

# Bangladesh

## On The International Stage

In 2014

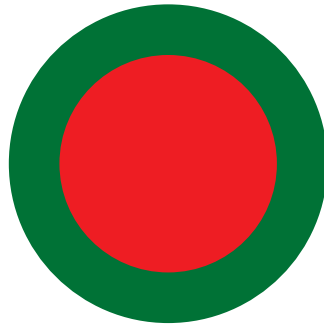




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## Preface

Bangladesh Awami League as a political party was created out of the struggles of the Bangali nation against oppression and discrimination. As such, the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman formulated its foreign policies to reflect such notions. Article 24 of the party's constitution clearly states that the motto on which the foreign policy of the party is based is "Friendship with all and malice towards none". It further states that the party should endeavor to assist and co-operate in all steps for establishing universal brotherhood and world peace and to support the rightful liberation struggles of oppressed people or nations against terrorism, racial discrimination, colonization, imperialism and communalism everywhere in the world.

The Awami League led government under the premiership of Sheikh Hasina has operated with the aforementioned policies over the last six years. Building on the principles, and customizing them for the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century diplomacy, the Awami League led government maintained a highly active international profile in 2014. Apart from playing a key role in the international peacekeeping operations under UN, Bangladesh has been instrumental in bolstering regional cooperation, both in the South Asian as well as greater Asian perspectives.

A zero tolerance policy has been maintained towards militancy and terrorism, both in the international, as well as regional and national levels. Bangladesh has been highly praised for not only dealing with terrorist and/or militant outfits endangering its own security, but also those trying to use Bangladesh's soil for plotting and carrying out attacks on its neighbours. As far as disputes with other countries are concerned, Bangladesh has preferred negotiations and amicable settlement through judicial processes, such as marine verdicts against India. Diplomacy has been effectively used for safeguarding Bangladesh's trade and commercial interests too. Proactive diplomacy has led to expanding markets for Bangladeshi products and overseas workers. Bangladesh's emerging role in the global political scene was also marked by Awami League lawmakers being elected to leadership roles in prestigious international forums.

This special publication looks at Bangladesh's successes on the international stage designed and implemented by the current Awami League government under the prudent and able leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina over the last one-year.

# Bangladesh to the World

**"inspiring" health leadership**



**"model country" for economic growth**



INTERNATIONAL  
CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE

**made "exemplary strides" in education and literacy**



**'green' in all almost MDG sectors**



**"wildly adopting technology"**

- Bill Gates

**"sustained substantial growth"**

- Riedin, US Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs

**"significant and laudable progress" in improving health and safety standards in garment factories**

- US Senators

**"stabilized political atmosphere"**

- Ramakrish Sharma, Secretary General, Commonwealth

**a "Capitalist Haven"**

Alyssa Agers, Senior Adviser on India and South Asia at McLarty Associates

*“We believe in peace as the only solution for development and prosperity. I believe if all countries reached out to one another in friendship, our world would be secure, stable and enjoy peace. Our aim is to strengthen friendships with all countries of the world.”*

**Sheikh Hasina**, Prime Minister  
Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh

## Government to Government Cooperation

After being elected for the second time straight, Bangladesh Awami League has stayed on its path to make Bangladesh an investment friendly country. Countries that are expanding their trade borders are seeing Bangladesh as a country with stable and investment-friendly economy. In the last one year, Bangladesh received great responses in almost every sector.

### Cooperation to Develop Power, Energy and Mineral Resources



Power and energy sector is one of the thrust sectors of Bangladesh. To boost the development of this sector, Germany is to provide €211 Million to improve and establish of energy transmission lines and substations. Japan will provide US\$ 1.18 billion overseas development assistance (ODA) for Bangladesh for development of power and gas sector.

With a vision to provide access to affordable and reliable electricity to all by 2021, the current government is continuing its plans from the last tenure. A deal has been finalized with Tripura government of India to set up an inter-state transmission line to import 100mw electricity. India has also agreed to supply 1000 mw more power daily through Bahrampur- Bheramara Grid Line with an

assurance to upgrade the capacity of power grid to 3000 megawatts.

Both the countries have signed a power co-operation deal which will allow India to transmit electricity from its northeastern states to Bihar through Bangladesh territory. In exchange, Bangladesh would get a daily minimum of 500 to 1,000 in additional megawatts.

The government is also set to install more power plants to produce power on its own soil. In this regard, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed

*JICA, Chevron, Gazprom, IFC and several other organizations are in agreement to **explore and extract** mineral resources, **setting up power plants** and oil refinery in Bangladesh.*

with Malaysia to establish 1320 (2x660) MW coal-based power plant at Maheshkhali in Cox's Bazar. A MoU has been signed with China to construct a 1,320 MW coal-fired power plant in at Moheshkhali.

