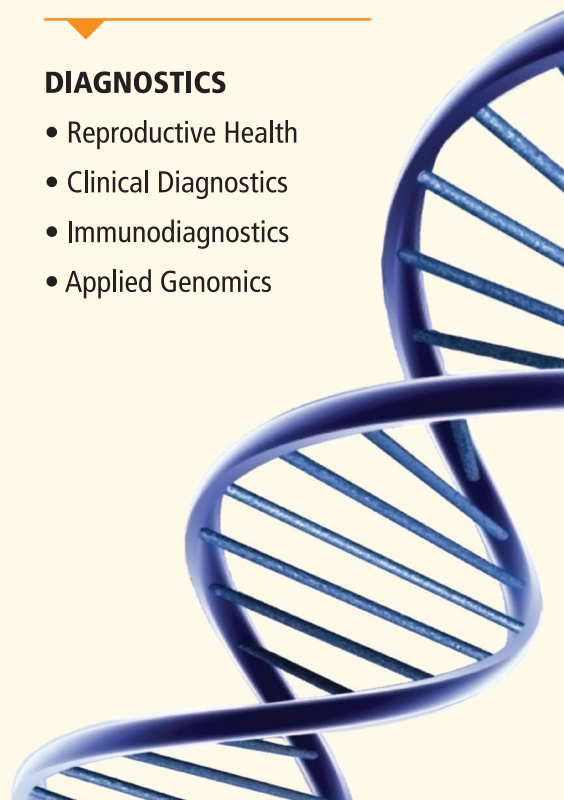
LIFE SCIENCES

- Research & Drug Discovery
 - Drug QA/QC
- Manufacturing



APPLIED MARKETS

- Industrial
- Environmental



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'LET THERE BE LEVEL-PLAYING FIELD TO UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF INDIA-BANGLADESH TRADE'

There have been impediments in the way of Bangladeshi investment in India and many non-tariff barriers created by India have hampered our export to India. This needs to be addressed by India so that the playing field gets even and Bangladeshi products get a chance to compete in the Indian market.



M. ANIS UD DOWLA
Chairman Advanced Chemical Industries
Ltd. Bangladesh

Q Under your leadership has diversified its business interests ranging from pharmaceuticals, consumer goods and agribusiness. Which new areas of growth and expansion is the company eyeing, say in the next 5 years?

A Our Retail Chain business is growing rapidly in line with the growth of our economy and the increase in the Per Capital Income of our people. This business has potential for high growth. We also have a sophisticated pharma business, which has completed and commissioned a state-of-the-art pharmaceutical plant which awaits USA FDA approval. We will be able to achieve significant level of export to

Europe and the USA when our plant gets FDA certification.

Finally, we are the largest integrator of agricultural value chain. We have business presence in almost all the segments of a farmer's need. Our businesses in agri sector includes soil analysis and enrichment services, agri machineries supply and servicing, development of varieties of seed, crop protection chemicals, shrimp cultivation, trading in agricultural produce and retailing them through our Super Store outlets. We also produce animal and fish feeds through a 50:50 Joint Venture partnership between ACI and Godrej Group of India since 2004.

Q Could you define the broad contours of Bangladesh-India trade and investment relationship? How has it evolved in the past one decade?

A Our trade with India is sizable. Indian goods have dominance in Bangladesh market. Indian investment in Bangladesh could be better.

On the other hand there has been impediments in the way of Bangladeshi investment in India and many non-tariff barriers created by India have hampered our export to India.

The development of our trade and investment has been one-sided. This

needs to be addressed by India so that the playing field gets even and Bangladeshi products get a chance to compete in the Indian market.

Q Bangladesh having registered an impressive economic growth of close to 7 percent under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the past decade, which are the key sectors of the Bangladesh economy where investments from India can be leveraged to make an impact?

A Bangladesh has a liberal foreign investment policy without any discrimination. When India gives Bangladesh equal opportunity, trade between the two countries will grow significantly. India has the opportunity to invest in the development of infrastructure of Bangladesh. Our Railway needs rehabilitation. India has an opportunity there. Also, power generation and road building are sectors which may attract Indian investment.

Q Bangladesh has been attracting considerable investments from China, Japan and the GCC countries recently. What are the key drivers enabling the surge in interest of investors from these countries?

A Bangladesh welcomes investment from all countries. Japan and China have relocated a lot of their sunset industries to



Bangladesh. Our labour wage rate is still very low. Also our energy supply has stabilized.

Q What are the expectations of Bangladesh Inc. from the upcoming visit of the Bangladesh PM to India?

A I think Bangladesh can look forward to a very fruitful visit of our Prime Minister to India because the two leaders have excellent personal equation and hopefully all outstanding issues shall get resolved

to the satisfaction of both the nations.

Q What are the key challenges that you think need to be addressed for trade and commerce between India and Bangladesh to flourish in order to realise its full potential?

A Let India withdraw all restriction on Investment from Bangladesh. All non-tariff barriers should also be removed.

Let there be a task force to address those issues of discrimination and recommend measures to remove

them so that business of each may flourish to the level of the capacity of its entrepreneurs in an environment of friendly competition.

ACI secure the ISO 9001 certification, the international standard for quality management system, in 1995, the first for a Bangladesh company. In 2000, ACI obtained the ISO 14001 certification, which is a global standard for environmental management, again a first for the country which reflects his environmental concern. ■

About ACI

ACI Enabling Bangladesh through Quality and Technology

Advanced Chemical Industries Limited (ACI) is a leading conglomerate in Bangladesh. ACI started its journey with a unique mission - to improve the quality of life of the people through responsible application of knowledge, skills and technology. ACI is committed to the pursuit of excellence by developing world-class products, innovative processes and empowered employees, to provide the highest level of satisfaction to its customers.

ACI has successfully infused ethical work culture, professionalism and advanced management processes in all its business operations. As a result, ACI has become one of the most respected business organizations in Bangladesh.

ACI has two publicly listed companies and 18 subsidiaries with diverse businesses, ranging from pharmaceuticals, consumer goods and agribusiness. ACI has three joint venture companies, namely Tetley ACI (Bangladesh) Limited, a Tata-ACI Joint Venture; Asian Consumer Care Private Limited, a Dabur-ACI Joint Venture and ACI Godrej Agrovet Private Limited, a Godrej-ACI Joint Venture.

ACI is a founding member of the Community of Global Growth Companies, which was set up by the World Economic Forum, the leading business networking organisation. ACI is one of the six companies in Bangladesh that adopted UN Global Compact Principles in September 2003.

ISLAMI BANK BANGLADESH LIMITED: Contributing Towards a Developed Bangladesh

Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited (IBBL), the first generation private commercial bank of the country, was established with the mission of introducing a welfare oriented banking. The bank started its operation on March 30, 1983 with 10% share of the Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh with considerable amount of foreign and local shares.

