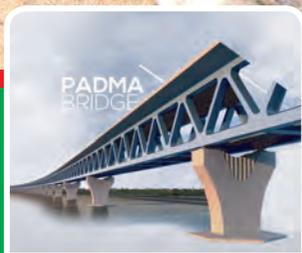
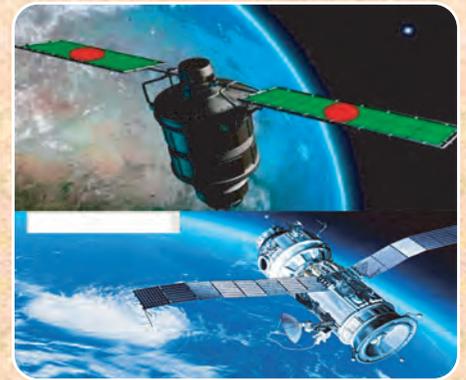


# Bangladesh

SPECIAL REPORT | MARCH 26, 2018

**A vibrant economy  
towards sustainable  
development**





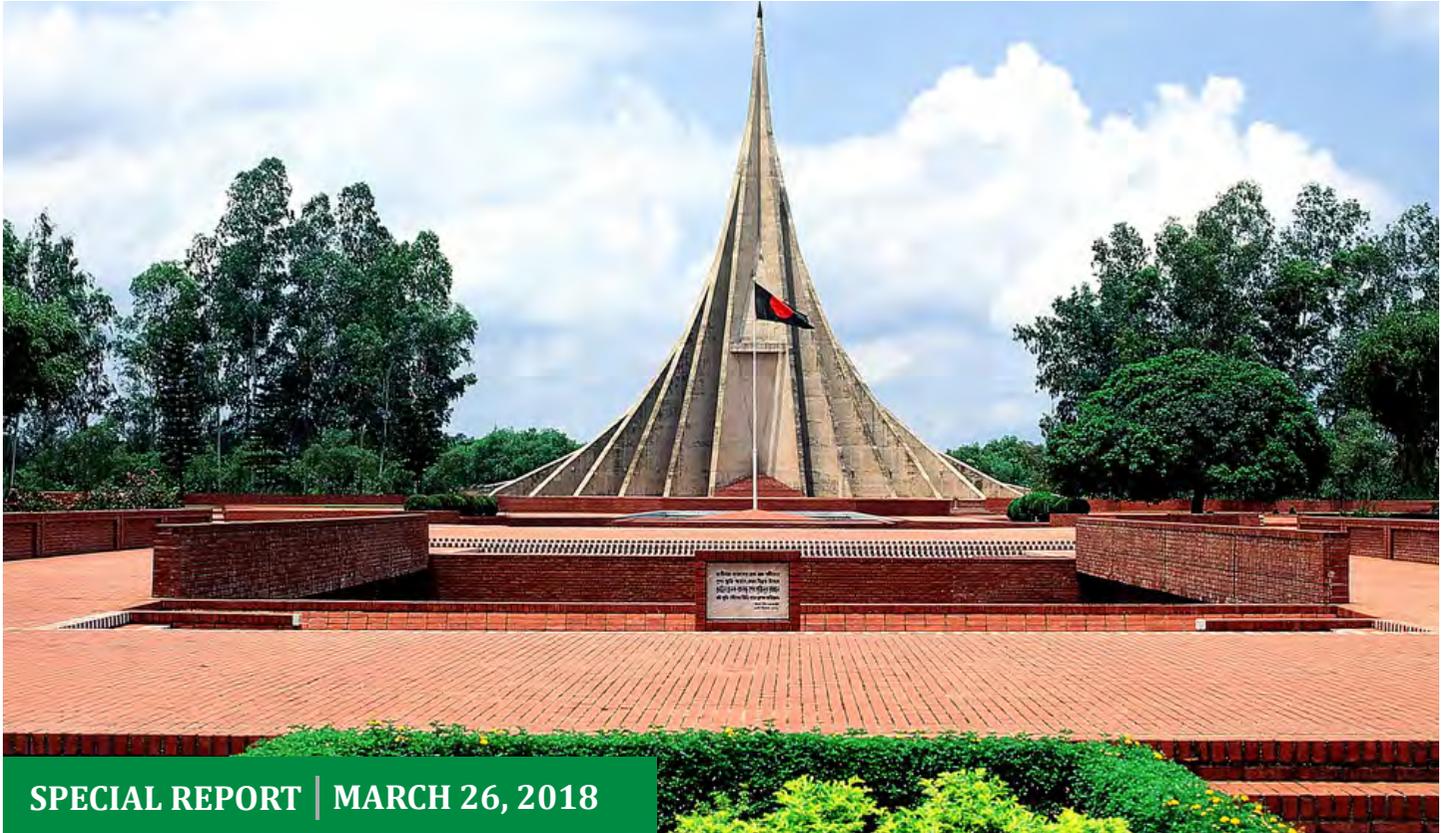
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SPECIAL REPORT | MARCH 26, 2018

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Bangladesh Special Report 2018 marking the 47th anniversary of the country's Independence & National Day is published by **Barood Media FZ LLC** in association with the **Embassy of Bangladesh in Abu Dhabi**. Contact: Abdul Haque Chowdhury on [baroodmedia@gmail.com](mailto:baroodmedia@gmail.com) or [info@baroodmedia.com](mailto:info@baroodmedia.com) and call on Tel: 971 4 3392620; Mobile; 971 56 2399268. Cover: Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by Shahabuddin Ahmed.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**M**arch 26, the Independence Day of Bangladesh. On the occasion of our great Independence and National Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings and warm felicitations to my fellow countrymen living at home and abroad.

On this historic day, I recall with profound respect Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who proclaimed independence on March 26, 1971. Under his able leadership, we achieved our independence through a nine-month long armed struggle. Today, I pay my deep tributes to the martyrs and valiant sons of the soil, who made the supreme sacrifices in the war of liberation. I also recall with deep reverence our four National Leaders, valiant freedom-fighters, organizers, supporters and people from all walks of life for their unmatched valour, immense contributions and courageous role that accelerated the achievement of our victory. I remember with deep respect our foreign friends who extended their wholehearted support directly and indirectly in our war of liberation in 1971. They sheltered millions of refugees who fled from our country during war. The contributions of all would be written in golden letters in the history of our independence forever.

We have achieved our hard-earned independence through huge sacrifices. Bangabandhu always cherished a dream of building a happy and prosperous country along with achieving political independence. Keeping that in mind, the present Government has been rendering untiring efforts in materializing the dream of Bangabandhu. The growth rate of GDP is increasing constantly. Per capita income is increasing and the rate of poverty is decreasing. Our country has attained food-sufficiency owing to the huge development in agriculture. The pace of advancement in the sector of empowerment of women, social safety net etc. is going on. Now the Padma Bridge is not a dream, it is a reality. Bangabandhu Satellite-1 is waiting to be launched into the space. Bangladesh is elevated from least developed country (LDC) to the developing nation in context of three index of being a developing country. As a nation, it is a great achievement for us. Bangladesh is now being branded as a role model of development in the outside world. In pursuing our diplomatic objectives, the government has been consistent in upholding the principle of "Friendship to all, malice towards none" as enunciated by Father of the Nation. Our achievement in international arena is also commendable. Our expatriate Bangladeshis have also been making significant contributions to our national economy through sending their hard-earned remittances. Nevertheless, we have to go a long way for achieving the desired goals of independence. We must ensure good governance, social justice, transparency and accountability to make the development people oriented and sustainable.

Self-restraint and showing respect to others' opinion are important for thriving and institutionalization of democracy. Therefore, we have to maintain patience, self-restraint, and



**Md. Abdul Hamid**

forbearance in our national life. We must show respect to others' opinion. National Parliament would be the centre of hopes and aspirations of the people. For this, the ruling party as well as the opposition would have to play constructive role. People of Bangladesh are always peace loving. They do not support any type of violence including militancy and terrorism. Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Raahman dreamt of transforming Bangladesh into 'Sonar Bangla'. The present Government has set 'Vision 2021' and 'Vision 2041' to materialize Bangabandhu's dream into reality. Concerted efforts are imperative from all to implement those initiatives.

Imbued with the spirit of war of liberation and democratic values, let us work together irrespective of caste, creed and party opinion to make our hard-earned independence more meaningful. Let this be the pledge of our Independence and National Day.

***Khoda Hafez. Mav Banaladesh Live Forever***



Md. Abdul Hamid



## PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE

I convey my heartiest greetings and congratulations to my countrymen as well as all expatriate Bangalees on the occasion of the great Independence and National Day of Bangladesh.

The 26th March is the day of earning self-identity of our nation. It's the day of breaking the shackles of subjugation. On the eve of the Independence Day, I recall with deep gratitude the greatest Bangalee of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, under whose undisputed leadership we earned our beloved independence. I pay my deep homage to the 3 million martyrs and 200 thousand women who lost their innocence in the War of Liberation. I also pay my tributes to four national leaders who led the War of Liberation. My homage goes to the valiant freedom fighters, including the wounded ones. I extend my sympathies to those who had lost their near and dear ones, and were subjected to brutal torture during the war. I recall with gratitude our foreign friends who had extended their whole-hearted support and cooperation for the cause of our liberation.

The Bangalee nation had fought against Pakistani rulers' oppression and deprivation for long 23 years under the leadership of Bangabandhu. They were compelled to hold general elections in 1970. Bangladesh Awami League led by Bangabandhu won overwhelming majority in the elections. But the Pakistani rulers instead of handing over the power to the majority party in a democratic way; they launched repressive measures against them. Bangabandhu in his 7th March historic address at the then Racecourse Maidan declared, "The struggle of this time is for freedom, the struggle for this time for our independence." He instructed the Bangalee nation to resist the enemies.

The occupation forces unleashed a sudden attack and started killing innocent and unarmed Bangalees on the black night of the 25th March 1971. They killed thousands of people in cities and towns, including Dhaka. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman officially proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh at the first hour of the 26th March 1971. Bangabandhu's proclamation was spread all over the country through telegrams, tele-printers and EPR wireless. The international media also had circulated Bangabandhu's proclamation of independence. Under the brave and dauntless leadership of Bangabandhu, we earned the ultimate victory on the 16th December 1971 after a 9-month bloody war.

The independence earned through supreme sacrifices of millions of people is the greatest achievement of Bangalee nation. To ensure that this achievement remains meaningful, all have to know the history of our great liberation war and retain the spirit of independence. The history has to be passed on to generation to generations.

Being imbued with the spirit of the freedom struggle, the Awami League government has been working relentlessly to develop the country. During the last 9 years, we have implemented expected development programmes in all sectors. As a result, Bangladesh has emerged as a 'Role Model' of socio-economic development. The world is now acclaiming Bangladesh for attaining remarkable progress in socio-economic fronts. We will turn Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041, Insha Allah.

The historic 7th March Speech of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been included in the international memory of the world register as World Documentary Heritage by UNESCO. This recognition of the 7th March Speech has made the whole nation proud once again.