Exploring the alternative sources of energy Bangladesh is also emphasizing on hydropower, natural gas and solar power. To set up liquid natural gas based power terminal in Khulna, an agreement has been signed with GALI (India) and North-West Power Generation Company Ltd. Chinese investors have shown interest to invest in Bangladesh's energy, mining and hydropower sector. India assured Bangladesh's partnership in India-Bhutan hydropower project.

*“Bangladesh is a leader in this region in rule of law and law enforcement efforts against counter-terrorism financing.”*

**William Brownfield**

US assistant secretary for narcotics and law enforcement affairs

*“Khaleda Zia had denied the presence of terrorists and Indian insurgents in Bangladesh when she was in power, but Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has uprooted them.”*

**Veena Sikri**

Former Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka

## Cooperation to Combat Human Trafficking, Counter Terrorism and National Security

Bangladesh is maintaining its firm stance against trafficking of women and children, drug trafficking. Since taking office in 2009, Bangladesh Awami League led government continued its war against religious extremism. From 2001 to 2008, Bangladesh experienced terrorism in the name of religion. With the strong resolution to wipe out fanaticism from its roots, the current government is continuing its activities. Bangladesh has joined hands with India to combat terrorism, stop human trafficking. In this context, a MoU has been signed with India on bilateral cooperation for rescue, repatriation and rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking especially women and children. National Investigation Agency (NIA) of India and Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) of Bangladesh have agreed to work together to combat militancy. India also agreed for a greater cooperation regarding neutralizing JMB and other militant groups.

United States of America have agreed to continue cooperating Bangladesh in countering terrorist financing and violent extremism. Greece also agreed to work together to combat terrorism and militancy.

Bangladesh's success in securing its maritime border has made Lebanon to seek training and assistance to prepare a detailed curriculum for Lebanese navy. In response, Bangladesh has offered Lebanon to provide training to their navy in naval aspects on maritime strategy and warfare.

During the visit of Lieutenant Daya Ratnayeke, Commander of the Sri Lanka Army agreed to assist in raising women's corps unit to strengthen Bangladesh's armed forces.

## Cooperation to Develop Communication and Infrastructure

The current government is committed to strengthen the communication network as it identifies communication and infrastructure as an indicator of development. Government has built new roads and developed the current communication system. It also has made several agreements with foreign governments to get assistance for upgrading the communication sector.

*International agencies and organizations like World Bank, European Union are extending their support for, i.e. **export diversification** of Readymade garments sector, **training rural women** for apparel industries, etc.*

### COOPERATION IN DIFFERENT SECTORS

Developing a poverty database

Boosting Bangladesh's export by providing financial assistance

Training Health Assistants for increasing skilled attendants

Assistance for developing primary education sector and to create employment

Bangladesh has signed a MoU with 'Max-Renken JV', a China-Bangladesh joint venture company to construct a 5.2 kilometers long flyover in Chittagong. Another MoU has been signed to construct a tunnel under the Karnaphuli River in Chittagong.

During the recent visit of Malaysian premier to Bangladesh, a MoU has been signed to construct thousands of dwellings

in Dhaka. Malaysia will also assist Bangladesh to construct 13-km flyover and 22,000 apartments in Dhaka to develop city dwelling and communication sector.

Recently Bangladesh has expanded its maritime boundary by winning disputes with India and Myanmar. To expand trade capacity through sea, government has initiated to construct a deep sea port at Paira in Patuakhali.

During Bangladesh premier's recent visit to UAE, Dubai Port Authority has agreed to conduct a feasibility study for the Paira deep sea port. Another agreement has been signed with India for long-term coal sourcing, maritime transportation, transshipment, inland water transport and logistics.

Bangladesh has expanded its transportation system beyond the borders. It already has initiated bus services on Dhaka-Kolkata and Dhaka-Agartala route. India has decided to expand the communication system to strengthen people to people contact between the two neighbouring countries by initiating a bus service in Dhaka-Shilong-Guwahati route. A trial service has been running on this route from 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2014. This service will connect the north-western region of India with Bangladesh.



## Migration and Overseas Employment

Overseas employment is Bangladesh's one of the major sources of earning foreign currency. More than 9 million Bangladeshis are stationed around the world and they are contributing 13 percent of the country's total GDP. To uplift the situation, government has made a number of agreements with several of the host countries like UAE, Malaysia, Maldives etc.

During the recent interactions, Malaysia has expressed interest to recruit 150,000 farm labourers from Bangladesh. A MoU has been signed by the two countries in regards to export 12,000 labors to Malaysia by next year. An agreement has also been signed to abolish partial visa requirements. Previously Bangladeshi workers were recruited only to work at the plantation sectors of Malaysia.

From now on they will be able pursue jobs in other sectors too. This has been agreed by the host country.

Maldives has signed a MoU to recruit doctors and nurses from Bangladesh and will send more students to Bangladesh for medical education. During the recent visit of Bangladesh premier to UAE, the host country has agreed to recruit manpower from Bangladesh. The two countries have also inked a groundbreaking deal to export 1000-2000 female household workers from Bangladesh.