In the journey of 36 years, IBBL has materialized its commitment to all stakeholders as well as has become highly professional, most compliant and strongest bank in Bangladesh. IBBL is now serving 14 million clients through its 347 branches, 700 Agent Banking Outlets and banking booths with deposit portfolio of USD 10590 million and investment portfolio of USD 10355 million.

IBBL handles highest foreign trade of Bangladesh economy i.e. import USD 3038 million, export USD 1860 million and remittance USD 2310 million with market share 9%, 8% and 21% respectively up to August 2019. IBBL is highest remittance collecting bank in Bangladesh. IBBL has been conducting its banking business having consistency with national development policies prioritizing industrialization, trade and manufacturing industries as well as service sector.

IBBL is amongst world's top 1000 banks for last 8 consecutive years having the position 943rd in 2019 rated by UK based financial magazine 'The Banker' in consideration of strength, size, performance, soundness and return on assets. Md. Mahub ul Alam,

Managing Director and CEO of the bank was also achieved 'Best Emerging CEO in Islamic Banking-2018' award conferred by UK-based financial intelligence house Cambridge IF Analytica.

IBBL received a number of national and international awards and accolades in recognition to its skill development activities, business success and maintenance of professional standard. The bank achieved World's Best Islamic Bank Award 2019 conferred by The General Council for Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions (CIBAFI) and 'Strongest Bank in Bangladesh-2018' Award conferred by The Asian Banker.

Touching the success points, IBBL has become the largest commercial bank of the country, assuming galloping market shares in all service initiatives – especially in deposit, investment, export, import, remittance, industrialization, entrepreneur development and women empowerment. It happens to be the highest tax-paying institution in banking sector of the country.

IBBL is truly equal opportunity institution enjoying trust and confidence of all segments of the



PROFESSOR MD. NAZMUL HASSAN, PH.D
Chairman, Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited

people, irrespective of caste, creed, faith, class or professional denominations. It has been ceaselessly working to strengthen the economic base of the country ever since its inception. IBBL is the pioneer in the advancement of national economy through two major pillars – Foreign Remittance and Readymade Garments.

This bank financed more than 1000 garments, 5000 industrial enterprises, 25% Spinning Mills, 21% steel re-rolling and steel sector. It also financed in Power Plant sector which supply more than 500 MW power to the National Grid. IBBL's contribution in SME sector is 19%. More than 1500 agro-based industries and 500 Cold Storages have been built with IBBL investment for perishable agro-products.

IBBL is the highest investor in housing sector prioritizing the fundamental need providing accommodation to 2 million people providing investment in flats and



MD. MAHBUB UL ALAM
Managing Director & CEO
Islami Bank Bangladesh

houses. This Bank's share in the country's total housing finance is 13%. Market share of the bank in transport sector is around 18%. IBBL has developed a huge number of successful entrepreneurs who are now leading in the business and trade of the county. This bank is playing a pivotal role in contributing towards women's participation and empowerment.

IBBL is pioneer in harnessing hard-earned foreign exchanges from Bangladeshis working abroad. It is substantially contributing to national forex reserve through enhancing foreign remittance. This bank is serving its valued customers with a nationwide as well as globally connected customer-base with 24-hour online service through various tool and codes like contact Centers, API, EFT, SWIFT, FTP, SFT etc.

Bangladesh is marching toward developed country under the dynamic leadership of our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. To accelerate the national development, IBBL has been conducting its activities by employment generation in the countryside, developing agriculture and agro-based enterprises. IBBL introduced Rural Development Scheme (RDS) in 1995 enhancing the standard of rural life and livelihood to bring qualitative changes. Around 1.2 million families are beneficiaries of this scheme, out of which 92% are women.

Financial inclusion has been a built-in attribute of IBBL ever since its inception. This bank is working for sustainable development through a progressive approach of financial inclusion by bringing the unbanked population under banking services. It has been spreading its Agent Banking outlets and banking booths across the country prioritizing the rural Bangladesh.

IBBL has created infrastructure and expert workforce which is strong in modern information technology in accordance with customers' expectation and increasing technology-based services like internet banking, ePay, mobile banking, SMS Banking, e-commerce etc. for the valued customers.

IBBL is a socially responsible organization. Since its inception, it is working for the poor, disadvantaged and helpless people following the policy guidelines issued by the Central Bank. CSR programs of IBBL include education, healthcare, sports, disaster management, flood, natural disasters, cold affected people and humanitarian issues. IBBL's contribution to the National Relief Fund is remarkable.

The Islami Bank Foundation is operating 11 Hospitals and 9 Community Hospitals from where around 1 million patients are receiving

health service every year. The Bank has shown remarkable progress in terms of contributing to nation-building and fulfilling social responsibilities throughout its 36 years of journey and commits itself to strive harder and stronger towards building the long cherished Golden Bangladesh.

The bank was established to materialize the dream of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for economic emancipation; poverty and hunger free Bangladesh with sound economy, which is now a reality and model to the world.

IBBL HIGHLIGHTS

Authorized Capital: USD 238 million

Paid-up Capital: USD 192 million

Equity: USD 829 million

Shareholders: 38,309

Share of Capital:

Local: 56.17%

Foreign: 43.83%

Deposit: USD 10590 million

Investment: USD 10355 million

Foreign Exchange Business:

Import: USD 3038 million

Export: USD 1860 million

Remittance: USD 2310 million

Manpower: 17,000

Branches: 347

Agent Banking Outlets: 700

Client: 14 million ■



TEXTILE & APPARELS: Story of Promise, Potential and Pride

By Dr Rubana Huq*



In last 48 years the relationship between Bangladesh and India has grown in depth and dimension. Under the visionary leadership of Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the contemporary leadership of India, the last 10 years have marked the dawning of a new horizon in the area of growing trade and business, cultural exchange, cross border peace and harmony.

The recent growth in Bangladesh's export to India indicates a promising journey ahead. When it comes to trade, the apparel industry becomes predominant from Bangladesh perspective. Textile and apparel has a significant stance on our growing trade, which is mutually complementary. India is a great source of textile for Bangladesh as 30% of cotton and 60% of cotton yarn are imported from India under duty free treatment. India has unique capability

in vertical textile supply chain starting for ginning of cotton to finished fabrics. India is the second largest textile fibre producer in the world. It is the largest producer of cotton in the world and second largest producer of Manmade Fibre and Filament. India has world's second largest installed spindle capacity and highest installed weaving capacity. Since our priority is to diversify from cotton to non-cotton items, Bangladesh can be a good market for Indian MMF textiles. With the added capability in fashion and designing, both our countries have the opportunity to collaborate and create our own brand and retail globally.