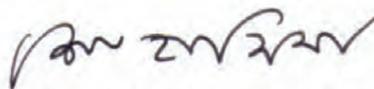


**Sheikh Hasina**

We have executed the verdict of the killing case of Bangabandhu and most of his family members. The verdicts of cases against those who committed crimes against humanity are also being executed. Our government is maintaining 'zero tolerance' policy to tackle militancy and terrorism. We have stopped to take over power in an undemocratic way through the 15th amendment of constitution. On this auspicious day, I urge the countrymen to foil any plot of the anti-liberation, communal forces and anti-development and anti-democracy forces together.

Being imbued with the spirit of our great liberation war, let us work together to advance our country's development and democracy and build a non-communal, hunger-poverty-free and happy-prosperous Sonar Bangladesh as dreamt by the Father of the Nation. On the historic day, this is our commitment.

*Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu  
May Bangladesh Live Forever*

  
**Sheikh Hasina**



angladesh



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on its Independence Day!

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## FOREIGN MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Today is 26th March, the 48th Independence and National Day of Bangladesh. Forty seven years back on this day, our great leader, the greatest Bengali of all times and the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman proclaimed the independence of Bangladesh. Bangabandhu steered the freedom-seeking nation to independence through his visionary and charismatic leadership. His historic 7th March speech was a great inspiration for our Liberation War. We celebrate our independence day this year at a time when his historic 7th March speech has been recognised as part of the Memory of the World Register of UNESCO. At the same time Bangladesh has been graduated from the LDC group to developing country category. This milestone feat of the country has been officially confirmed by the United Nations on the eve of the 98th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

On this auspicious day, I take this opportunity to pay my sincere tribute to three million martyrs of our glorious War of Independence, who made supreme sacrifices for the independence of our beloved motherland. I also pay homage to all valiant freedom fighters, and two hundred thousand mothers and sisters who sacrificed their honour during our Liberation War. I recall with gratitude the invaluable contributions of the members of our diplomatic front who played a crucial and courageous role in garnering moral and material support from the international community during our War of Independence. I also convey my heartiest greetings and felicitations to all Bengali brothers and sisters at home and abroad as well as to all our foreign friends and partners across the globe.

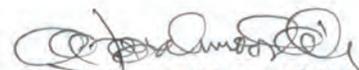
The present government under the visionary leadership of our beloved leader Bangabandhu's daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been working hard to realise Bangabandhu's dream of building a 'Sonar Bangla' (Golden Bengal) with a view to achieving people's socio-economic emancipation and building poverty and hunger-free society. Bangladesh is now a 'role model' for success in all socio-economic sectors like education, health, gender equity and women empowerment. After successful attainment of most of the 'Millennium Development Goals', we are confident of achieving the 'Sustainable Development Goals' on time through appropriate plans and initiatives. Due to our intense diplomatic efforts and extensive engagement with the International community Bangladesh's relationship with other countries and international organizations has reached to a new height in recent years, both in terms of depth and dimension. We have been able to garner widespread support from the international community on Rohingya issue and significant progress has been made so far in this regard. Today, Bangladesh stands out in the comity of nations with its own hard earned reputation, development achievements and self-esteem.



**Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, M.P.**

On this historic Day, I wish to thank all the members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our Missions abroad for their committed efforts in advancing our foreign policy objectives and development goals, and promoting our national interests on the world stage. I also congratulate Bangladesh Diaspora in every corner of the world who are immensely contributing to our development endeavors and enhancing Bangladesh's image abroad. On this glorious day, being imbued with the spirit of our great Liberation War and with a view to building Bangabandhu's dream of 'Sonar Bangla' (Golden Bengal), let us take a fresh vow to devote ourselves to work from our respective positions in advancing the ongoing developments efforts of the present government to strengthen the hands of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and build a better world for our future generations.

Joy Bangla, joy Bangabandhu.



(Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, M.P.)

## MESSAGE

**T**oday, March 26, is the glorious Independence and National Day of Bangladesh. On this very day in 1971, our great leader, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared independence of our beloved motherland.

On this auspicious occasion, I recall with deep reverence the greatest Bengali of all time, our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by whose clarion call the Bengali started the War of Liberation against the Pakistani occupation forces. I pay my profound homage to the 3 million martyrs and 2 hundred and thousand mothers and sisters whose supreme sacrifice and dishonour ushered us an independent and sovereign Bangladesh coloured in red and green. My respectful salute goes to all freedom fighters including the wounded war heroes. On this memorable moment of Independence Day, I express sincere gratitude to all foreign friends, expatriate Bangladeshis, members of diplomatic front who accelerated our victory by extending all possible support during the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

26 March is the day of breaking the shackles of subjugation when the Bengalis protested against misrule, exploitation and oppression by the then Pakistani rulers. Our war heroes took arms at the call of the Father of the Nation. Before that, on 7 March in 1971, Bangabandhu in his historic speech declared, "The struggle this time is the struggle for our emancipation; the struggle this time is the struggle for liberation". It is matter of great joy indeed that the UNESCO has included this historic 7th March speech of Bangabandhu in the Memory of the World International register, a list of world's important documentary heritage. Being started on 26 March, the bloody war ended fruitfully through the emergence of an independent and sovereign Bangladesh on 16 December 1971.

Our Father of the Nation, the great architect of our Liberation War dreamt for a happy, prosperous, exploitation free and equitable 'Sonar Bangla' (Bengal of Gold). His able successor, the leader of mass people Sheikh Hasina has been working tirelessly to realise this dream. Formation of an equitable state mentioned in 'The Charter for Change' presented by Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina consists of a number of specific and integrated programmes for accomplishment. Following that roadmap, goals have been agreed on for transforming the country into a 'Middle income' one by 2021 and a 'Developed' one by 2041. At the same time it has taken firm measures towards achieving these goals.

Currently, Bangladesh is marching forward with US\$ 1,610 per capita income and more than 7.28% growth rate. After successful completion of the 'Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) in which Bangladesh has been acclaimed as a 'role model'; we are now committed to the objectives and realisation of the 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. As a sequence of all these tremendous achievements



**Md. Shahriar Alam, M.P**  
*State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh*

the United Nations has announced Bangladesh's eligibility for graduation to the 'Developing Country' status from the 'Least Developed Country' category in this month of rebellious March.

On this Day, I congratulate Bangladesh Diaspora in every corner of the world which has been immensely contributing to our economic development and in brightening the image of Bangladesh. I also thank all the members of our Missions abroad who have been working with sustained dedication and commitment in achieving our foreign policy objectives and promote national interest of Bangladesh on the world stage. I appeal to all expatriate Bangladeshis and mission officials to work in unity with the government and people of your respective host countries to strengthen the relationship for greater benefit of all concerned.

On this 48th day of the declaration of our independence, Let us make a renewed pledge to devote ourselves to work from our respective positions imbued with the spirit of Liberation War to build a 'Sonar Bangla' and also a better world for our future generations.

***Joy Bangla , Joy Bangabandhu.***  
***May Bangladesh live forever.***

# Happy Independence Day

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# A HUMBLE DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

By Muhammad Imran

**B**angladesh attaches great importance to its relationship with the United Arab Emirates which is based on shared faith, culture and traditions. Bilateral relations between Bangladesh and UAE have grown steadily over the years and are being strengthened and diversified. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman visited UAE in 1974 that began a new era of co-operation between the two friendly countries. The people of Bangladesh fondly remember the 10-day long visit of UAE's founder Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan to Bangladesh in 1984. The large plot of land presented to him in Chittagong during this visit still remains as a testimony of permanent friendship between the two nations.

Bangladeshi skilled and semi-skilled professionals contributed during the initial development phase of the new country, UAE. In 1970s and 80s Bangladeshi engineers and technicians used to work in large numbers in the energy and power sector of the UAE. Bangladeshi companies were involved in the development of a number of infrastructure facilities in the UAE at that time. A 90-km highway in the western region, the earliest sewerage system of Abu Dhabi Municipality and about 5000 villas in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain region remain as examples of the bilateral cooperation between the two countries. Since that period, Bangladeshi workers have been playing a vital role in the construction and building maintenance.

Janata Bank, a reputed commercial bank from Bangladesh, was one of the first foreign financial institutions in the UAE that financed various development projects and businesses here through its branches in all major UAE cities including Abu



*Late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman*

Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah and Al Ain. This bank is still operating in the UAE with a large client base, mostly expatriates from Bangladesh and other countries of South Asia.

The majority of the people working in the farming sectors in the UAE are from Bangladesh and through their expertise and innovative initiative they are diversifying the agriculture. Their



*His Highness General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her visit to UAE.*

dedication, hard work and indigenous methods of cultivation are making UAE greener overcoming the challenges of the weather and arid topography of the region. Though often overlooked, this is an area where both the countries may further cooperate to complement the environment policy achievements of the UAE.

Bangladeshi professionals and experts played a major role in wildlife conservation and Zoo management in the UAE. Several journalists from Bangladesh were pioneers in English language print media in Dubai.

Although the number has reduced in the recent years, the workforce from Bangladesh continues to play a humble but significant role in the UAE economy as well as in the society. At present, Bangladeshi workforce are serving in construction, hospitality, financial services, automobile maintenance, transport, municipal and household services.

Bangladesh entrepreneurs are also running various businesses here that include construction companies, large perfumery, groceries to supermarkets, automobile workshops, electric equipments and building materials shops and retail outlets.

Many UAE nationals visit Bangladesh to experience its exotic food, natural beauty and unparalleled hospitality extended to foreigners by the locals. The Government of Bangladesh has extended unilateral 'Visa on Arrival' facilities for the UAE passport holders to make the travel easier for them.

Bangladeshi expatriates in the UAE consider their host country UAE as their second home and they are proud to take part in various activities of



***His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai, with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during her visit to UAE.***

everyday life. They are witnessing with admiration the spectacular growth and the achievements in various fields under the wise and visionary leadership of UAE.

Bangladesh nationals in the UAE highly admire the leadership of this country and pay respect to His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Hon'ble President of the UAE, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE and Rul-

er of Dubai, and His Highness Sheikh Muhammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces for their strong support and encouragement for further widening and deepening our brotherly relationship.

Long live Bangladesh-UAE friendship.

***Muhammad Imran is the Ambassador of Bangladesh to UAE***

**Bangladesh**

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# BRINGING VIBRANCY IN ECONOMY

By Muhammad Imran



**Muhammad Imran**  
Ambassador of Bangladesh to UAE

On 26 March 1971, Father of the Nation of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared Bangladesh an independent and sovereign state. The country became free on 16 December 1971 after a nine months' war that saw huge blood-bath and enormous sacrifice of the people.

Today's Bangladesh was part of Mughal Empire and subsequently of British India. When the colonial rulers left the region in 1947, East Bengal - today's Bangladesh - became a part of one of the two countries formed due to the partition of the subcontinent.

But soon, the people of Bangladesh found their basic rights denied. They faced exploitation and mistreatment from the ruling elites. Despite adequate resources and demographic weight, they experienced oppression and subjugation in every aspects of life - cultural, economic and political - to the extent that they were about to lose their rich linguistic and ethno-cultural identity.

People of Bangladesh demanded and tried to achieve their due rights in a civilized, nonviolent and democratic manner under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. But the verdict of the people in a nationwide general election in 1970 was denied. Finally, when the unarmed people were subjected to brutal attack and war was imposed on them, they resisted. They fought back and became victorious to achieve the independence. The world saw the birth of a new nation, Bangladesh, on 16 December 1971.