## Cooperation to Develop RMG Sector

Readymade garments sector is the top contributing sector in Bangladesh's total export income. According to a recent report by Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, in the first six months of 2014 RMG sector has contributed 81.25 percent of the total export income. To boost this sector, United States has assured continued support for further development of Bangladesh's RMG sector and acknowledged the progress already made in the areas of labour rights and factory safety.

In a meeting between the two premiers of Bangladesh and Belarus during 69th United Nations General Assembly Summit, Belarus premier offered US\$15 million as long-term assistance for the development of readymade garment sector. Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel expressed her government's eagerness to provide assistance to improve Bangladesh's RMG sector.



## Cooperation in Education and Research

The Bangladesh government is moving forward with a vision to advance the academic sectors of the country. Recently, India has agreed to raise its education related facilities including stipends for Bangladeshi students who are pursuing higher education there. Australia has decided to provide US\$ 32.6 million aid for developing Bangladesh's education sector in 2014-15 fiscal year. The amount is over one-third of the developed country's total aid spending in South Asia.

Bangladesh has taken steps to ensure its food security by striking a partnership with a Chinese firm to create hybrid rice crops. The country is hoping to bolster its rice production to tackle the issues of a fast-growing

population and gradual decline in cultivable land. China would provide up to US\$ 10.5m to set up a Joint Research Center to develop hybrid seed for 3 category rice.

Bangladesh has signed a deal with Japan-based IT professionals' examination council, paving the way for its IT professionals and graduates to get internationally recognised certificates. Russia is to provide Bangladeshi students with 13 scholarships especially from Dhaka University to pursue PhD, Post-graduate and Under-graduate programmes in Russia. Besides, Maldives is to send more students in medical schools in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has moved one major step closer towards the advanced science and technology, particularly in the field of research of quantum and fundamental physics, by signing an 'International Cooperation Agreement' with CERN in Geneva. For the countries like Bangladesh, CERN provides a unique opportunity for the much-needed technology transfer, education and training for researchers, scholars, academics and students.

## Cooperation for Human Development

The South Korean government is to provide Bangladesh with US\$ 13 Million as a soft loan to build a multi disciplinary and specialized hospital under Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical Hospital (BSMMU) in Dhaka. A joint Memorandum of Declaration (MoD) was signed between the two parties in this regard.

*United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide US\$ 26 million to benefit 130,000 school children in poorest areas of Bangladesh*

Bangladesh and India have agreed to swap all kinds of traditional medicines and also exchange experts and physicians for conducting trainings. Bangladesh signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with India at the 32nd meeting of the Ministers of Health of World Health Organisation South-East Asia Region (WHO-SEAR) and the 67th Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia.

Japan is to provide Bangladesh with a grant of US\$ 2 million to develop innovative new crop insurance products for giving small-holder farmers of Bangladesh income protection from increasingly severe storms and natural disasters.

## Cooperation in Trade and Investment

Political stability and investment-friendly economic environment of Bangladesh have attracted new investors in unique sectors.

*"Bangladesh advanced much in establishing "Sonar Bangla" as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Your (Sheikh Hasina) role in establishing world peace and security is praiseworthy."*

**Ban Ki Moon**, Secretary General  
United Nations

*"United States is proud as it has been a partner of development of Bangladesh."*

**Nisha Desai Biswal**  
US Assistant Secretary of State

*"The uncompromising policy of Sheikh Hasina in establishing peace and security in the world has been widely recognized."*

**Gennadiy Gatilov**, Deputy Foreign Minister  
Russian Federation

*"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government has not just denied these (terrorist and militant) groups shelter; it has actively intercepted them, arrested some of their leaders, and even handed wanted terrorists over to the Indian government... Giving Bangladesh legal rights to territory within its own borders is the least India can do to express its gratitude."*

**Shashi Tharoor**  
MP for the Indian National Congress

Recently Singapore has proposed to provide technical and financial support for establishing utility services at Purbachal satellite town near Dhaka. As per the proposal, Singapore will complete all the civic amenities there by 2019. Singapore is interested to construct an independent city with all modern facilities at Purbachal, in the outskirts of the capital Dhaka.

India intends to set up 70 markets, colloquially called 'haats', on its border where Bangladeshis and Indians will be able to buy and sell, among other things, fish, spices, dairy and poultry products as well as handicrafts.

Bangladesh government is to create and improve 'Special Economic Zone' (SEZ) for the Indian investors. Discussions have also been initiated between respective governments for the creation of special economic zones for China and UAE.

China agrees to finance Bangladesh's larger priority development projects on easier terms and at a cut-down lending rate. The Chinese government's lending agency--EXIM Bank--assured of relaxing the terms and conditions, including lowering the interest rate on their proposed credits.