Bangladesh's apparel export to India has already reached half a billion dollar mark in last fiscal which also testifies the growing need of quality apparel in India. While being economical, Bangladesh has significantly moved towards

sustainable and resilient manufacturing. In the past few years, we have fast transformed our manufacturing as responsible undertaking – in all respect. In our industry we now have 101 LEED Green Factories, certified by the United States Green Building Council. 25 of those are platinum rated. 500 more factories are in the pipeline for obtaining the LEED certification.

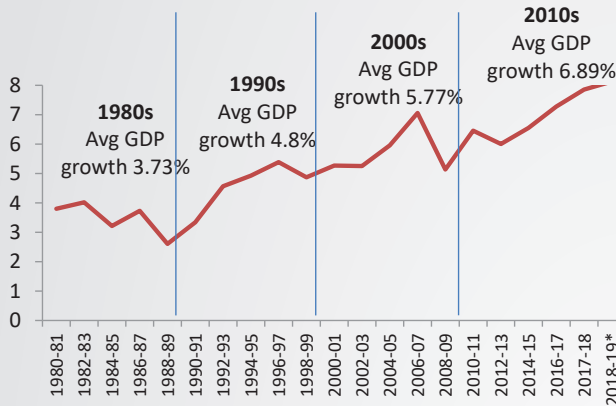
Since the opportunities are endless, both the countries need to celebrate the bondage and potential in order to complement each other while treading the grounds of global excellence in multiple fronts. Together we can soar to newer heights of prosperity and growth. ■

•Dr Rubana Huq, President
On behalf of Board BGMEA 2019-2021

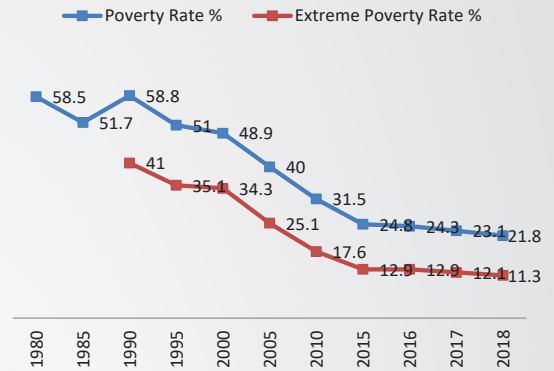
BANGLADESH

THE STORY OF A PHOENIX

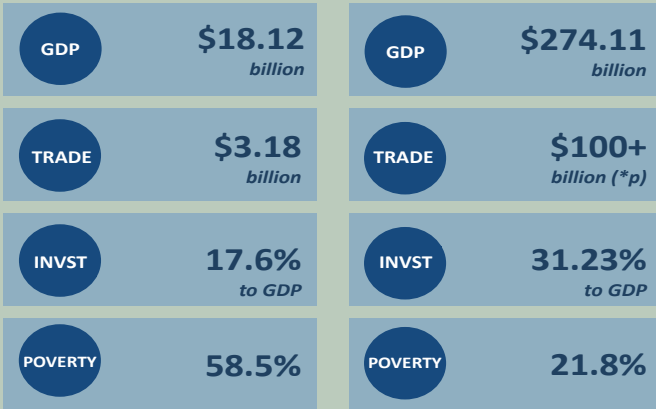
Growth in GDP



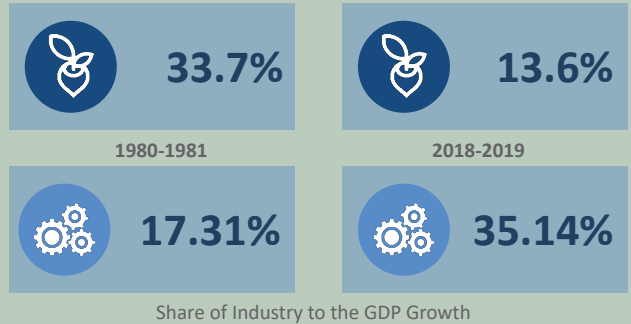
Poverty Headcount Rate (%)



IN ABOUT 40 YEARS



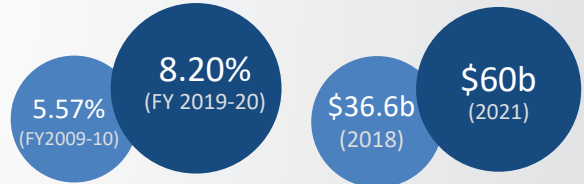
Share of Agriculture to the GDP Growth



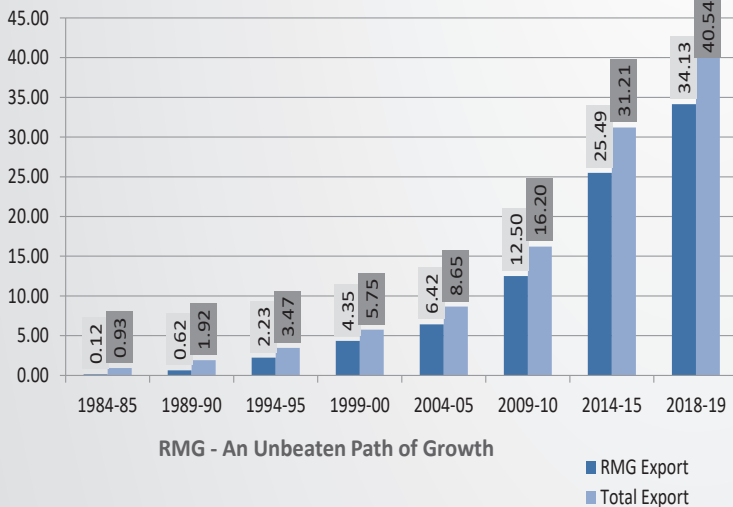
VISION FOR A DEVELOPED NATION

Forecast of GDP Growth

Forecast of export growth



RISE OF THE RMG INDUSTRY IN BANGLADESH



THE EXPORT ORIENTED RMG INDUSTRY AT A GLANCE



MADE IN BANGLADESH
WITH PRIDE



BANGLADESH GARMENT MANUFACTURERS AND EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION (BGMEA)

www.bgmea.com.bd

BANGLADESH BHAVAN – A Cultural Bridge Between India and Bangladesh

Bangladesh Bhavan at the campus of Visva Bharati University houses a centre for research on the Liberation War of Bangladesh apart from the history, culture and art of Bangladesh. The building, inaugurated jointly by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, symbolises India's deep ties with Bangladesh and combines tradition with modernity.

By Vivek Ratnakar, eGov Bureau



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated 'Bangladesh Bhavan' on 25th May, 2018, at the campus of Visva Bharati University, founded by Rabindranath Tagore in 1921 at Bolpur in Santiniketan, West Bengal. A symbol of cultural ties between Bangladesh and India, the aim of the Bangladesh

Bhavan is to strengthen Indo-Bangladesh ties in the field of language, culture, art, economy, history with emphasis on cultural exchange between the two countries. The centre serves as a platform for exchange of academicians, performers, students, and facilitates people to people exchange between the two countries with focus on

research in inter-cultural exchange.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister Modi said that India and Bangladesh are two nations, whose interests are linked to mutual cooperation and coordination among each other. He said that Visva Bharati University and the sacred land of Bengal have a history that has seen the freedom struggles of both India



and Bangladesh. He added that the Bangladesh Bhavan is a symbol of the shared heritage of the two countries.

"Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rehman is respected equally in both India and Bangladesh. Similarly, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi are respected in Bangladesh as much as in India," he added. In the same vein, he said that Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore belongs to Bangladesh, as much as to India.

He stressed that the shared resolve of India and Bangladesh, against cruelty and terrorism, will continue to inspire future generations through the Bangladesh Bhavan.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister said that Bangladesh never forgets India's major role in extending support and cooperation during Bangladesh's freedom struggle.

The building with a museum, a library and an auditorium reflects India's deep ties with Bangladesh and combines tradition with modernity. The Bhavan also houses a centre for research on the Liberation War of Bangladesh, apart from the history, culture and art of Bangladesh.

The museum has four elements -- History of Bangladesh, Liberation War of Bangladesh with special focus on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman, the Tagores and Bangladesh and modern Bangladesh. In the art gallery, there is a special permanent gallery on the Liberation War of Bangladesh and the role of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the creation of independent Bangladesh.

A special picture gallery on the theme "The Tagores and Bangladesh" includes the history of the interaction of the Tagore family with Bangladesh. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation of independent Bangladesh, shared Tagore's liberal and humanist view of life. His choice of "Amar sonar Bangla, ami tomay valobashi [My golden Bengal, I love you]" as the national anthem of Bangladesh reflects his profound love and respect for Kabiguru Tagore. Bangabandhu was equally inspired by the great poet, popularly known as the "rebel poet" or "bidrohi kabi", Kazi Nazrul Islam, who is also the national poet of Bangladesh.

Built by National Building Construction Corporation (India) Ltd, a Navratna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, the Rs 24.22-crore project has come up in 11,112 sq. mt. land area adjacent to the Indira Gandhi Centre at Santiniketan. Bangladesh Bhavan is a barrier-free building with 453 capacity

state-of-the-art auditorium equipped with the international standard audio system and two seminar halls each with a capacity of 175 persons separated by folding acoustic partition with video conference and video streaming facilities. Besides, there is a cafeteria to seat 108 persons, fire management system as per National Building Code, CCTV surveillance at strategic locations and passive infrastructure for Wi-Fi.

It has been built using green building compliant and eco-friendly materials like fly ash bricks, low VOC (volatile organic compounds) paints, LED (light emitting diode) luminaries, energy efficient VRF (variable refrigerant flow) air conditioning, rooftop solar installation, and rainwater recharge pits for groundwater recharge. The red and yellow two storey building has a glass roof so that the centrally airconditioned building can get direct sunlight from above.

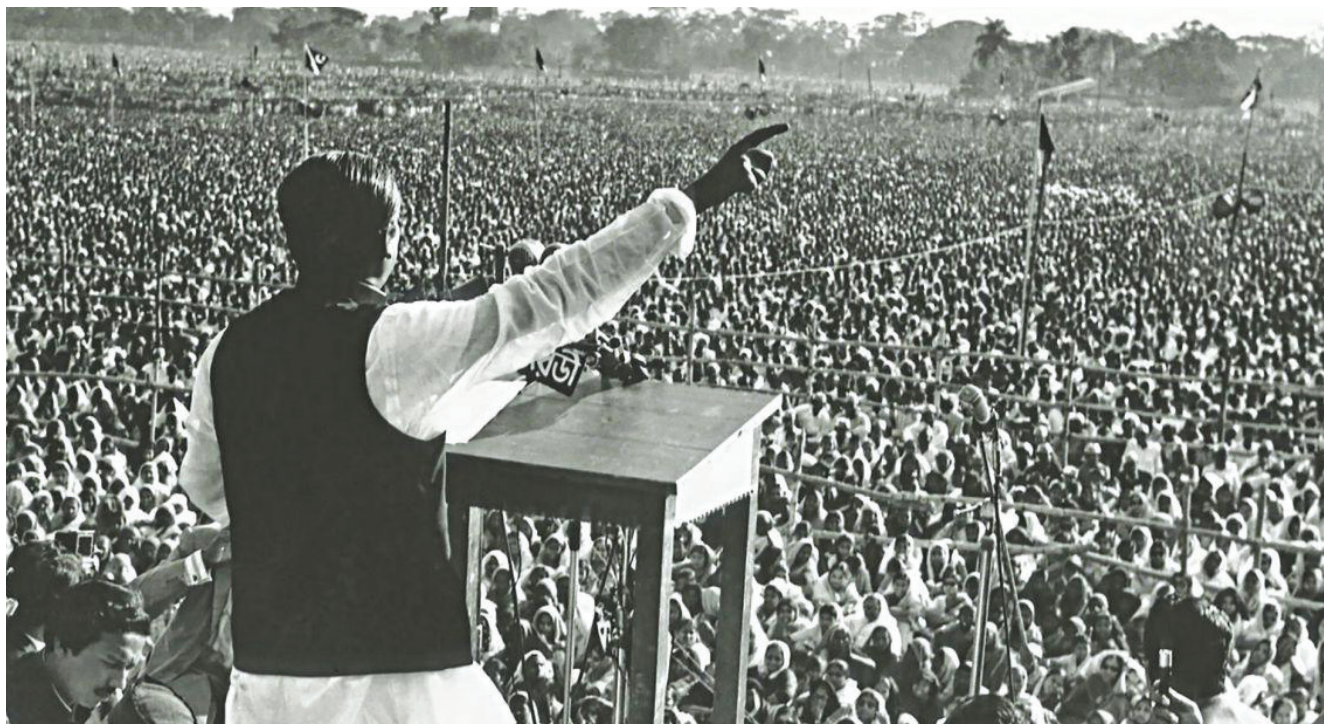
Scholarships are provided to under-graduate and post-graduate students from Bangladesh as part of the activities of Bangladesh Bhavan.

Given the best of relations between the two countries, Bangladesh Bhavan is indeed most befitting that both countries are now trying to nurture the age-old connection of culture between them. ■

BANGLA: The Pride of Bangladesh

Bangla—the language representing the rich linguistic heritage of Bengal—has come to be regarded as a rare force that has united millions of people from all walks of life to come together to uphold their linguistic identity and show the way to the mother language communities of the world how to preserve and revitalise their languages.