The events that led to the creation of this new country shook the entire world. Bangladesh became a model of courage and sacrifice, an inspiration to fight against oppression and tyranny, an example for self-determination and victory.

Bangladesh started her journey as an independent nation with a war-ravaged economy, a

vacuum in the administration, all physical infrastructure destroyed, no foreign currency reserve and there were periodic natural calamities like cyclone and flood.

Bangladesh has faced manifold challenges but the people of Bangladesh overcame all with enormous courage and determination. They have strived and succeeded to rise from the ashes to bring vibrancy in the economy with improvement in social indicators and continued expansion of infrastructural facilities.

In the recent past, the country has changed every sphere of its national life. It is the long cherished aspiration of present government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to take the country to a new height of development. Despite being a densely populated country, Bangladesh had achieved success in fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets. The government is now committed to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the national development plans have been aligned with the SDGs.

Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in the areas of education and health. Targets for enrolment and gender parity in primary and secondary level education, lowering the under-five and maternal mortality rate, improving immunisation coverage and reducing the incidence of communicable diseases have been achieved. Population growth rate has been reduced considerably and life expectancy has been raised. In many such areas, Bangladesh is well ahead of her South Asian neighbours.

The country has attained food-sufficiency producing 35 million tons of food in a year, sufficient to feed the entire 160 million people of the country. Bangladesh has now become a role model for fighting poverty, ensuring food security, empowering women and disaster management.

The agriculture based economy of Bangladesh is being replaced by export-oriented industrialization and gradually moving towards a knowledge based economy. Bangladesh apparel industry is the second-largest in the world with an export earnings of about US\$30 billion per year. Other key sectors include pharmaceuticals, ceramics, leather goods and electronics. Bangladesh is one of the top bicycle exporters to the EU countries and is now a globally acknowledged builder of ocean-going vessels.

It is becoming a major destination of global IT outsourcing. Today, more than 130 million people (82% of total population) use mobile phones in Bangladesh while around 50 million people have access to internet.

Bangladesh has been maintaining an average GDP growth rate of more than six percent during the last decades. Due to this consistent growth over the years Bangladesh's GDP is now more than US\$220 billion as per the current prices. During the last two years, the GDP growth was over seven percent and last year figure was 7.24 percent. Goldman Sachs highlighted Bangladesh as one of the next 11 emerging economies.

Bangladesh have started receiving international recognitions. In 2015, Bangladesh was ele-



**Bangladesh had achieved success in fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receiving Millennium Development Goals (MDG Award)**



*Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in the areas of education. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid are seen with children during free distribution of books.*

vated to lower middle income economy from low income economy as per World Bank Atlas method when the GNI per capita crossed the threshold of US\$1025. At present, the per capita the GNI of Bangladesh is US\$1610.

And another recognition came on 15 March 2018 when the United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP), on completion of its review of the Least Developed Country (LDC) category, officially declared Bangladesh eligible for graduating from the LDC to a developing one as Bangladesh has met the all three graduation crite-

ria for the first time.

The UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP) determines the graduation of a least developed country from the LDC category on the basis of its meeting at least two of the three criteria which are Per Capita GNI, Human Asset index (HAI) and Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI). Bangladesh could meet all the three criteria in this year's review by the CDP. Its per capita GNI is US\$1610 whereas this year the threshold set by CDP for this year was US\$1230. The HAI of Bangladesh is 72.9 whereas the threshold was 66. The EVI of Bangla-

desh is 24.8 whereas the threshold was 32.

The government has declared Vision 2021 to transform the country into a middle-income, technologically advanced Digital Bangladesh. It has also set forth Vision 2041 and aims to take its place in the world stage as a developed country within another 20 years.

At the international front, Bangladesh follows the foreign policy principle "friendship to all and malice towards none". Bangladesh has been playing a constructive role in promoting international peace and stability and remains deeply focused on sub-regional, regional and international issues apart from its bilateral engagements.

Bangladeshi Peacekeepers, under the auspices of the United Nations, have proved their professionalism and competence in various troubled areas around the globe. Bangladesh remains a leading contributor to the UN peacekeeping missions. Currently, about 10000 personnel from the armed forces and civil service of Bangladesh are deputed under the UN peacekeeping missions with two women-only contingents.

In 2017, the world witnessed one of the fastest growing human movements of the history as our neighbour in the southeast orchestrated an unprecedented exodus of their own national Rohingyas from its Rakhine State. More than 700000 desperate Rohingyas entered Bangladesh during the last few months' time. The helpless Rohingyas faced worst forms of human rights violations owing to their religion and race. Bangladesh, as immediate neighbour, had to bear the burden of hosting now over one million forcibly displaced populations in its territory. Bangladesh acknowledges the moral and material support extended in this crisis period by the government and people of the UAE and other friendly countries.



*Bangladesh apparel industry is the second-largest in the world with an export earnings of about US\$30 billion per year.*

# REMARKABLE GROWTH

By Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad

**B**angladesh is marching forward. This statement is heard often, both at home and abroad. In fact, it is a very important statement. The reality that this simple statement reflects makes us proud and that Bangladesh's advancement is internationally recognized and acclaimed. In fact, Bangladesh has now reached an unprecedented height in terms of socio-economic progress. Also, the country's development-related circumstances are, by and large, solid and conducive for further progress.

In the early years of independence, a human-centric, justice-assuring development pathway was being initiated under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. But all of that changed after August 1975, following the heinous act of killing Bangabandhu by the anti-liberation national and international forces. A long military rule followed, at times in the guise of a sort of democracy. In this period, the writ of market economy was facilitated to gradually penetrate more and more. Towards the end of the 1980s, the country entered into the age of neo-liberalism by contracting a loan under the World Bank-IMF led structural adjustment programme. However, its implementation became vigorous with effect from 1991, after the re-establishment of democracy. Since then, neo-liberalism has continued to be the ruling paradigm in the country. Basically, this paradigm consists of the private sector leading the economic process under unfettered free market conditions. This paradigm gradually gathered strength in Bangladesh.

However, during 1996-2001, the then Awami League Government started providing substantial subsidy to agriculture, ignoring the pressure of the World Bank, other international funding agencies, and bilateral development partners against the



*Bangladesh has achieved self-sufficiency in food production at the national level. Womens are working in a food factory.*

policy. As a result, agricultural production, the production of foodgrains in particular, increased significantly and food self-sufficiency at the national level was more or less achieved by 2000.

The average annual GDP growth rate was 5.6% during 2001/02-2008/09. But, after that, it accelerated and was above 6% every year from 2009/10 to 2016/17, above 7% in the last two years. Per capita income rose to US\$1602 in 2016/17, while it was US\$475 in 2005/06 and US\$ 378 in 2001/02. In the meantime, Bangladesh

has earned the status of a low middle-income country. But the country is still in the category of least developed countries (LDCs).

Generally, three conditions have to be fulfilled to graduate from the LDC status. The UN Development Committee meets once in three years to decide as to which LDCs have fulfilled the conditions to enter into the process of moving out of the LDC



status or are ready to move out. If an LDC fulfills the conditions twice in succession, then it can get out of the LDC status in another 3/4 years. Bangladesh is expected to get the nod in the 2018 UN Review and will enter into the process of getting out of the LDC category, as two conditions (relating to economic risk and human asset) are already fulfilled and the other (per capital annual income) should also be fulfilled by then or even earlier. If the result is the same in the next review in 2021, the country can graduate from the LDC status around 2024. But, if Bangladesh wants, it can on its own shake off the tag in 2021. I strongly suggest that Bangladesh does take this step. In terms of Human Development Index, Bangladesh is in middle category (value of 0.579).

A basic reason behind the significant increase in the GDP growth rate and enviable achievements in social and other respects since 2009 is essential-



*A structructrul image of Padma bridge is being displayed*



*A partial view of a jute mill in Bangladesh*

ly the conducive policy regime and other facilities created by the Government on the one hand and the efforts, within that framework, of the farmers, farm workers, industrial workers, entrepreneurs, managers and all others concerned, on the other.

There has been a significant stride in the agricultural sector in recent years. Subsidy on inputs and increased agricultural loan (from Tk.111,170 million in 2009/10 to Tk. 176,460 million in 2016/17) and more effective agricultural extension services have played an important role in facilitating agricultural growth in this period.

On the basis of available data, Bangladesh has achieved self-sufficiency in food production at the national level. The country is now, respectively, the 3rd and 5th largest producer of fish and vegetables in the world. Significant improvement has been achieved in the rural economy outside of agriculture as well. Rural industries and other enterprises are coming up all around rural Bangladesh. Women are also coming forward in a significant way to undertake economic activities as entrepreneurs. The daily wage rate in rural areas is now, on average, the equivalent of 10/11 Kgs of rice. It may be recalled that, in the 1980s, the demand was only 3.5 Kgs.

Progress is also taking place in the industrial sector. Industry now accounts for 32.48% of the GDP. Readymade garment (RMG) is the leading sector. With a view to accelerating and decentralizing industrialization and expanding employment, special economic zones are now being established in different parts of the country, in both public and private sectors.

The foreign currency reserve has continued to increase, creating a record every year. It was

US\$32.5 billion on 19 April 2017. Remittance has declined somewhat on an annual basis recently. Yet, it was US\$12.8 billion in 2016/17. There is a strong sign of recovery as there has been 12% increase in the first six months of 2017/18 compared to the same period of last year. It may be noted that the largest ever annual remittance received was US\$15.3 billion in 2014/15. Export

earnings have been increasing every year and the total annual figure was US\$34.3 billion in 2015/16. Inflation has been more or less under control during the past several years. In 2016/17, the average inflation rate was 5.44% (preliminary estimate), which is okay for a fast developing country like Bangladesh.

A very significant increase has been achieved



*The construction of a power plant is in progress in Bangladesh*



in electricity generation. The highest electricity generation was 3,003 MW in 2000/01 and 3,812 MW in 2005/06. But, given the Government's special attention, electricity generation has expanded fast since 2010 and, in 2015/16, reached 9,036 MW.

In keeping with commitment in Vision 2021 to establish digital Bangladesh, a significant progress in this regard has already been achieved. In fact, digital information centres have been set up at the union (the lowest administrative unit) level around the country.

In relation to various social indicators con-

Trust to girl students. Again, on the first of January every year the Government has been distributing books to all students up to class 10. In 2017, a total of 360 million books were distributed. There has also been a notable expansion of vocational education.

The present government is trying to ensure primary healthcare services for all citizens. There are public hospitals and community clinics at upazila and union levels throughout the country. But, there is a problem in this regard that doctors do not want to live in rural areas. The Government has recently announced a hardline position

between India and Bangladesh, outstanding for a long time, has been resolved through international legal process, with significant outcomes for Bangladesh.