India and Bangladesh reviewed the entire scope of their

bilateral relations at the third meeting of their Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) and identified several new areas of cooperation, including civil nuclear energy and space. The two parties have agreed to enhance cooperation in new areas including nuclear science and technology, space, health, jute and textiles, renewable energy, maritime, fisheries, oceanography, meteorological, and other areas related to development of the blue economy of the region.

Japan is the largest foreign donor to Bangladesh. They stood by Bangladesh during the Liberation War of 1971. Commemorating the friendship, Bangladesh is to offer a Special Economic Zone to Japanese industrials to set up factories in Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka, so far heavily dependent on Indian drugs, has signed an MoU with Bangladesh to import pharmaceuticals products. This is the first government-to-government mechanism for exporting Bangladesh drugs. The new agreement will open the door to increasing the export volume. Talks are also on for adoption of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Sri Lanka. Recently, Myanmar has shown its interest in importing Bangladesh's pharmaceuticals.



# Regional Cooperation

## SAARC



The 18th Summit of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 26-27 November 2014. Bangladesh displayed considerable diplomatic dexterity at the summit, standing out in performance from its neighbours. Due to

Bangladesh's concerted efforts, the SAARC Framework Agreement for Energy Cooperation (Electricity) was signed at the last minute. Bangladesh continued its efforts to closer regional integration in terms of power and energy when it hosted the first meeting of SAARC energy regulators in Dhaka from 21-22 December 2014. At this meeting, the national energy regulators of the SAARC countries agree to form a Regional Energy Regulatory Authority to adopt a plan of action that will include the removal of regulatory barriers to the cross-border trade of electricity among the member states.

## Joining AIIB

Bangladesh has joined as one of the founding members of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Bangladesh and 21 other Asian countries on Friday signed the intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Bangladesh's joining to the AIIB would enable the country to get financial and technical support for building and improving its infrastructure, which is an urgent requirement for achieving higher economic growth and promoting the country to the middle-income group.

## BCIM- Economic Corridor



Bangladesh is strongly supporting China's efforts to establish greater regional cooperation in Southeast Asia through the creation of the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC). Recently, Bangladesh hosted the second Joint Study Group of BCIM-EC at Cox's Bazar that ended with the pledge to establish a multi-billion dollar fund to pull in resources from various parties to set up the BCIM-EC.

## ASEM

In order to enhance Bangladesh's cooperation with the major European countries, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

played a proactive role during the 10th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit. In addressing the Summit, the Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina upheld the modern image of Bangladesh at the European stage. She made powerful statements about Bangladesh's stance on terrorism, climate change, migration, connectivity, MDGs and post-2015 development goals. In order to enhance Bangladesh's relations with major European states, and in particular to promote its trade and commercial interests, the Bangladesh Premier held talks with the Prime Ministers of Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Greece and Germany.

## BIMSTEC

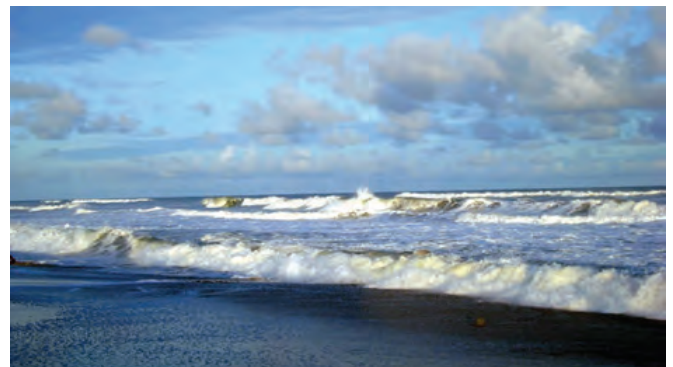
The permanent secretariat of BIMSTEC has now officially started its operation in Bangladesh's capital city of Dhaka. The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an alliance of South and South East Asian



countries, comprising of Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal. In September 2014, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the secretariat in Dhaka aiming to achieve greater economic development through greater regional integration.

## Bay of Bengal Cooperation – Blue Economy

The current government has placed utmost significance on making optimum and balanced utilization of the natural resources in the Bay of Bengal and its geo-politically strategic location. Under the Awami League government's policy of using international judicial mechanisms for securing marine territories, a favourable verdict by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) was secured in Germany in the delimitation case with Myanmar on 14 March in 2012. The award helped Bangladesh establish sovereign rights over the living and



nonliving resources of the Bay of Bengal in the Exclusive Economic Zone within 200 nautical miles and in the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles. In the same way, the verdict with India declared on 7 July 2014 also allowed Bangladesh's sovereign rights on all the living and mineral resources of the Continental Shelf extending upto 354 nautical miles. Thus, Bangladesh's sovereign rights have been established on more than 118,000 sq km of maritime territory, 200 nautical miles (NM) of exclusive economic zone, and 354 NM of continental shelf after positive verdicts in international courts.