By Dr. Jinnat Imtiaz Ali*



Bangladesh is a country of rich linguistic diversity and Bangla is spoken by majority of the population. It is the only country in the world that was established based on the linguistic identity of its people. Bangla played a crucial role during the country's struggle for independence. The father of the nation, Bangabandhu (the Friend of Bengal) Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a true nationalist leader, always addressed the people in their mother tongue Bangla. On February 15, 1971, Bangabandhu declared that Bangla would be introduced in all governmental and judicial works, as well as different sectors of public life, whenever his Party would come to power. True to his words, the

Constitution of the Republic of Bangladesh was written in Bangla assigning it the highest status. The father of the nation also delivered his speech in Bangla in the General Assembly of the United Nations on 25th September 1974. Taking forward his legacy, his worthy daughter Sheikh Hasina, the Honourable Prime Minister of the country, has also been following the footsteps of her father.

Bangla is also the official language of Indian states of West Bengal, Tripura and Assam. A considerable number of speakers of this language live in different countries of the world.

Bangla belongs to the Eastern Branch of Indo-European Language Family and has its own alpha-syllabic

writing-system or orthography derived from the Brahmi script. It is written from left to write.

The historical development of Bangla has been classified under three different eras—Old Bangla (950-1350), Middle Bangla (1350-1800) and Modern Bangla (1800 to the present day). Charyapada, the mystical poems of Buddhism, represents the history of the Old Bangla Period.

The written language of Middle Bangla is basically narrative poetries. Srikrishnakirtan of Baru Chandi Das is a remarkable work of this era.

The 16th Century is also to be mentioned for Baishnabpadabali—the poems enriched with the combination of music and philosophy of

Baishnabism. It is famous for another reason, that is, some remarkable Muslim poets composed lyrics in this language during this period.

Literary trend of the 17th Century is different from that of the previous century. Different genres of literary works, called Romantic Pronaya Upakkhan (Tale of Love), were composed by Muslim poets in this era. Sati Mayana (Mayana, the devoted wife to her husband) by Daulat Kazi is the shining example of this kind of literary work carried out during this era.

The 18th Century in one sense is the continuation of aforesaid literary works.

The 19th Century is the age of Renaissance in Bangla language. This is also regarded as beginning of modernism in Bangla language and literature. The epoch radically changed all forms of expression of literary Bangla. This can be mentioned as the age of Renaissance. Some remarkable spirit of the Renaissance are return to the nature, revivalism and extreme emancipation of emotion and those were found first in the literary epic 'Meghonad Badh Kabbo' (1861) of Michael Madhusudan Dutta (1834-1873). He is also considered as the first poet of Bangla sonnet. Madhusudan introduced first blank verse Amitrakshar Chanda in Bangla literature. He also exhibited an extraordinary skill in writing farce plays such as Buro Shaliker Ghare Roan (1859) and Ekei Ki Bale Sobhota (1859). He also wrote poems of sorrows and afflictions for love as spoken by women named Birangona Kabba (1861).

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838-1898) is also a very remarkable literary personality of this century. He was the first successful novelist, essayist and editor of literary journals. The contents and forms of Bankim's writing inspired his contemporary creative personalities to develop themselves. That is why Bankim's contribution to Bangla language is very significant.

One of the prominent literary personalities of this period is Mir

Mosharraf Hossain (1847-1911). His career started as the reporter of two local journals Sangbad Prabhakar (1831) and Gram Barta Prokashika (1863). Gradually, he emerged as a distinguished literary personality. He wrote the epic novel Bishad Shindhu (1891) (An Ocean of Sorrow) portraying the tale of martyrdom of Hasan and Husain in Karbala. His other remarkable work is Jamidar Darpan (the Mirror of Landlords), a play that inspired the common and oppressed people to stand against the injustice of the landlords and the British colonial rule.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) is an exceptional creative personality in the recorded history of Bangla language and literature. He made exceptional contribution to all forms of expression in Bangla. He was a poet, playwright, dance composer, novelist, short storywriter, essayist and musician. He is the first Bangali poet who was awarded the Noble Prize for literature in 1913 for his book of poems Gitanjali, or Songs Offering to God. He was also endowed with high ideals and very strong social commitment. He influenced Bangla language and literature in his time to such an extent that it can still be found today.

A new trend was introduced in Bangla language and literature in the third decade of the last century, which is known as the Post-Rabindranath period. The poets and writers of this

phase were influenced by the World War I and the socialist revolution of Russia.

When India gained its Independence from British rule in 1947 and the Sub-Continent was divided into two separate countries of India and Pakistan, Bengal was again divided into two separate states of India and Pakistan—West Bengal and East Bengal (the present day Bangladesh). It is ironical that within just two years of the partition, the people of the eastern province of Pakistan, the Bangla speaking majority, faced a grudging attack on their language by the then Pakistani ruling class. Their ill motives and imperialistic attitude were exposed when they tried to impose Urdu as the state language of Pakistan.

It was a clear case of violation of the fundamental rights of the people and an act of linguistic imperialism. People from all walks of life, therefore, strongly reacted to resist such a move. Political leaders, activists, students of Dhaka University and different institutions in Dhaka city all came together to uphold their linguistic identity. The situation gradually worsened and reached the point of no return.

The Great Language Movement was started with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, among other political leaders, playing a vital role in strengthening this movement. On February 21, 1952, the world came to





witness an unprecedented event in the history of mankind when Salam, Rafique, Barkat and many unknown sons of Bangladesh embarrassed martyrdom while advancing in a procession to uphold the dignity of their mother language. The Great Language Movement of Bangladesh has since then acquired an iconic status among language movements world over. It successfully demonstrated that when people from all walks of life come together, bounded by their love for their mother tongue, they can achieve unthinkable.

The Language Movement of 1952 unleashed the creative spirit of Bangla writers across the country. There was hardly a Bangla poet to be found who did not pen down a poem or two on the Language Movement. Novelists, dramatists and story tellers tried their best to express their emotions in the art forms of their choice. The Language Movement proved to be an enriching experience for Bangla language in every respect.

Bangladesh has marked 21st February as a national holiday to pay respect to the martyrs who laid their lives for the love of Bangla on this very day. Every year, the honourable President and Prime Minister of the country and people from all walks of life, irrespective of their age and social status, gather at the Shahid Minar in Dhaka to pay their homage to the great sons of the soil and sing the following historic song:

***"My brothers' blood spattered 21
February
I forget the Twenty-first of
February?
Incarnadined by the love of my
brother?
The Twenty-first of February, built
by the tears
of a hundred mothers robbed of
their sons,
Can I ever forget it?"***

It is very rare to find a language community that has the experience of defending the dignity of their mother tongue like ours. Many of us have tried in their own ways to send this message across to the world community. Inspired by this spirit, Rafiqul Islam, a Bengali expatriate living in Canada, wrote on March 29, 1998, a letter on behalf of his organisation named 'Mother Language Lovers of the World' to Kofi Annan, the then Secretary General of the UN, requesting him to declare 21st February as the International Mother Language Day under the world body. He believed that it would inspire the mother language communities of the world to preserve and revitalise their languages.