About 700,000 tortured Myanmar citizens (Rohingyas) fled to Bangladesh since 25 August 2017. They were allowed to enter Bangladesh at the initiative of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. This act reflects compassion and humanitarianism of high order, and has rightly been acclaimed by the global community. Another 300,000 Rohingyas came to Bangladesh earlier. There are, therefore, a total of about 1 million of them now in Ban-



*The business in Dhaka expo processing zone is booming .*

cerning education, health services, poverty reduction, child and maternal mortality etc., enviable improvements have been achieved. In several respects, Bangladesh has done better than all other South Asian countries and also compared to most of the world's other developing countries. Poverty ratio was almost 50% in 2000 and 40% in 2005. Now (2016), it has come down to 24.3%. The extreme poverty ratio was down to 12.9% in 2016 from 25.1% in 2005 and 34.5% in 2000. As of 2015, life expectancy at birth was 71 years, which was 64 years in 2000 and 56 years in 1990/91.

Significant progress has been achieved in education, both for males and females and drop-out has been significantly reduced. The contributing factors to the progress in female education importantly include stipends provided on a large scale by the Government and scholarships provided from the Prime Minister's Education Assistance

against the doctors concerned.

The Global Gender Gap Report 2016 of the World Economic Forum has shown that Bangladesh is the most successful country in South Asia in promoting gender equality. Globally, Bangladesh's position is 64th among the 145 countries included in the Report.

The decision to construct the Padma Bridge, which is costing about US\$3 billion, with vown resources has been courageous and national dignity-enhancing. A significant progress has been achieved in the implementation of the project.

Let me mention another few high-profile achievements of Sheikh Hasina led Government. The long outstanding land boundary issue between Bangladesh and India was resolved as the Land Boundary Agreement was accomplished in June 2015. Also, the maritime boundary demarcation issue between Myanmar and Bangladesh and

gladesh.

In the meantime, in order to send them back to their own country, an Agreement has been signed between the two countries. For an effective implementation of the Agreement and to ensure that the Rohingyas live peacefully and with dignity when they return to their country, Myanmar; and that their minimum basic needs are met during the period they will need to stay in Bangladesh, effective involvement of the UN and influential countries of the world is necessary in the Rohingya issue.

A Gallop Poll taken in September 2015 finds the people of Bangladesh to be most hopeful about future, among the countries surveyed. In my judgment, Bangladesh economy has now reached a level of development that it can take off to a higher development trajectory and march ahead along that pathway at a faster pace on a sustainable basis.

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## Janata Bank Ltd:

# Committed Partner in Progress

Janata Bank Ltd. has been working to upgrade its services to the modern platform and is mulling to offer more services in The UAE.

Janata Bank, Bangladesh's second largest lender, is planning to revamp its services in the UAE and offer more features and facilities to non-resident Bangladeshis in the country. The bank started its operation in the UAE soon after the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1974. Since then, more than 1.2 million non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) have migrated to the UAE for work and are contributing to both the economies. NRBs remit more than \$2.8 billion annually to Bangladesh.

Janata Bank Limited, one of the state-owned commercial banks in Bangladesh, has an authorized capital of Tk30 billion (\$359 million) paid up capital of Tk19.14 billion (\$229 million), and reserve of Tk 31 billion (\$371 million). The bank has total assets of around Tk 800 billion (\$9.50 billion)

The bank currently operates through 912 branches, including four overseas branches in the UAE. It is linked with 1,239 foreign correspondents all over the world. It is one of the oldest foreign Banks in the UAE, and has four branches, serving

more than 54,000 account holders in the country.

The bank has already purchased ATM for rendering modern services to its clients. The ATMs will be installed in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah and Al Ain and will cover all the Emirates and GCC through UAE Switch. The ATMs are 3 in 1 featured capable to handle cash withdrawal, cash deposit and cheque deposit along with fund transfer facility. Upon completion of regulatory permission and mandatory testing procedure, it will be operational soon.

To introduce Internet banking and Mobile banking in the UAE Operation, the Bank has planned to change its existing Banking software. The process of transformation will be completed in this year.

Md. Amirul Hassan, Chief Executive of Janata Bank, UAE said "We want to bring qualitative change in the services of Janata Bank in the UAE with introduction of modern services; it will certainly draw attention of various quarters". "We want to contribute more in the development of the UAE in the time to come." he added.





# LDC GRADUATION: Prospects for Bangladesh

By Dr. Fahmida Khatun



**Dr. Fahmida Khatun**

Member Secretary: Board of Trusty and Executive Director,  
Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh.

On March 16, 2018, for the second time in the history of independent Bangladesh, the country was adorned with a crown for its achievements in development. The first time was in 2015 when it upgraded itself to the World Bank's "lower middle income" category by increasing its Gross National Income.

By becoming eligible for graduation from LDC, Bangladesh has taken its status to a new height. The LDC category was introduced by the United Nations in 1971 when there were 25 LDCs. In 2018, the number has increased to 47. So far, only five countries were able to graduate from the LDC group, including Botswana, Cape Verde, Maldives, Samoa and Equatorial Guinea. Bangladesh is the only country that met all three criteria for graduation including GNI per capita, Human Assets Index, and Economic Vulnerability Index.

This graduation will bring a lot of opportunities for Bangladesh and quite a few challenges as well. There will be benefits but there will be costs to pay also. Overcoming these challenges is critical for a smooth graduation process.

The new status will help in branding Bangladesh. Investors will be interested to invest in the country given its strength in certain areas such as the size of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), exports and population compared to other LDCs. These will help Bangladesh's credit worthiness which is reflected through better credit rating. Bangladesh will have more opportunities for taking commercial loans from the international market at a competitive interest rate. Such branding will help it to mobilise resources from the global market through sovereign bond. The private sector will also have the opportunity to generate capital from the global financial market.

The other impact will be reflected through the cost of development finance and higher debt servicing liabilities due to the cessation of access



to concessional finance for LDCs. Over the years, Bangladesh has transformed itself from an aid-dependent country into a trade-dependent one. However, for poverty alleviation, social sector activities and infrastructural development, the role of official development assistance cannot be undermined. As a lower-middle-income country, Bangladesh is no more eligible for low interest loans. After graduation, Bangladesh has to go for blended finance that includes loans from the development institutions and other sources with a high interest rate and shorter repayment period. However, Bangladesh should also explore more resources from institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), New Development Bank (NDB) and other commercial sources.

Bangladesh's major challenge will be to face "preference erosion" due to the LDC graduation. Bangladesh is entitled to have duty-free access to the European market under the "Everything But Arms" initiative. This is a huge opportunity for the country as more than 60 percent of its export goes to the European market. Except for the apparel exports to the USA, Bangladesh receives duty-free market access for all products in all developed countries. Even some developing countries such as India provide duty-free market access for all products, and China for more than a thousand tariff lines. Due to the graduation, Bangladesh will lose about 8 percent of its total exports because of the imposition of additional tariff on its exports by 6.7 percent without a preferential treatment. A Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) study reveals that the loss will be equivalent to USD 2.7 billion.

After graduation in 2024, there will be a grace period of another 3 years when Bangladesh can enjoy all LDC-specific benefits. So there are approximately 10 years for the country to prepare itself to start the new journey. Bangladesh needs to prepare for a smooth graduation by taking into account a few issues.

First, the overall capability of the economy has to be improved. This should be achieved through diversification of the economy, technological upgradation, training and skill development of human resources, and institutional strengthening.

In order to attract foreign investment, the economy has to go through structural changes, achieve resource efficiency, and improve productivity. This is the age of artificial intelligence and robotics. Bangladesh has to gear up to face the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The labour force displaced due to technological upgradation should be able to find themselves engaged in self-employment through micro, small and medium enterprises.

Second, in order to make up for the loss to be incurred by the preference erosion and end of various international support measures, Bangladesh must improve its export competitiveness and diversify both markets and products for export. Besides, Bangladesh has to play a proactive role at the regional and sub-regional initiatives, such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal (BBIN), Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar (BCIM), and Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), for more meaningful partnerships. At the same time, it should remain active at the World Trade Organization to realise any potential benefit. In the post-graduation period, the country will still be eligible for Generalised System of Preferences or "GSP Plus" benefits for market access. In order to access this, countries usually have to comply with stringent conditions such as improved work conditions, higher poverty alleviation efforts, women's empowerment and reduction of carbon emission.

While celebrating Bangladesh's latest achievement, we have to recognise that we are facing a world full of challenges and crises. We have to be prepared for a world increasingly battling with conservatism, protectionism, extremism, refugee crises and confrontations. At the same time, the world has also set ambitious plans such as SDGs to be fulfilled by 2030. Bangladesh is committed to these goals. It is expected that implementation of these goals will also help its smooth graduation from the LDC group.

*This article was first published in the Daily Star, Dhaka on 20th March 2018. It is reprinted with kind permission of the writer.*

# Promoting eco-tourism

By Aparup Chowdhury

**B**angladesh is a land of immense beauty embraced with a good number of serpentine rivers. We have the world heritage the Sunderbans which is the world's largest mangrove forest and the habitat of critically endangered species the Royal Bengal Tiger. We are proud of our Cox's Bazar sea beach which is the longest (120 km long) unbroken sandy beach of the world. Shat Gambuj Masjid (Sixty tomb mosque) of Bagerhat is another world heritage and Kantajeu Temple of Dinajpur is UNESCO heritage which is famous for Terakota. Tanguahaor of Sunamganj is Ramsar site which is the habitat of a large number of flora and fauna and famous for migratory birds in winter season. One can watch both sunrise and sunset from the same place of Kuakata sea beach in Patuakhali district. Paharpur and Mohastangar are famous for ancient civilization. Three hill districts, Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban comprising one fifth area of our country are beautifully decorated by God where 13 indigenous group of people live who have diversified social, cultural and ritual norms and life style. Millions of tourists from home and abroad visit those areas to enjoy sights and sounds of our beautiful Bangladesh.



*The Sunderbans is the gold mine for ecotourism and pride of Bangladesh. It is the world's largest mangrove forest and the habitat of critically endangered species the Royal Bengal Tiger*

## Concept of Eco-tourism

While climate change has been a crucial issue in the question of sustainable tourism, eco-tourism has drawn much attention of world leaders. International Ecotourism Society defines eco-tourism as: "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people". The Australian Commission on National Ecotourism

Strategy calls it: "nature-based tourism that involves education on natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable". These destinations are often remote areas, whether inhabited or uninhabited, and are usually under some kind of environmental protection at the

national, international, community or private level.

Ecotourism strives to minimize the adverse effects of hotels, trails, and other infrastructure by using either recycled materials or plentifully available local building materials, renewable sources of energy, recycling and safe disposal of waste and garbage, and environmentally and culturally sensitive architectural design. Minimization of impact also requires that the numbers and mode of behaviour of tourists be regulated to ensure limited damage to the ecosystem (Ecotourism and Sustainable Development", Author - Martha Honey).

Ecotourism means education for both tourists and residents of nearby communities. Well before departure tour operators should supply travellers with reading material about the country, environment and local people as well as a code of conduct for both the travellers and the industry itself. This information helps prepare the tourist as The Ecotourism Societies guidelines state "to learn about the places and peoples visited" and "to minimize their negative impacts while visiting sensitive environments and cultures".

Ecotourism is not only "greener" but also less culturally intrusive and exploitative than conventional tourism. Whereas prostitution, black markets and drugs often are by-products of mass tourism, ecotourism strives to be culturally respectful and have a minimal effect on both the natural environment and the human population of a host country. This is not easy, especially since ecotourism often involves travel to remote areas



*Tea plantations in greater Sylhet.*



*Sandy beaches at Cox's Bazar and Kuakata.*

where small and isolated communities have had little experience interacting with foreigners.