Owing to these successes, the government has undertaken the "Blue Economy" initiative, under which the AL government envisages sustainable development through proper utilization of the potentials of the sea and marine resources. In September 2014, Bangladesh hosted a workshop to explore the possibilities that the Bay has to offer, bringing together more than 30 experts and representatives of 20 countries. There, Bangladesh sought 'Bay of Bengal Partnership' for sustainable economic growth leveraging the blue ocean to its south. Bangladesh is now seeking cooperation with countries experienced in this sector to enhance its capacity on research, observation, surveillance, analyses, outcomes and observations to fully and sustainably exploit the blue resources.

## **BIG-B Initiative**

Bay of Bengal also forms the basis for greater cooperation between Bangladesh and Japan regarding the Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth- Belt (BIG-B) Initiative. Bangladesh, embracing the Bay of Bengal, located in-between South Asia and South-East Asia. Under the current global economic power shift toward the Indo-Pacific Ocean region, this geographical advantage will provide a unique opportunity for the country to play a node and hub role in regional as well as inter-regional matters. This also suggests Bangladesh's renewed focus on "Look East"

policy to exploit the vibrant economic growth from Pacific to Indian Ocean.

The BIG-B initiative is to accelerate industrial agglomeration along the Dhaka-Chittagong-Cox's Bazar belt area and beyond, encompassing developing economic infrastructure, improving investment environment and fostering connectivity. The Prime Ministers of Bangladesh and Japan, Sheikh Hasina and Shinzo Abe, during their respective visits to their counterpart's country in 2014, agreed to forge greater ties in making this vision a reality, bringing mutual prosperity. The two Premiers have agreed for maximum use of Japan's advanced technologies and socioeconomic development experiences, to yield mutual benefits and prosperity to both countries under this initiative. BIG-B foresees Bangladesh transcending its national borders to become a heart of the regional economy and providing a gateway for both South Asia and South-East Asia to step into a closer inter-regional relation, so that Bangladesh may reshape herself as a sparkling trading nation deeply incorporated into inter-regional and global value chains.

## **Regional Cooperation for Wildlife Conservation**

In October 2014, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal joined hands to conserve wildlife and tackle poaching under a coordinated effort to combat wildlife trading and protect biodiversity under the 'Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Wildlife Protection in Asia (SRCWP)' project, funded by the World Bank (WB). Under the project, the three countries would be sharing information, innovative practices, and demonstrating results to preserve these unique species. The three countries also signed a bilateral Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with India relating to collaborate to further the project's goals of protecting biodiversity in South Asia.



# Leadership on the International Stage

In the last one year of the Bangladesh government led by Bangladesh Awami League, the country has made remarkable success in leading several international bodies. From becoming the member of United Nations Human Rights Council to becoming Director General of International Mobile Satellite Organization, Bangladesh is active in different international agencies representing almost every sector.

*Bangladesh is a model for developing countries for its rapid development in the education sector. Bangladesh has made remarkable strides in education and literacy, particularly for girls, since independence, and especially in the recent years.*

**Irina Bokova**, Director General  
UNESCO



## **Bangladesh stands for quality education at UN Global Education First Initiative**

The UN Global Education First Initiative was launched in 2012 with aims to put quality relevant and transformative education at the centre of the social, political and development agendas. It also aims to generate additional and sufficient funding for education through sustained global activity efforts.

In a high level discussion of UN Secretary Generals Global Education First Initiative at UN Headquarters, Prime

Minister Sheikh Hasina upheld Bangladesh's stance for quality education, not waging war. She said, "We must divert billions we spend for creating war machines and violence to educating our progeny for the 'world we want.'"

Bangladesh has achieved universal access to education and gender parity because of right policies and deploying quality teachers. The current government has trained nearly a million secondary level teachers. With a goal to prioritize quality education, Bangladesh will have 120 million skilled workforces by 2015.

## Bangladesh pledges fighting child marriage at Girl Summit, 2014

Attending the first ever Girl Summit 2014, held in London on 22nd July 2014, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina outlined Bangladesh's pledge to end all forms of child and early marriages by 2040. Sheikh Hasina was the only head of government invited to the event due to her long standing commitment to empowering women. The summit was aimed at mobilizing international efforts to end child, early and forced marriages.

## Bangladesh, a brand in peace support operations

Bangladesh has been the most active partner in UN Peacekeeping Operations. Bangladesh has provided unequivocal support to UN Secretary General's strategic review on peacekeeping. In a high level summit on UN Peacekeeping, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reassured that Bangladesh will continue to provide assistance to build a world without terrorism, war and conflicts. Since the first time Bangladesh sent its sons to Africa in 1988, more than 103,000 forces have been deployed around the world. One hundred and nineteen (119) soldiers have laid their lives for restoring peace in an alien nation.