However when Rafiqul Islam did not get any reply from the UN, he decided to contact Sheikh Hasina, the then Honourable Prime Minister of the Government of Bangladesh, so that a proposal to this effect can be submitted by Bangladesh as a member state of the UN. Realising the significance of Islam's aspiration, the Prime Minister

made all necessary arrangements to submit the proposal on behalf of Bangladesh. The proposal was tabled accordingly and it was passed unanimously. To mark this remarkable achievement, a meeting was arranged on December 7, 1999 at Palton Maidan (ground) where Sheikh Hasina declared that an institution named International Mother Language Institute (IMLI) would be established in Dhaka with a view to protecting and promoting the mother languages of the world. She laid the foundation of the institute in the presence of the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the newly built IMLI building on February 21, 2010. Meanwhile International Mother Language Institute Act (2010) was passed by the National Parliament of the Country, and according to this Act the Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Bangladesh is the Chief Patron of the Institute. In 2016 (January 12) IMLI got the status of UNESCO Category-2 Institute. Now the Institute has taken up different initiatives for preservation and promotion of mother languages of the world.

Human language is a unique mental and a biological phenomena. Language acquisition of a child begins very early when he or she is in the mother's womb. The child after his or her birth can understand the phoneme of the mother. It has now been proved by the psycholinguists and neurolinguists that there is no alternative way to start early learning other than in mother language. Bangla is our mother language. I have acquired this speech by birth and it greatly enhances my ability to represent aspects of the world, to think and to communicate with others. So, I am certainly proud of my language. ■



•Dr. Jinnat Imtiaz Ali is a former professor of University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. He has developed his career in teaching linguistics and research on phonetics and phonology. Presently he is the Director General of International Mother Language Institute, Dhaka.



BANGLADESH

A Treasure Trove of Biodiversity

Trans-boundary cooperation in species and habitat protection is among transformative action which is already happening between Bangladesh and India. One good example of the two countries' commitment to protect biodiversity is the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to conserve the Sundarbans mangrove. The MoU, among other things, puts emphasis on protecting one of the most important species of the Sundarbans—the Royal Bengal Tiger.

By Raquibul Amin*

Bangladesh, despite its small landmass and huge population, is endowed with a rich biodiversity. Due to its geographic location, flora and fauna of Indian sub-continent and South-east Asia overlap in Bangladesh as a transitional zone. The fertile delta of the three mighty rivers—the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna and their year-round flow combined with monsoon and tropical climate keep the country lush green for most part of the year. All these factors make Bangladesh's biodiversity very unique. Table 1 provides a list of faunal diversity of Bangladesh in comparison with neighbouring India—a mega-

biodiverse country, and the world. When we consider the total known species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, freshwater fishes, crustaceans and butterflies, Bangladesh supports 1.7% of the world species. On the other hand, if we compare the species of the two neighbours, Bangladesh has nearly about one-third of Indian fauna belonging to the seven different groups (Table 1), even though the land area of Bangladesh is less than 5% compared to the total area of India. The multiple ecosystems found in the forests, wetlands, hills, rivers and coast of Bangladesh contribute to the diversity

of species. In the north-east, the dominant ecosystems are haor wetlands and swamp forest, and mix-evergreen forest. Deciduous forests with Sal (*Shorea robusta*) as the dominant species are present in the centre, north and northwestern part of the country. The hills in the south-east have the mixed-evergreen forest. The Sundarbans—the jewel in the crown—is a treasure house of biodiversity, and the only habitat of famous Bengal tiger. The marine waters of Bangladesh have 442 species of fish and 36 species of marine shrimps making it an important source of livelihood for a large number of coastal population. The coastal and

Table 1: Major wildlife species of Bangladesh covered by compared to the World and neighbouring India (IUCN 2015)

	Mammals	Birds	Reptiles	Amphibians	Freshwater Fishes	Sub-total vertebrates	Crustaceans	Butterflies	World Totals	% of the World	% of India
No of species in World	5515	10,424	10,272	7448	33,200	156,859	47,000	18,000**	131,859	-	-
No of species in India	350	1224	408	197	2546	4725	2150*	1,501**	8376	6.35	-
No of species reported from Bangladesh	133***	711**	173**	64**	653	1734	185	323	2242	1.70	26.77
No of species in Bangladesh as Assessed by the 2015 Red listing	138	566	167	49	253	1163	141	305	1619	1.22	19.21

Source: Information for Table 1 has been taken from- *Indian crustaceans-[http://nopr.niscair.res.in/bitstream/123456789/1544/1/IJMS%2034\(1\)%2057-75.pdf](http://nopr.niscair.res.in/bitstream/123456789/1544/1/IJMS%2034(1)%2057-75.pdf); **Kehimkar 2008 and *** Khan (2015) that does not included extinct species. Remaining figures are from the IUCN Red List (2015).

marine waters also support seven species of dolphins. The iconic Gangetic and Irrawaddy dolphins are mostly found in the in rivers and coastal water.

Biodiversity in Bangladesh, however, like rest of the world is under numerous threats. Our Earth is going through the Anthropocene epoch where human activities are overwhelmingly altering atmospheric, geological, hydrological and biospheric systems. About a million animal and plant species of are now faced with extinction crisis globally. In IUCN's latest Red List of Bangladesh, almost 25% out of 1,619 species assessed was found to be threatened. It is unfortunate that charismatic species like the Bengal Tiger, Asian Elephant, Gharial and White-rumped Vulture have all found their way into the threatened category. The continued loss of biodiversity will undermine the achievement of most of the UN Sustainable Development goals globally and also in Bangladesh.

Amidst this grim picture, however, there is optimism. We need "transformative changes" to restore and protect our nature. Transboundary cooperation in species and habitat protection is one such transformative actions which is already happening between Bangladesh and India. We have common habitats like our "third neighbor"- the Bay of Bengal, and the Sundarbans. We share the common threats such as climate change and biodiversity loss, and therefore we

need joint solutions to deal with these challenges. One good example of the two countries' commitment to protect biodiversity is the signing of a MoU to conserve the Sundarbans mangrove. The MoU, among other things, also puts emphasis on protecting the flagship species of the Sundarbans – the Bengal Tiger.

Both Bangladesh and India are state members of IUCN. Through its neutral convening capacity, and having offices in both Dhaka and New Delhi, IUCN has been facilitating transboundary cooperation in species conservation. IUCN facilitated to bring the governments of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan to adopt a Regional Declaration on the Conservation of South Asia's Critically Endangered Vulture Species. The four governments agreed to take measures to remove

toxic drugs, like diclofenac, identified as the single most important cause for the catastrophic decline of vulture populations across South Asia. The governments also agreed to create transboundary Vulture Safe Zones to conserve vulture populations in the wild. The Vulture safe Zone in Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary in the northeastern corner of Bangladesh shares boundaries with the Indian state of Tripura. It provides nesting ground for the majority of Bangladesh's last resident vulture species – White-rumped Vultures- a globally Critically Endangered species. A South Asia Regional Steering Committee (RSC) for Vulture Conservation has been established to coordinate and guide these measures. India hosted the first two RSCs, while Bangladesh held the last two..