**Eco-tourism in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh itself as a whole is an eco-tourism destination. There is a plenty of eco-tourism attractions lying hither and thither of this land. A desire to establish eco-tourism in Bangladesh has been demonstrated for many years. And therefore, eco-tourism has been emphasized in the tourism planning process. The government has enacted laws to ensure pollution free environment and these are being implemented by the Department of Environment. These are environment Policy 1992 and Bangladesh Environment Protection Law 1995 (amended in 2010). The National Tourism Policy framed in 2010 also emphasizes the eco-tourism development as well as preservation and conservation of natural and cultural products. These reflect government's keen interest and high priority to create clean and green environment and eco-tourism development in the country.

As per Article 18(A) of our constitution, we have constitutional obligation to conserve our nature and Biodiversity which includes Forest Ecosystem, Wetland Ecosystem and Wildlife. Bangladesh sincerely believes that the eco-tourism marketing & conservation of bio-diversity are complementary to each other and together make tourism and conservation activities sustainable if a synergy through proper management can be developed. Eco-tourism can bring improved income and living standards for local people. Eco-tourism can revitalize local culture, especially traditional crafts and customs. It can stimulate the rural economy by creating demand for agricultural products and through infrastructure development project; it can inject capital into rural area. So for vigorous eco-tourism marketing for the benefit of all sharers, there needs interactions among the local community groups and leaders and the local authorities.

Earlier in Bangladesh the tourism activity was centred at the beaches and some other attractive areas. But of late, this idea has been changed. Conservation of nature and culture is

the most important theme of all planned tourism development. Ecotourism is understood as a key element in the current tourism development, which can play a very vital role in the promotion and development of tourism industry. Tourism businessmen and planners understand that it is such kind of tourism development, which shows respect to heritage and culture, protects & preserves environment and provides knowledge to the visitors and welcomes them.

In Bangladesh, there is a vast potential to develop and promote ecotourism. The Sundarbans is the gold mine for ecotourism and pride of Bangladesh. Besides this, other ecotourism products include tea plantations in greater Sylhet,

hilly green areas of Hill Districts, sandy beaches at Cox's Bazar and Kuakata, rivers, lakes, forest and wildlife, glorious tribal life and the simple life style of the village people. These tourism products have tremendous demand in the tourism markets of the world.

Bangladesh is engaged in a continuous endeavour to integrate her ecotourism resources through planning, management and appropriate use, based on the following principles: (i) optimum multiple use of the resources; (ii) maximum sustainable use; and (iii) conservation and development of natural resources. When we promote and sell our tourist products (for example, the Sundarbans, the Hill Districts, Cox's Bazar) we have to make sure that the resources, such as the forests with their numerous varieties of trees, plants, herbs and their animals are not destroyed or overexploited.

**Concept of Responsible Tourism**

Responsible tourism is like sustainable tourism, however as often the word sustainability is often overused and not understood, responsible tourism has been adopted as a term used by industry. Responsible tourism is any form of tourism that can be consumed in a more responsible way. The Cape Town Declaration, 2002 describe the Responsible Tourism in the following manner:

"Responsible tourism is tourism which:

- minimizes negative social, economic and environmental impacts;
- generates greater economic benefits for local people and enhances the well-being of host communities;
- improves working conditions and access to the industry;
- involves local people in decisions that affect their lives and life chances;
- makes positive contributions to the conservation of natural and cultural heritage embracing diversity;



*Glorious tribal life of Chittagong Hill Tracts.*

- provides more enjoyable experiences for tourists through more meaningful connections with local people, and a greater understanding of local cultural, social and environmental issues;
- provides access for physically challenged people;
- is culturally sensitive, encourages respect between tourists and hosts, and builds local pride and confidence.

### Potentials in Bangladesh

Responsible travel is about discovering and re-discovering how to experience nature and to be in it, feeling it, smelling it and learning about it rather than just looking at it. Through this they replenish their souls. They would rather get out on foot than sit in a big bus, and are determined to leave no physical evidence of their visit but their footprints.

The responsible traveller understands local people's relationship with environment, and that income from tourism can be a powerful incentive for conservation. The responsible traveller values diversity – diversity of people, culture and environment. Responsible tourists believe that they can grow as individuals through these experiences, and that their trip can make a positive contribution towards conserving global diversity.

Bangladesh being a natural disaster-prone country and its most of the tourists attractions are vulnerable to climate change, hence responsible tourism can be an effective way for developing sustainable tourism here. In this regard, Bangladesh may focus on making aware its tourism stakeholders like tour operators, travel agencies, tourism service providers, moreover the policy and plan implementing organization, so that an optimal benefit can be reaped. Through promoting the responsible tourism, a balance can be stricken for economic benefit, environmental benefit and social benefit. Through the active participation of local people in tourism policy framing and project implementation, benefit will cascade down to the local people.

Primarily, Bangladesh may focus promoting responsible tourism based on its natural sites (Subndarbans, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Lawachhara Forest and TanguaHaor in Sunamganj) and



*The simple life style of the village people in Bangladesh*

cultural heritage sites (Paharpur, Mahasthangarh, Kantajeu Temple and 60-dome Mosque). As a part of promoting responsible tourism in the country, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation has already initiated some programs for local community awareness in tourism and encouraging their livelihood through tourism activities.

Last year, it organized 4-day long workshops at the four cultural heritage sites of Bangladesh as mentioned above. Currently, it is imparting 5-day long 'Local Tour Guide Training' to 30 local youths (both male and female) from each site of the four said heritage sites. Through this training program, a total of 120 youths will be developed as local tour guides. These trained up tour guides will help local income generation from tourism as well as preservation of local tourism attractions. Apart

from these, for the promotion of local food of above-mentioned four heritage sites, trainings on 'Food Production and Selling in Hygienic Manner' will be imparted soon to the local women and men and restaurant related people.

All these activities ultimately will contribute to the promotion of responsible tourism in Bangladesh. All these programs are being carried out under the ADB sponsored South Asia Tourism Infrastructure Development Project, which is being implemented jointly by Department of Archaeology and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation.

Both Ecotourism and Responsible Tourism demand a more holistic approach to travel, one in which participants strive to respect, learn about and benefit both the local environment and local communities. For development of ecotourism and responsible tourism in Bangladesh, we need well-trained people, multilingual guides with skills in natural and cultural history, environmental interpretation, ethical principles and effective communication. We need ecotourism and responsible tourism related projects to educate members of the surrounding community, schoolchildren of the host community. Although tourism often is superficially hailed as a tool for building international understanding and world peace, we understand this does not happen automatically. We all need to work hard for ecotourism and responsible tourism development in Bangladesh. Since the nation is famous for hospitality and we have smile in face and warm hospitality in heart we are ready to welcome tourists to visit our beloved motherland.

*(Author is the Chairman of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation)*



# 26 March 1971: Vibrant contour of aspiration

By R A M Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury

**M**arch 26, is our independence day, our day of birth. Even those who were worried about the future of Bangladesh at the time of its birth are now astonished. This country is now a unique example for the new world. Our achievements since independence have indeed been blissful. Although we could not erect a permanent edifice in some basic areas including democracy, we are hopeful that we shall be able to reach our cherished goals in the coming days. But the basis of everything has to be the ideology of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The countrymen passed on to Bangabandhu the power to rule and speak on their behalf by voting for him during the general election of 1970. The proclamation of independence adopted on 10 April 1971 stated as follows: ‘...Whereas in the facts and circumstances of such treacherous conduct, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the undisputed leader of the 75 million people of Bangladesh, in due fulfilment of the legitimate right of self-determination of the people of Bangladesh, duly made a declaration of independence at Dacca on March 26, 1971, and urged the people of Bangladesh to defend the honour and integrity of Bangladesh...’

In fact, the 26 March Declaration of Independence by Bangabandhu was a reflection of the will of the people. The need for forming a constituent assembly and to approve and adopt this declaration arose in order to give it a legal validity in the international arena. The adoption of the proclamation of independence and formation of a revolutionary government undoubtedly played a



*Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman speaking to the people of the then East Pakistan before the declaration of independence.*



*Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad continued to issue directives on behalf of Bangabandhu in March 1971 for carrying forward the non-cooperation movement through a specific path*

singular role in providing a legal validity to the history of Bangladesh’s liberation war and in bringing the ongoing war under a command structure. M A Hannan had read out the declaration of independence by Bangabandhu in his own voice from the Chittagong (Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra) radio station, and the deputy commander of Bengal Regiment Major Ziaur Rahman also made the declaration of independence on behalf of Bangabandhu from the same station on 27 March. At the same time, military officers like Major Abu Osman Chowdhury joined the liberation war at Kushitia-Chuadanga border, Major Shafiullah in Myensingh, Major Khaled Mosharrif in Brahmanbaria, and Major Rafiq on the Chittagong border. Resistance was built up throughout the country in the light of the declaration of independence under the leadership of Awami League.

On 4 April 1971, a meeting of the military commanders participating in the eastern zone of the war was held under the leadership of Colonel M A G Osmany (retired) and Lt. Colonel M A Rab (retired). Here, the liberation army (Mukti-Fouj) was constituted with Osmany and Rab as the chief

and the deputy chief. On the other hand, the political leaders assembled at Agartala and Kolkata, and set up communication links between each other. Political leaders stationed in these two places consulted among themselves to form a single command for running the government as well as directing the war and coordinate efforts to provide support to the military.

As the Proclamation of Independence has now been made a part of our Constitution (Article 150), the declaration of independence by Bangabandhu on 26 March has been recognized constitutionally. As Article 150 cannot be amended, the matter can be considered to have been constitutionally resolved. But history does not move forward by obeying the dictates of law or the Constitution. It has its own flows and dynamics. This is true for our national history as well. The paths that the Bangalis treaded before reaching 26 March 1971 should also be kept in mind. Around 1 million people had died on 12 November 1970 in the southern region of the country due to a devastating cyclone and tidal surge immediately before the general election. After visiting the affected areas,

Bangabandhu said at a crowded press conference on 26 November at the then Hotel Shahbag, 'For discharging the responsibility vested on us by the 1 million people who died in the cyclone and tidal surge, if needed another 1 million Bangalis will give up their lives so that we can control our own destiny.'