Bangladesh has established a state-of-the-art Institute of Peace Support Operations and Training (BIPSOT). Regarding BIPSOT, Prime Minister stated, "We have planned to turn BIPSOT into a global centre of excellence for training peacekeepers, especially women peacekeepers from all countries." Mentioning the agility and mercurial nature of the Bangladesh peacekeepers, Prime Minister said, "Bangladesh has constantly updated its deployment capabilities with evolving nature of peace support operations." Bangladesh was the first to respond in Mali, Congo, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic. In all these operations, Bangladesh remained self sustained which took pressure off from UN logistics.

## UNHRC elects Bangladesh a member

In the 47-nation UN Human Rights Council's highly competitive elections held in New York, Bangladesh has been elected a member to the top UN human-rights forum for 2015-2017 term which is a massive global endorsement of the Sheikh Hasina government.

This Human Right Council created in 2006 oversees global human-rights standards, mechanisms and normative deliberations on promotion and protection of human rights.

Bangladesh has tasted victory in this election before. It had been a member of this UN body for the two successive terms until 2012. According to the rules, a member is not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms that compelled Dhaka to take a break.

## UNGA adopted 'Culture for Peace' resolution proposed by Bangladesh

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has unanimously adopted a resolution titled **"Culture of Peace"** proposed by Bangladesh. The resolution was adopted at a meeting of the UN General Assembly on the Victory Day of Bangladesh, 16 December, 2014.

Along with Bangladesh, as many as 97 countries were cosponsors of the resolution. The main slogan of the resolution was "Peace will come if intolerance and hatred of the people are reduced." Many European countries for the first time cosponsored the resolution.

In this year's resolution, working process and code of conduct for the youths and women have been added. Like the previous years, there were also directives for the NGOs and civil society.

## Bangladesh's resolution on autism and global recognition

In 2014, the World Health Assembly passed a Bangladesh-pushed resolution on autism in Geneva. Bangladesh placed the resolution in 2013 that received immediate board approval. The annual Assembly is the supreme decision-making body of the World Health Organization that passes such resolutions. Passing a resolution means all 194 member states agree with it. With this success, the neuro-development disorder has received global attention.

Following the recognition, the World Health Organisation incorporates global autism advocate Saima Wazed Hossain into its highly prestigious 'Expert Advisory Panel' on mental health. Her technical ability, experience, global representation in terms of diversity of knowledge, and



approaches in the relevant field played important role in receiving the honour.

Saima Hossain has been awarded by South-East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) for her contribution to public health in the national, regional and global level. Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director of SEARO, handed the citation and crests. She is the architect of South Asia Autism Network that brought the regional countries together to address the growing challenge of this disorder. It was her initiative that Bangladesh hosted the first-ever global conference on autism in 2011, drawing leaders like India's Congress Party chief Sonia Gandhi.

## **Bangladesh aims for a greener world at 69th UNGA**

Prior to the 69th session of UNGA, Bangladesh has attended Climate Conference, 2014. This event is one of the most crucial events as the world leaders sit together to make the mother Earth more inhabitable. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressed at the National Action and Ambition Announcement session of the conference. Reaffirming the country's commitment to reduce carbon emission and monitoring environment-friendly development activities, she said, "The large emitting countries should reciprocate by robust voluntary commitments." Regarding the 'Intended Nationally Determined Contributions' (INDCs), Bangladesh is working on its possible INDCs. Prime Minister said that every country should have a clear, verifiable and measureable INDCs.

Describing the future effect of global warming, Prime Minister urged the world leaders to pay attention to 'Carbon budgeting' and 'de-carbonization pathways. Being climate-vulnerable, the country so far allocated 385 million US dollars from own resources for adaptation and mitigation.

## **South South Award for eradicating poverty**

Bangladesh has been awarded for the government's efforts to eradicate poverty and raising living standards, health services and social safety net across Bangladesh. "This award is recognition of Bangladesh's progress by utilising limited resources under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina. Prime Minister ICT Advisor Sajeeb Wazed Joy received the award on her behalf.

Organization of American States and UN's South-South Cooperation has been jointly organizing this award as part of the Global South-South Development Expo held each year since 2008. South-South Cooperation is a broad framework for collaboration among countries of the South in various sectors.

## **Prime Minister receives recognition for promoting female education**

UNESCO has awarded Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her tireless effort in promoting female education in Bangladesh. UNESCO director general Irina Bokova presented a memento titled, 'Peace Tree', to the Prime

*UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) elects Ambassador Ismat Jahan a member of the for the second successive term.*

*Won deputy membership of the governing body of the International Labour Organization (ILO) for the period of 2014-2017*

*Successfully won membership in International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for the second term*

*Elected a member of UN South-South Steering Committee for Sustainable Development*

Minister in recognition of her outstanding contribution to girls' and women education. Bokova handed over the memento at the inaugural ceremony of an International Conference on "Girls' and Women Literacy and Education: Foundations for Sustainable Development" marking the International Literacy Day 2014.