A similar scenario for conservation of the Asian Elephant, considered globally Endangered, also exists. IUCN estimates the elephant population in Bangladesh is around 268. Elephants move from one habitat to another in search for food, water and shelter. To do so, they use specific corridors, that connect one patch of habitat to the next. Surveys done by IUCN identified at least two such corridors – one in Mymensingh Division and one in Sylhet – where elephants move between Bangladesh and India. With rising population on both sides, there has been increase in human-elephant conflicts as resources for elephant dwindle. Two countries are working work together for safe migration of elephants.

The Bay of Bengal produces yet another unexplored opportunity for the countries to collaborate on biodiversity issues. Bangladesh has declared its second Marine Protected Area (MPA) this year, and while India has an impressive list of MPAs, the two countries have not yet fully looked into the possibilities of any collaborative conservation initiatives. Considering the productivity of the Bay of Bengal, the threatened species it shelters and, the biodiversity and economic aspects, it is high time that both countries initiate the conservation work under a common "Blue Economy" vision.

The hilsa is possibly the most iconic



species in Bangladesh and India linking the trans-boundary rivers of the two countries to the life and culture of two countries. Through the Ecosystem for Life (2010-2014), a Bangladesh-India transboundary initiative, IUCN has facilitated the transfer of knowledge on successful hilsa conservation practices in Bangladesh to West Bengal. As a result of this similar hilsa management practices were adopted in West Bengal. In the Barak-Meghna basin, IUCN through its BRIDGE GBM initiative, is working with different stakeholders, including governments, to create an enabling environment for transboundary

cooperation as a strategy to develop joint solutions for addressing common basin-level challenges such as food security, climate change adaptation and loss and degradation of biodiversity. Considering the common threats to biodiversity, transboundary efforts are paramount in saving the last of natural places and charismatic species. Nature based solution (NBS) like establishing protected areas that span boundaries and forest landscape restoration, sharing knowledge learned from collective experiences, and having the will to cooperate, both countries can come together to save the irreplaceable biodiversity. There is hope still as both countries have already shown the determination and commitment, and will work for development and implementation of post-2020 framework can deliver the 2050 Vision for biodiversity, "Living in harmony with nature". ■



Mr Raquibul Amin is the Country Representative of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Bangladesh. He helps building bridges between governmental & non-governmental sectors and

between national, regional, trans-boundary and global institutions and promote IUCN as neutral convening platform.



BANGLADESH: The Land of Exquisite Beauty & Heritage

Located within the deltaic landmass of three major rivers--Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna--Bangladesh boasts of a naturally, ecologically, culturally and religiously rich and diverse variety of destinations that are treasures of visual treat

By Dr. Bhubon Chandra Biswas*

Bangladesh is a country of harmony and heritage endowed with a rare gift of nature. It is the rainbow land where multi-hued cultures have blossomed from times immemorial. Blessed with an unparalleled biodiversity replete with exotic flora and fauna, lush green landscape, endless golden beaches, and scenic hills, it is simply impossible not to fall in love with Bangladesh.

A range of fantastic architecture depicted through historical monuments and ruins reflecting Bangladesh's rich past, delicious food and hospitable people add value to the tourism potential of the country.

After gaining Independence in 1971, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) was established in 1972 as the national tourism organisation under the Ministry of Civil Aviation and

Tourism to start the work on developing tourism in the country. As the pioneer government organisation, BPC started to develop tourism attractions, providing support services to tourists, roping in private stakeholders and educating people in the industry along with taking initiatives in branding and promotional activities to promote tourism in the country.

Globally, tourism emerged as an

industry in the early 19th Century and became one of the major contributors in international commerce, emerging at the same time one of the main sources of income for many developing countries.

Bangladesh realised the potential of tourism in the development of the country in the late 90s. The Government of Bangladesh declared "tourism" as one of the major thrust sectors in its Industrial Policy of 2010 and promulgated the Tourism Policy-2010 and enacted the Parjatan Board Act-2010. Within the legal framework, the government established Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) as the designated National Tourism Organization (NTO) with a mandate to develop tourism product and promote tourism of the country with a view to shaping Bangladesh as a tourist hub in south Asia. Within just five years of its establishment, BTB boosted Bangladesh's image in the world tourism community by dint of its innovative activities earning for itself recognition for its immense

contribution in the development of tourism in the region. BTB is duly contributing to develop human resource by arranging and providing training, seminar, workshop, round-table conferences, familiarisation tours and so on.

BTB believes that sustainable tourism can improve livelihood, education levels and quality of life for local people. It can refocus energy and action towards conservation, and help to preserve cultural traditions and heritage in a country like Bangladesh. Tourism can bring a real sense of pride and identity to communities.

Sustainable development is actually a constitutional obligation in Bangladesh. According to Article 18 A: Protection and Improvement of Environment and Biodiversity, "The state shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to preserve and safeguard the natural resources, biodiversity, wetlands, forest and wildlife for the present and future citizens".

In Bangladesh, it is encouraging to see private sector's participation and

development of partnership between the public and private sectors. Under the overall framework of strengthening national capabilities and promoting regional cooperation in sustainable tourism development, it is imperative to outline the plan of action at the national level and supporting action at the regional level on identified thematic areas;

- (a) human resources development in the tourism sector;
- (b) the economic impact of tourism;
- (c) environmental management of tourism;
- (d) infrastructure development and investment for the tourism sector;
- (e) facilitation of travel; and
- (f) regional and sub-regional cooperation in tourism development.

The country has a lot of potentials to attract tourists in Bangladesh. Cox's Bazar, the longest uninterrupted sandy sea beach; the Sundarbans, the world largest mangrove forests; and the large Ganges delta is a boon for the country. Besides these, Bangladesh is also the home of Royal Bengal Tigers.



Ratargul Swamp Forest, Gowainghat, Sylhet

Having lots of natural beauties, biodiversity, heritage and cultural diversification and achievement in international arena; it is necessary to draw attention of the international communities and valued guests by focusing and promoting the potentials of the Beautiful Bangladesh:

- A country of harmony of heritage
- Development of human resources by expansion of tourism education
- Multi-faceted initiatives to attract foreign investment
- Above 7% consecutive growth of GDP (8.13% in 2018-2019)
- Low cost high value destination
- The welcoming and hospitable nation
- Infrastructure development in tourism
- Cox's Bazar- the longest unbroken sandy beach
- Sundorbans the largest mangrove forest
- The largest delta in the world
- An evergreen country
- Splendid historical and archaeological sites
- Vibrant culture and lifestyle
- Exotic ecotourism destination

Beautiful Bangladesh: **A** Harmony of Heritage

Bangladesh is a small country in South Asia sharing its borders with India, Myanmar, and Bay of Bengal bordering the south. This country is situated within the deltaic landmass of three major rivers namely Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna. Topography of the country is almost flat with huge network of rivers and canals spanning across the country. Bangladesh's vast green fields and low hills offer amazing scenic sights for visitors.