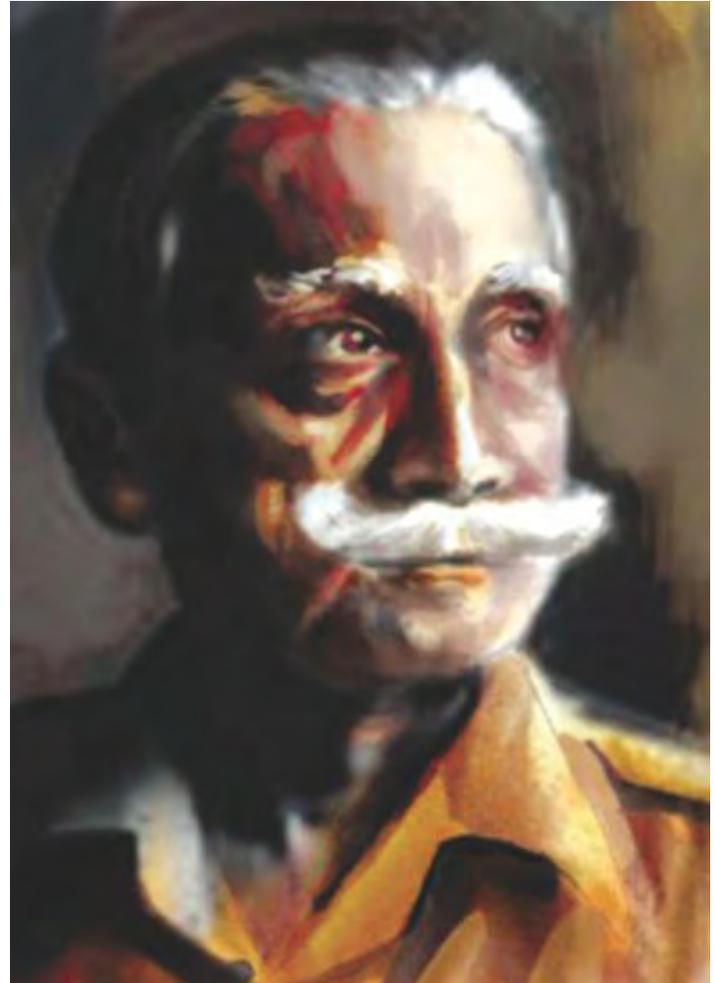
On the occasion of the death anniversary of Suhrawardy on 5 December 1969, Bangabandhu declared: 'From today, the name of this country is Bangladesh.' On 21 February 1971, he said at the Shaheed Minar (Martyrs' Monument): 'Be ready in your houses to shed blood for the movement to realize the self-determination of the Bangalis. ...Today I call upon the people of Bangladesh from the altar of the martyrs, prepare yourself, if needed we shall shed more blood. ... We seek self-determination. ...I do not know when I shall be able to stand before you next. I therefore call upon you and the people of whole Bangla, get ready for the ultimate sacrifice.' At a meeting of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 28 February 1971, he declared: 'Joy Bangla is not merely a political slogan. It is a symbol of the political, economic and cultural rights of Bangla.'

Bangabandhu urged preparations for Bangladesh's independence in numerous speeches throughout March 1971. He put forward the strategy for a movement and struggle in his historic 7 March speech. He said, "Let me then tell you that the Prime Ministership is not what I seek. What I want is justice, the rights of the people of this land. ...I now declare in clear terms the closure of all the courts, offices and educational institutions for an indefinite period of time. So that the poor are not inconvenienced, rickshaws, trains and other transports will ply normally.... The Secretariat, Supreme Court, High Court, Judges Courts and government and semi-government offices shall remain shut. All employees will collect their salaries on 28 February. If the salaries are held up, if a single bullet is fired upon us henceforth, if the murder of my people does not cease, I call upon you to turn every home into a fortress against their onslaught."

Bangabandhu gave a clear directive about what the struggling people should do. He said, "Use whatever you can put your hands on to con-

front this enemy." He also said (hinting about his absence in the upcoming war), "Every last road must be blocked. We will deprive them of food, we will deprive them of water (i.e. supply lines to cantonments should be blocked). Even if I am not around to give you the orders, and if my associates are also not to be found, I ask you to continue your movement unabated."

Bangabandhu presented the strategy for an all-out war on that day. He was a leader of struggles that conformed to democratic practices. His experience with armed wars was limited to merely reading books. But he suddenly faced a reality that there was no alternative to an armed war if the country was to be liberated. He therefore gave an outline of a guerilla war in his speech. He declared, ...."I say that my directives must be followed. ...From today, until this land is freed, no taxes will be paid to the government any more..." He also declared, "No money shall be transmitted from East to West Pakistan..." "The people of this land are facing elimination, so be on guard..." "I ask my people to immediately set up committees under the leadership of the Awami League to carry on our struggle in every neighbourhood, village, union and subdivision of this land. You must pre-



*Colonel M A G Osmany (retired) was the chief of liberation army*

pare yourselves now with whatever little you have for the struggle ahead."

Tajuddin Ahmad continued to issue directives on behalf of Bangabandhu in March 1971 for carrying forward the non-cooperation movement through a specific path. He issued a total of 35 directives and this resulted in the emergence of a parallel government. Through this, Bangabandhu and his party the Awami League enforced their legal and moral right to declare independence, in the backdrop of an electoral verdict received earlier.

26 March was not a sudden day or a sudden event. 26 March was really the vibrant expression of the Bangalis' carefully nurtured aspiration for independence. There is no scope to consider 26 March separately by treating it as something outside the course of history, because confusions may crop up in that case. Not only that, it would deny the fact that the independence of Bangladesh was the result of a sequence of political events from 1947 to 1971, where the politicians were at the forefront and Bangabandhu had played the central role. A web of confusion is woven and an absurd debate is created through a vile attempt to embellish Bangladesh in the light of the Pakistani ideology of militarism as against that of politics. We, therefore, should look at 26 March – the Independence Day – in the light of historical progression. Only then can we move forward towards a developed Bangladesh.



*The jubilant young freedom fighters of Bangladesh*

**Al Haramain Perfumes Group**

# A blend of vision and success

**M**ohammed Mahtabur Rahman (Nasir), a seasoned businessman who is well-versed in a broad range of trade ventures around the world, hails from Sylhet. Born in 1958, he completed his education there itself and pursued with passion his traditional family owned business, which was established in the holy city of Makkah, under the name 'Al Haramain Perfumes', in 1970. He mastered the craftsmanship of the fragrance industry and surmounted the business to new heights. He is currently the Chairman and Managing Director of the Al Haramain Perfumes Group of Companies and the Chairman of NRB Bank Limited.

**AWARDS:**



**1) Top Commercially Important Person - (Non Resident Bangladeshi)** Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman (Nasir) was ranked the top Commercially Important Person (CIP) for four consecutive years in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 by the Government of Bangladesh.

**2) Bangladesh Bank Remittance Award:**

Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman (Nasir) was awarded the prestigious Bangladesh Bank Remittance Award for four consecutive years in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. These awards were given to him in recognition of his outstanding remittances to Bangladesh using the banking channel.



He was commended for contributing significantly towards the persistent growth of the Bangladesh economy.

**3) Honorary Doctoral of Philosophy**

He is also the recipient of the Honorary Doctoral of Philosophy in World Peace and Morality Business Administration of the International University of Morality, which was awarded in 2014.

**Humanitarian & Philanthropic Activities**

Being a man with a compassionate heart, and a desire to help those in need, Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman (Nasir) undertook several humanitarian projects in his personal capacity, and also as Chairman of NRB Bank Limited, Chairman of Al Haramain Hospital (Pvt.) Ltd, and Chairman & Managing Director of Al

Haramain Perfumes Group of Companies.

**Relief for Rohingya Refugees**

Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman (Nasir) has also been significantly involved in efforts to assist hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. For the greater part of the year 2017, he has distributed over 100 tonnes of relief items among the most affected Rohingya refugees in Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, Bangladesh.

**Al Haramain Medical Centre**

Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman (Nasir) went a step further and inaugurated the Al Haramain Medical Centre in the Ukhiya Sub-District of Cox's Bazar on the 27th of November 2017 to cater for the health care needs of the refugees in need of treatment for the most prevalent diseases affecting them, such as diarrhoea, fever, cuts & bruises, common cold, conjunctivitis, skin diseases, dehydration and nutritional deficiency among others.

**Relief for Bangladesh Flood Victims**

Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman (Nasir), in his capacity as Chairman - NRB Bank Limited, contributed towards the Hon'ble Prime Minister's Relief Fund for flood victims in September 2017 by handing over a cheque to Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina Wazed, Hon'ble Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh at Gano Bhaban, Dhaka.

**Prime Minister's Education Assistance Trust**

Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman



(Nasir), in his capacity as Chairman - NRB Bank Limited, contributed towards the Hon'ble Prime Minister's Education Assistance Trust Fund by handing over a cheque to Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina Wazed, Hon'ble Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh at Gano Bhaban, Dhaka in May 2017.

**Assistance for the under-privileged people of the Haor Area**

Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman (Nasir), in his capacity as Chairman - NRB Bank Limited, handed over a contribution of sarees and lungis for the under-privileged people of the Haor Area to His Excellency Md. Abdul Hamid, the President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, at a function held at Bangabhaban in May 2017.

**Inauguration of Al Haramain Hospital (Pvt.) Ltd.**

A significant milestone for



the year 2017 was the opening of Al Haramain Hospital, a 250 bed, ultra-modern, multi-storey and multi-specialty Hospital in Sylhet, chaired by Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman (Nasir) CIP, that confidently and capably provides comprehensive health care with the latest medical, surgical and diagnostic equipment and facilities. These services are provided by expert medical professionals, skilled nurses and technologists using state-of-the-art technology. The Hospital was officially inaugurated on the 21st of December 2017 by Mr. Abul Maal Abdul Muhith, Hon'ble Finance Minister for the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

#### **Al Haramain Perfumes**

Based in the UAE, Al Haramain Perfumes has a modern and well-equipped Head Office fitted with ORACLE-ERP Server in an area of 33,000 sq ft and also a 180,000 sq ft factory with a state-of-the-art manufacturing unit that uses automatic and semi-automatic ultra-modern machinery, including 'Agilent' quality control equipment in the R&D Department. The quality conscious Al Haramain Perfumes, has been accredited by the authorities with Dual ISO Certificates in QMS (ISO 9001:2008) and GMP (ISO 22716:2007) and received scores of appreciation certificates and accolades. The first branch was opened

in Dubai and gradually expanded more than 100 outlets all over the UAE/ GCC countries and beyond in the name of Al Haramain Perfumes and the following sister concerns: Al Haramain Trading L.L.C, Oudh Al Haramain, Noor Al Haramain Trading L.L.C, and Al Halal Perfumes Industry L.L.C.