## **Inter-Parliamentary Union elected Bangladesh's MP as President**

Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP has been elected as the President of Inter-Parliamentary Union. He defeated three other candidates -- Speaker of Australia's House of Representatives Bronwyn Bishop, Indonesian MP Nurhayati Ali Assegaf and former Speaker of the Maldives Parliament Abdulla Shahid. This election was held during the 131st IPU Assembly in Geneva. The IPU is the international organization of Parliaments which works for world-wide parliamentary dialogue and works for peace and co-operation among people and for the firm establishment of representative democracy. Bagging 169 votes in the election, Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP will lead IPU till 2017.



## **Elected Vice President at Montreal Protocol**

Abdullah Al Islam Jakob, the Deputy Minister for Environment And Forests, in favour of the government of Bangladesh, has been elected as the vice president (VP) of the COP (Committees of the Parties) and MOP (Meeting of the Parties) to the '26th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol' and '10th Meeting of the COP to the Vienna Convention'. The election took place in an international Meeting at UNESCO HQs in Paris, France organized by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

## **Elected Director General at International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO)**

In November 2014, Bangladesh's Captain Moin Uddin Ahmed was elected the Director-General (DG) of International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO). Bangladesh's win at this forum represented the first time that a candidate from a developing country was elected in the leadership position of this prestigious forum. IMSO is an inter-governmental organisation with 99 member states and its primary purpose is the oversight of certain public satellite safety and security communication services provided by mobile satellite communication systems.

## **Membership at Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)**

In May 2014, Bangladesh became a full member of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). CICA is an Asian forum that works to enhance cooperation for peace, security and stability in the region. CICA can also facilitate trade expansion among the member states, particularly with Central Asian countries. Bangladesh was an observer of the forum since 2010. Being one of the largest political entities in Asia, the forum has the potential to create impact upon the politics of this continent.

These consecutive victories at the UN and other inter-governmental organisations testify to the successful pro-peace and pro-development foreign policy pursued by the government. It also signifies the recognition of Bangladesh's pro-active diplomatic engagement in the international arena.

## **Commonwealth Parliamentary Assembly elects Bangladesh's Speaker as Chairperson**

Bangladesh's first women speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury MP has been elected as the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Assembly (CPA). The election was held at the 60th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Cameroon. CPA was previously known as the Empire Parliamentary Association. It works to support good governance, democracy and human rights. Honorable Speaker Shirin Sharmin bagged 70 votes and achieved the position to lead a executive committee of 35 members till 2017.

## **Bangladesh wins Vice Presidency at International Programme for the Development of Communication**

Bangladesh has been elected as the Vice President of the Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). The election took place at the 29th Session of the Intergovernmental Council of IPDC being held from November 20-21, 2014 at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. The IPDC is the only intergovernmental programme in the UN system mandated to mobilize international support in order to contribute to sustainable development, democracy and good governance by strengthening the capacities of developing countries and countries in transition in the field of electronic and print media. By becoming Vice Chairman for the next two years, Bangladesh will join the 8-member Bureau of IPDC Council, which is responsible for project selection, approval and allocation of funds for media development in developing countries.

# Bangladesh's Performance at International Forums

*Bangladesh made important gains in the millennium development goals... The picture we saw in Bangladesh in 2008 was fully different in 2011. During the period Bangladesh made stunning development... I hope that the trend of Bangladesh's development would continue under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.*

**Ban Ki Moon**, Secretary General  
United Nations

## Continued Progress in Human Development



The latest Development Update released by the World Bank stated that Bangladesh has continued to progress on human development and reduce

extreme poverty. The Update notes that progress in poverty reduction is visible. The Development Update also expresses that Bangladesh has made significant progress in improving working conditions for factory workers, amending labor and factory laws, increasing government's capacity in assessing factory safety and structural building safety.

## Bangladesh feeding the world

The latest report of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in May, 2014, emphasized the growing role of Bangladesh in feeding the world by its fish and aquaculture production. Bangladesh is the fourth leading country in the world for inland fisheries production. "Asian countries are expected to account for 91% of world aquaculture production in 2022, with Bangladesh, Thailand, India and China experiencing highest growth rates," the report said.

## Remarkable progress in reducing gender gap



Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in reducing gender gap, moving up from the 75th position in the 2013 Index to 68th position in the 2014 Index by World Economic Forum

(WEF). Bangladesh is also featured as one of the top ten nations to have reduced gender inequality by political empowerment of women.

## 'Important progresses' made in labour rights and factory safety

International Labour Organisation (ILO) has stated that since 2013, the government of Bangladesh has made important progress to ensure labour rights application and factory safety

in the ready-made garment and knitwear industries. In particular the ILO noted the following improvements: amending law; strengthening freedom of association, collective bargaining and occupational safety and health; registering new trade



unions; strengthening safety and factory inspections; adopting national occupational safety and health policy; creation of standards for safety inspections and establishing review panel for closures of hazardous factories. By the same token, the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, a group of North American retailers, has also applauded Bangladesh for its progress in improving working conditions in garment factories.