Adventure and Wildlife:

Adventure tours in Bangladesh are very popular. Expansive landscape and amazing wildlife, along with rich cultural heritage, offers many avenues of adventures to enjoy this beautiful country. Some of the most popular travel adventures in the Bangladesh are offered through Hiking the hills of Chittagong Hill, sailing across the river waters and spending time with a tribe. Some of the famous hill tracts are Bandarban, Rangamati, Khagrachori. Even exploring the Sundarbans is a treat for adventurers. The forest is famous for its tigers, popularly known as the Royal Bengal Tiger as well as other animals such as spotted deer, wild boar, rhesus monkey, salt-water



crocodile, water monitor lizard, pythons, etc. Many species of birds including many exotic birds unique to the place offer visual delight to the tourists at "Tangua Haor" of Sunamgonj. A river cruise through the Chittagong Hills along with a trek to the naturally formed lotus shaped Boga Lake is quite popular among visitors, who also enjoy staying at Bawm village. During the stay they get the opportunity to learn first-hand experience about the lifestyle of the tribe. Usually, the headman and his family play host to the visitors. There is an option to trek to Keokeradong, the highest peak in Bangladesh. Visit to the Chakma village and historical Buddhist "Kyangs" at the hill district Bandarban takes you back to the golden and pristine days of old cultural heritage.

River cruise and Water Sports:

With the grand and resourceful Bay of Bengal at its south, Bangladesh is known as land of rivers. Bangladesh is a picturesque country with numerous rivers, mangrove forests, historical sites and an abundance of wildlife. Cruise tours along major rivers of the country is a favored way to see the exotic beauty of the nature, historic monuments, enthrall architectures and the life style of the hospitable nation, as it allows visitors to experience well-known sights in a relax, yet memorable way. As a riverine country, river cruise plays an important part of the country's

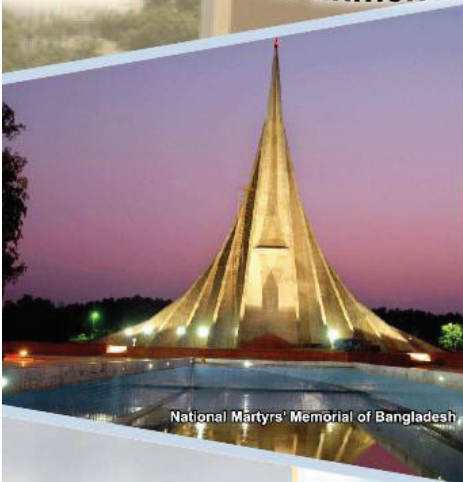




Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation
(Govt. Tourism Organization)

Visit the *golden* Bengal of
Bangabandhu
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

Bangladesh- a beautiful surprise,
a land of immense beauty and diversified culture and heritage



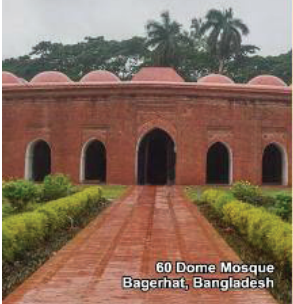
National Martyrs' Memorial of Bangladesh



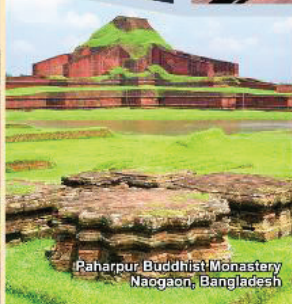
National Parliament of Bangladesh



Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh



60 Dome Mosque
Bagerhat, Bangladesh



Paharpur Buddhist Monastery
Naogaon, Bangladesh



Dhakeshwari Temple
Dhaka, Bangladesh



Kantajew Temple
Dinajpur, Bangladesh



Puthia Temple Complex
Rajshahi, Bangladesh



tourism. One of the most fascinating cruises is the historic old paddlewheel service known as the Rocket Steamer. These paddle steamer was built in the British regime in the dockyards of Calcutta which have been playing a significant and historic role in the water travel. Kapati Lake, located in the hill districts of Rangamati, offers excellent opportunities for water sports. The lake is good for sailing and swimming and anglers can enjoy fishing in the placid waters of the lake. Cruising by country boat on the river Sangu is another attraction of adventure and thrill; this unique opportunity may create ever ending feelings of happiness for



adventure lovers. The long coast of Bangladesh offers numerous opportunities for water sports. Cox's Bazaar is one of the most popular locations for these and other water sports while Sundarbans is ideal for boating and sailing.

Food and Shopping:

Bangladesh is known as a country of hospitality with generous behavior of her people and tasty food. Our food is delightful; a pure South Asian delicacy. The spectacular combination of our age-old traditional values and a diverse range of perfectly blended spices give Bangladesh cuisines a unique taste for which people from all around the world do not hesitate to come back here again. Shopping in Bangladesh, especially for clothing's is undoubtedly fantastic and attractive to the tourists in terms of quality and price. It can be one of the most attractions for foreign visitors.

Spiritual Attractions:

Bangladesh is a country of religious harmony and peace. Peoples belong to different religions are living here with fellow feelings and togetherness among themselves having their

individual belief and faith. Discovering and generating ideas and sharing views of spiritualism of Bangladesh could be one of the reasons to visit Bangladesh. There are a good number of Religious Place like Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, Lalbag Mosque, Dhakeswari Temple, Kantajew Temple, Dharmarajika Bauddha Vihara and The Church of Bangladesh along with historically runarounds archaeological sites having historical as well as spiritual connectivity: these are Sonargaon, Mainamati, Sixty Dome Mosque, Paharpur, Mahasthangarh, Lalbagh Fort, Sitakot Vihara and Vasu Vihara. In Bangladesh people are enjoying here plenty of religious festival all around the year and thousands of visitors including pilgrimage come to these festivals. Some of the popular festivals are Bishwa Ijtema, Dubla Rash Mela, Fair of Adinath, Kothin Chibor Dan Utsab, Lalon Mela and many more.



***Dr. Bhubon Chandra Biswas,** is Additional Secretary and CEO, Bangladesh Tourism Board .

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Bangladesh High Commission, New Delhi

EP-39, Dr S RadhaKrishnan Marg, Chanakyapuri

New Delhi- 110021

Phone : +91 11 2412 1391-94

Email : bdhcdelhi@gmail.com

Website : www.bdahcdelhi.org