**Some notable achievements over the years include:**

- *Al Halal Perfumes L.L.C was opened in the UAE, to cater to the fragrance needs of mass markets.*

- *Al Haramain Perfumes L.L.C with several branches, was opened in the Sultanate of Oman for Omanis and for the entire market in the country.*

- *Al Haramain Perfumes Int'l W.L.L and Noor Al Haramain Perfumes Company W.L.L were opened in the State of Kuwait, with several branches, to cater to the perfumery needs of the entire market all over the country.*

- *Al Haramain Perfumes W.L.L with several branches, was opened in the state of Qatar, to meet the perfumery needs of the valuable Qatari customers.*

- *Al Haramain Perfumes SPC with several branches, was opened in the Kingdom of Bahrain to satisfy the perfumery needs of Bahraini customers.*

- *Al Haramain Perfumes PTE LTD was opened in Singapore to*

*meet the fragrance needs of Singapore and also the Indonesian and Brunei markets.*

- *Al Haramain Perfumes SDN. BHD in Malaysia was opened to serve the perfumery needs of the entire Malaysian and other Asian countries.*

- *Rich & Ruitz Perfumes, yet another perfume company, was established in France with a manufacturing plant for production and distribution to capture the entire European and the American markets.*

- *4 Corners Distribution Ltd of Al Haramain Perfumes Group was established in London for the fragrance loving folks of the United Kingdom and the European Markets.*

- *Al Haramain Perfumes PVT LTD was established and opened its first showroom at Jamuna Future Park in Dhaka, catering to the perfumery needs of Bangladesh markets.*

Currently, Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman (Nasir) is associated with the following organizations:

- *Bangladesh Business Council Dubai, in which he is the Founder President, has been established for Bangladeshi Business Communities in Dubai and the Northern Emirates in UAE.*

- *Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed*

*Bangladesh Islamia (Pvt) School - Abu Dhabi, UAE in which he is the sponsor.*

- *NRB Bank Limited in which he is the Chairman, is one of the leading fourth generation Banks in Bangladesh. In 2017, Mohammed Mahtabur Rahman (Nasir) was re-elected as Chairman of NRB Bank Limited for the next 3 years.*

- *Al Arafah Islami Bank Ltd, in which he was the Sponsor/ Director, is one of the popular banks in Bangladesh.*

- *AIBL Capital Market Services Ltd, a subsidiary of Al Arafah Islami Bank Ltd, in which he is the Sponsor/Director.*

- *The University of Asia Pacific in which he is the Trustee, is one of the leading varsities in Bangladesh.*

- *Al Haramain Tea Co Ltd in Bangladesh, in which he is the Chairman, boosts the production of Bangladeshi Tea.*

- *Al Haramain Hospital Pvt Ltd, in which he is the Chairman, is one of the most modern 250 bed multi-disciplinary and multi-storey hospitals in Sylhet.*

- *Beani Bazar Cancer Hospital in which he is a Trustee provides better treatment and care facilities to cancer patients in Bangladesh.*

**UAE EXCHANGE:**

# SERVING BANGLADESHI EXPATS WITH SPECIAL CARE

**H**ome to the world's largest mangroves and river delta, and engraved with coral islands, beautiful beaches, rolling hills and tea plantations, South Asia's green gold, Bangladeshis much more than just a natural beauty.

Bangladesh is an irrepressible social and economic power, which has fought several odds to be where it is today. Breaking the decade long 6 per cent economic growth cycle, this phoenix of a nation rose to 7.28 per cent in FY 2016-17. With increased focus on poverty reduction, resource mobilisation, higher investment, infrastructure implementation, human resource development and strong institutional set up, Bangladesh is on its way to become a further accelerated economy.

The Bangladeshis are friendly and resilient bravehearts, who have endured numerous global uncertainties and natural calamities that imposed much strain on the already limited resources. The diaspora community around the world is a major pillar of financial strength to Bangladesh. In the UAE alone there are more than 700,000 Bangladeshi expats. They work in construction, real estate, hospitality, engineering, medical industry etc. Some of them are even entrepreneurs. Their remittance contributed to

over 7.24 per cent of Bangladesh's GDP during the financial year 2016-2017. Their remittance volume into Bangladesh was \$12.7 billion globally, out of which \$2.09 billion was from the UAE alone.

To safeguard, streamline and provide best forex rates for their hard earned money, financial institutions such as UAE Exchange, have encouraged this hardworking community to send money home only through legal channels. As a socially responsible leader in global money

**UAE Exchange reached out with 'Amar Bangladesh' initiative to help secure their earnings and plan their future better. In association with the Bangladesh embassy, they also supported the Bangladeshi expats in labour camps with Machine Readable Passport (MRP) renewal services.**

transfer, foreign exchange and payment solutions,

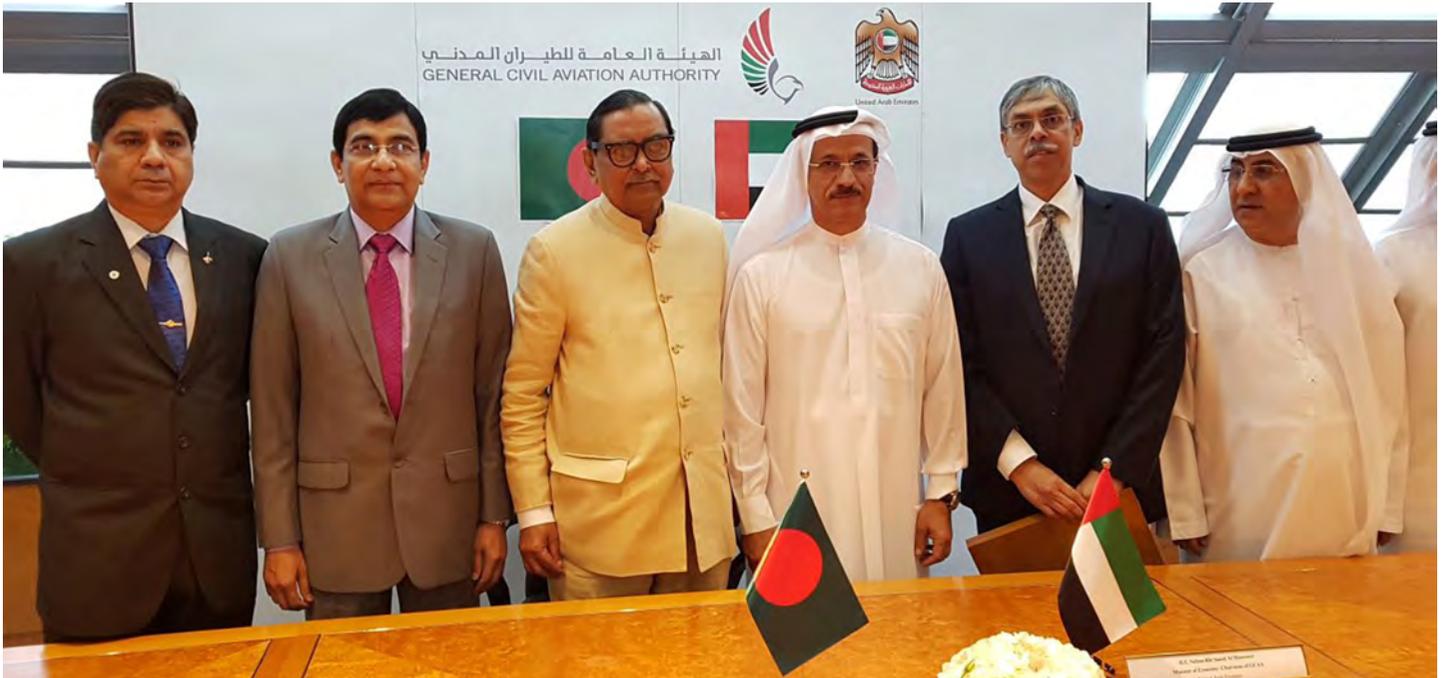
With a wide range of financial solutions such as FLASHremit, the instant bank transfer service, Instant Money Transfer, International Money Express (IME), Associate Bank Transfer (ABT), foreign exchange and payment solutions, UAE Exchange has been serving Bangladeshis with all its might. Especially products such as gocash, the prepaid multicurrency travel card, and SmartPay, the salary disbursal service are a boon to this community.

To provide better service, convenience and experience to Bangladeshi expats, UAE Exchange has created strategic partnerships with over 43 banks in Bangladesh, and has instituted Bangla speaking employees in all 150 plus branches. The brand also provides instant credit facility for both instant and account credit products. Bonding well with the Bangladeshi community and associations, UAE Exchange has been serving them for 38 years now.

Once again insisting on the need to save for the future, and use only legal remittance channels, UAE Exchange wishes resilient Bangladeshis, a very happy Independence Day!



# UAE-Bangladesh relations



*H.E Mr Rashed Khan Menon, Former Minister of Civil Aviation and Tourism of Bangladesh with H.E Dr. Sultan Al Mansoori, Minister of Economy of the UAE after signing the Air Services Agreement (ASA) between Bangladesh and UAE on 2nd October 2017 in Dubai.*



*Hon'ble Health Minister of Bangladesh H.E Mohammed Nasim with Sheikh Faisal Bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Chairman of Julphar Pharmaceuticals in Ras Al Khaimah on 22 August 2017.*



*H.E Mr. Md. Shahriar Alam, M.P, Hon'ble State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh with H.E Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Tolerance of the UAE in Abu Dhabi on 8 March 2018.*



*Signing of MOU on Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) between Bangladesh and the UAE at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Abu Dhabi on 06 February 2018 in presence of H.E Mr. Md. Abdul Mannan, Hon'ble State Minister, Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Finance of Bangladesh and H.E Dr. Anwar Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the UAE.*



*Bilateral meeting between H.E. Mr. Nurul Islam, B.Sc., Minister of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment of Bangladesh and H.E. Saqr Ghobash, Former Minister of Human Resources and Emiratization of UAE in Abu Dhabi.*

# Socio-cultural programmes



# Bangladesh Association UAE

(Abu Dhabi, Sharjah & Fujairah)

Wishes a Happy 47<sup>th</sup> Independence Day

All Bangladeshis residing in the UAE are requested to be the member of the Bangladesh Association to make the Association more effective.

Bangladesh Association is ready to support you  
to strengthen community relations.

Please contact: +971 2 6351 813



বাংলাদেশ সমিতি

সংযুক্ত আরব আমিরাত

**Bangladesh Association-UAE**

Bangladesh Socio - Cultural Organization

جمعية بنغلاديش

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Reg. No.  
2 / 1974

جمعية بنغلادش الإجتماعية - الثقافية

*The Most  
Refreshing Drink*



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Drink

# Tourism Industry of Bangladesh

By Ziaul Haque Howlader

The tourism and hospitality industry of Bangladesh is changing fast for the better at par with other recognized sectors. Despite many criticisms from different quarters on the status of tourism development of Bangladesh, everybody undoubtedly agrees the country possesses many unique tourism attractions. After travelling through Bangladesh, a tourist's perception becomes totally different to earlier views what s/he learnt from the negative media. The smiling people and the heartfelt hospitality mesmerize the tourists. "Bangladesh made an impression on me – and it's been a year since I visited the country. I still remember the taste of Bangladeshi tea served in a delicate cups and saucers every day around mid-afternoon. But the one experience that made the biggest impression on me was the hospitality of the poor... they had plenty of warm smiles and attentiveness,"- Ms. Renee Targos, a writer on Food for Hungry.

Bangladesh is bestowed with bounty of nature and immense beauty. Its captivating natural beauties attracted many travellers from far and wide through the ages. The country is also heir to a rich cultural legacy. In two thousand and more years of its chequered history, many illustrious dynasties of kings and Sultans have ruled and disappeared leaving their marks in the shape of magnificent cities and monuments, the desolate ruins that are still significantly visible in many places throughout the country.

With pristine natural beauty, thought-provoking ancient relics and unique hospitality of the people, Bangladesh has blessed potentials to be an amazing tourist destination. Situated

between India and Myanmar with the entire south edged by the Bay of Bengal, this south Asian country is crisscrossed by hundreds of rivers making it an interesting delta. Expansive green hills and valleys along with mangrove forests and long stretch of sandy sea beaches also add value to the spectacular natural beauty of this land. No wonder, this land attracted priests, traders and wanderers from different parts of the world since ancient period.

There are over seven hundred spots of tourist interest in the country. These include nature driven ones like sea beach, green valleys, forests, archaeological and historical sites, iconic religious places, cultural events and man-made wonders. Thus Bangladesh is a unique tourist destination where one can find the scopes for all kinds of tourist interest as well as investment.

Among the various archaeological sites and monuments the Buddhist relics are very significant, which are Paharpur (8th century AD)- the single largest Buddhist Monastery in south of the Himalayas, Mahasthangarh (3rd century BC)-the country's oldest archaeological site, Mainamati-the seat of lost dynasties (Buddhist) etc. Paharpur located in Naogaon district is the most important and the widely known monastery also a world heritage site by the UNESCO. Bangladesh is trying to develop Buddhist heritage circuit tourism in south Asia. This is to be mentioned here that, Bangladesh recently organized an international conference on "Developing Sustainable and Inclusive Buddhist Heritage and Pilgrimage Circuits in South Asia's Buddhist Heartland" on 27-28 October 2016 in Dhaka. The conference

was participated by government delegations from different countries of Asia, policy-makers, civil society, NGOs, community-based organizations, faith based entities, academic-research-professional institutions/bodies, development partners, relevant UN agencies/organizations and mass media with the aim at securing inclusive and sustainable promotion, protection, conservation and entire development of Buddhist Heritage and Pilgrimage circuits in South Asia's Buddhist heartland.

The world's longest unbroken beach (120 km) of Cox's Bazar is situated on a clean stretch comprising of miles of sands. With its water sports and towering cliffs, this place has been aptly described as the tourist capital of Bangladesh. Top of the list on any tourist's wildlife itinerary is a visit to the Sundarbans (world's single largest mangrove forest- a UNESCO world heritage site) to catch a rare glimpse of the Royal Bengal Tiger, in its natural habitat. Spread over 6000sq. km this riverine delta is criss-crossed by a network of rivers and creeks. Its dense tropical forest play home to a wide variety of flora and fauna and is every game lover's and anglers ideal heaven.

Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh boasts of having some outstanding ancient monuments. Some of the more popular tourists destinations are Lalbagh Fort, built in 1678 AD. Sonargaon, the seat of Deva dynasty upto the 13th century, Ahsan Manjil, Husseni Dalan (a Shiite monument), the Sat gambuz mosque (seven domed mosque built in 1680 AD) and the Dhakeshwari Temple. Sonargaon, the ancient capital of this land, is not very far from the present capital. It beholds old



*A view of the Marine Drive near Cox-Bazar sea beach*

palaces. A folklore museum situated in the area showcases the finest handicraft products made in this country.

The Hill districts in the south eastern region of the country commands an exotic view of natural beauty. Accessible by road from the port city of Chittagong, it is a tranquil heaven for nature lovers. Green hills and sprawling valleys are often dotted with waterfalls and small lakes. The unique lifestyle of the ethnic people adds value to the romance of this paradise. With no sound and air pollution, these hilly districts can be the finest destinations for those wanting to get away from the time chasing modern urbanistic life and embrace a domain of tranquility.

Up in the north eastern part of Bangladesh in the region of Sylhet, the sprawling tea gardens offer a panoramic view. It is like a green carpet rolled out for miles and miles. For centuries, these tea gardens have been producing tea. The plucking of tea leaves by thousands of women in the waist-level thick tea bushes itself is a spectacular view. In the midst of the tea garden valleys, natural waterfalls make it more scenic. The Madhabkunda water fall is the most prominent one with tens of thousands of tourists visiting it every year.

In the north central part between Sylhet and Mymensingh districts, huge water bodies dominate the landscapes which offer another opportunity for nature adventurers. Known locally as haor, these water bodies turn to safe havens for millions of cold escaping migratory birds coming from as far as Siberia. Tanguarhaor situated in the district of Sunamganj is known to be the biggest single water body in Asia.

Bangladesh is often called a land of mosques. It is obvious that with an over eighty per cent of the 140 million people being Muslims, there will be innumerable mosques. However, many of the mosques are ancient and reflect the taste and savoury of the early Muslim preachers and rulers. The 60-domed mosque complex in Bagerhat (a world heritage site) near Khulna is unique with its architectural design. The Atia mosque in Tangail near Dhaka is still vibrant with its archaic designs. The Star mosques in the capital Dhaka show the craze for beautification of holy places. The huge and magnificent national mosque – Baitul Mukarram- in the heart of Dhaka is an imposing



*A view of Cox-Bazar sea beach*

architectural beauty.

The people of Bangladesh are hospitable and resilient by nature and they always welcome guests to this land from time immemorial. Hospitality is the legacy for Asian; it is well-known to all that Asian hospitality is not like that of the other parts of the world. Asian hospitality is not mechanized, but emotional with cares. So, where to find that place which is blessed with truly Asian Hospitality? From time immemorial, according to the tourists, it is Bangladesh. Even today the people here shed tears at the departure of their guests from their residences. If Malaysia represents Truly Asia, Bangladesh represents Truly Asian Hospitality.

With the development trend, right now the country is just standing on the verge of building destination and its peripheral facilities. The tourism products of Bangladesh have started to enter world tourism market. Bangladesh today is a country at the crossroads in global market. She is moving towards the 22nd century while still maintaining a link with the past. Bangladesh is a country whose sights and sounds will delight a visitor and keep him returning again and again to

this land in mosaic.

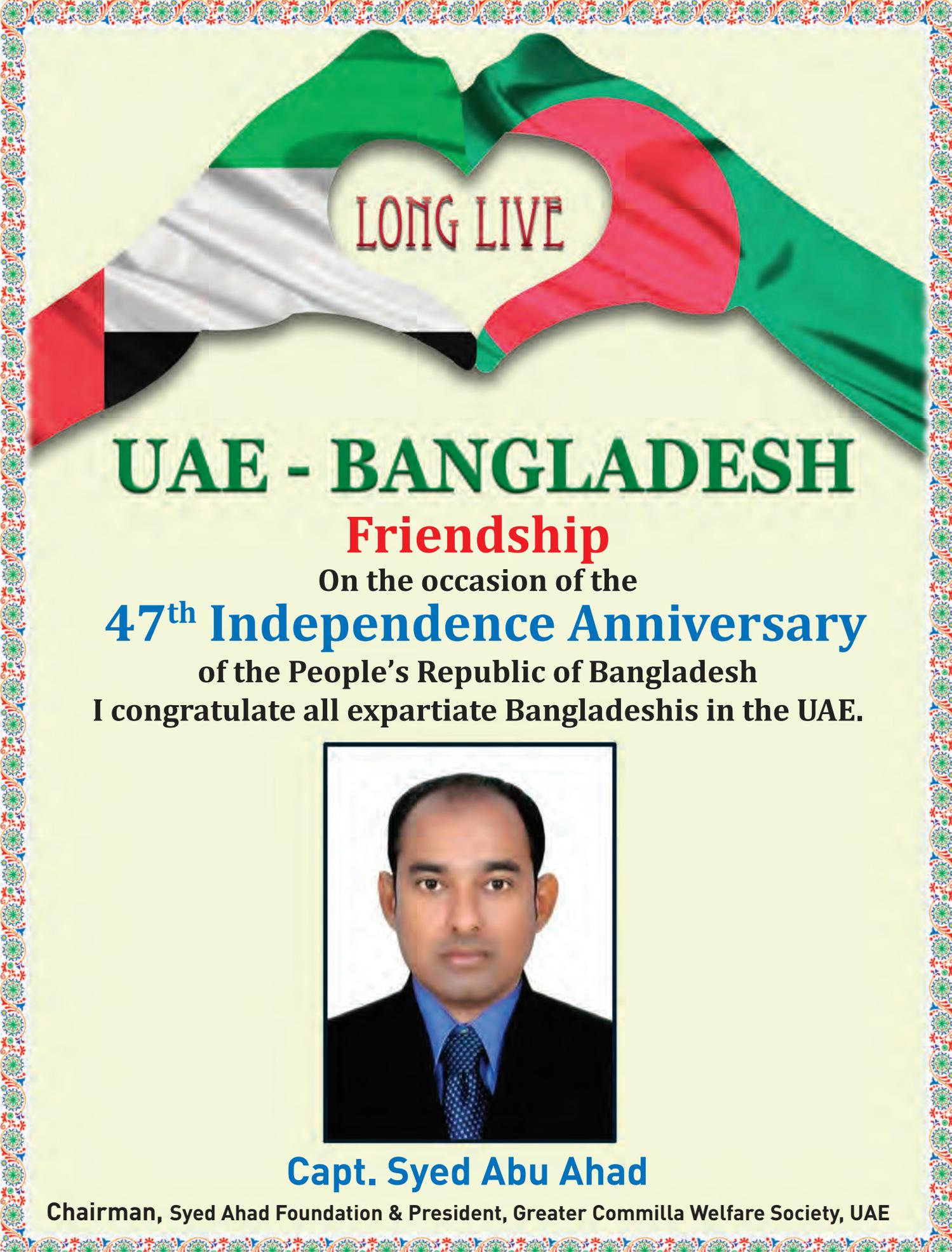
To achieve a consistent success from the tourism industry, Bangladesh has taken many commendable initiatives including creation of international standard tourist facilities which include Exclusive Tourist Zone, Golf course, Country Club, Amusement Parks, 5-star Hotel etc. to attract more foreign tourists. Government of Bangladesh has recognized tourism as an industry and framed a new National Tourism Policy in 2010 for the development of domestic and international tourism in Bangladesh, which underlines diversification of tourism products, development of eco-tourism, overseas marketing of tourism attractions and human resource development. The Industrial Policy of 2009 has included tourism as a thrust sector. The government has also enacted 'Tourism Protected Area and Exclusive Tourist Zone' Law in 2010. Under this law, the government has already declared about Ten thousand acres of land in Cox's Bazar and about Nine Thousand acres of land in Kuakata as Tourism Protected Areas. The government has already taken an initiative to establish an Exclusive Tourist Zone at Sabrung of Teknaf Upzila in Cox's Bazar district under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode. The government has developed two tourism master plans on Kuakata and Cox's Bazar – the two sea beach attractions of the country. Due to the government tourism-friendly policy, private investment in this sector is gradually increasing.

The government of Bangladesh has declared 2016 as 'Visit Bangladesh Year'. 'Bangladesh Tourism Corporation' and 'Bangladesh Tourism Board' under Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism have chalked out lots of events and programmes to be observed throughout this year. It is expected that Bangladesh can attract more than one million tourists this year through the successful campaign of visit Bangladesh year.

Bangladesh is a land of many wonders. With a rich history, diversified culture and impeccable natural beauty, it deserves to be visited again and again. Along with the hospitality of the people, there are all necessary facilities available to make the travel across Bangladesh a memorable one. Bangladesh is always ready to welcome tourists in this land of virgin lush green and ancient civilization.



*A groups of beautiful deers are in Sundarbans*



LONG LIVE

# UAE - BANGLADESH

## Friendship

On the occasion of the

## 47<sup>th</sup> Independence Anniversary

of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

I congratulate all expatriate Bangladeshis in the UAE.



**Capt. Syed Abu Ahad**

Chairman, Syed Ahad Foundation & President, Greater Comilla Welfare Society, UAE

HAPPY 47<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY OF  
INDEPENDENCE DAY

البسمة  
BASMIA  
Noir



AL HARAMAIN PERFUMES  
SINCE 1970



عطورات الحرمين  
منذ ١٩٧٠

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