## Improving maternal and child health

Lancet, a leading medical journal of United Kingdom and World Health Organization (WHO) have listed Bangladesh as one of the 10 "fast-track" countries that have made significant achievements in improving maternal and child health. Under-5 child mortality declined by 65% in Bangladesh between 1990 and 2011 while maternal mortality dropped drastically by 66% during the same timeframe.



World Health Organization

## Eradication of Polio

World Health Organization (WHO) certified that Bangladesh has successfully removed the threat of Polio. Though the target was achieved in 2008, the long-awaited certification came on March 27, when the WHO finally stamped the country as polio-free.

## Survey on Bangladeshi children's future

A survey conducted as part of the Global Attitudes Report 2014 by Pew research Centre, revealed that an overwhelming 71% Bangladeshis feel their children will be better off than them in future in Bangladesh.

*“Against the odds, Bangladesh has achieved sustainable growth that pulled 16 million people out of poverty in the last decade... Bangladesh has an excellent record of investing in health, education and social safety nets for the poor and I am optimistic that more progress can be made to end poverty and ensure shared prosperity. Today, more Bangladeshis are living longer, healthier lives, and more children are stepping into classrooms.”*

**Philippe Le Houérou**, Vice President  
World Bank, South Asia Region

## Pew Research Survey on trade and foreign investment

The Economic Conditions Report 2014 of Pew Research Centre (a Washington-based research organisation) found that 71 percent of the Bangladeshis are happy with the economic health of the country. The numbers reveal that majority of Bangladeshis have expressed optimism about the economy, giving the thumbs-up to the government's economic management. A staggering 66 percent of the respondents said they expect the economic situation in Bangladesh would improve over the next 12 months.

## Bangladesh acquires significant share in global market



In its latest report on Least Development Countries (LDCs) published in November, 2014, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has hailed Bangladesh's export growth for acquiring significant share in the global market for manufacturing

and service products. The report showed that Bangladesh tops the LDCs for manufacturing exports, earning over \$29.1 billion in 2013. In service exports, Bangladesh achieved substantial growth with more than \$1.87 billion in earnings.

## Bangladeshi products' demand on rise

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), demand for Bangladeshi products is on the rise both in the domestic and international markets. Between June 2013 and June 2014 the growth of demand for Bangladeshi products rose from 42% to 48% in the international market and from 50% to 55% in the local market.

## Maintained macroeconomic stability and amongst the top remittance earners

In their latest report titled "South Asia Economic Focus, Fall 2014", the World Bank has commented that Bangladesh has been able to maintain macroeconomic stability, its export earnings & foreign exchange reserves are on a consistent upward path, trade deficit and inflation are low

and the GDP will continue to grow over 6.2% due to the current climate of political stability.

Bangladesh has once again taken a spot among the top ten remittance-earning countries on the back of an upgrade in the legal status of migrant workers in Gulf countries. The country is expected to receive \$15.05 billion in 2014, enough to retain the eighth position it held last year. Remittance is forecast to grow by 8.62% this year.

A visiting delegation of IMF led by Rodrigo Cubero had stated that Bangladesh has made considerable progress in consolidating its macroeconomic stability. It noted with appreciation that foreign exchange reserves have continued to increase and have reached adequate levels, inflation has declined, and fiscal deficit is contained and public debt is on a downward path.

## Attractive investment environment, largest recipient of remittances

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) Investment Policy Review (IPR) reflects the desire of Bangladesh to build a successful investment framework and policy environment that attract not only foreign investors, but also promote domestic private sector development.



According to their latest report titled "Least Developed Countries Report 2014", UNCTAD stated that Bangladesh received 45% of the total remittance inflow to the least developed countries (LDCs). The report said Bangladesh continued to be the largest recipient of remittances, receiving almost \$14 billion in 2013. The report further stated that the country registered strong growth in export in the recent years, driven mainly by exports of labour-intensive manufactured goods.

## Higher growth in GDP and export

In its Asian Development Outlook 2014, Asian Development Bank (ADB) has predicted that in the current fiscal year, Bangladesh's Gross Domestic

*“Bangladesh is going through the process to graduate to a middle-income country from a developing nation...”*

**Naoyuki Shinohara**, Deputy Managing Director  
International Monetary Fund (IMF)

*“Bangladesh is a model country for the rest of the world, thanks to its resilience and the continuous economic growth in the face of crisis... Bangladesh is no longer a test case for development.”*

**John Danilovich**, Secretary General  
International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)



Product (GDP) would grow at 6.4%, a figure 0.2% higher than their earlier prediction. It also stated that export and remittance earnings would continue to rise in the current climate of political stability.

## **Bangladesh next hot spot in apparel**

According to the McKinsey forecast report, many chief purchasing officers view Bangladesh as the next hot spot for sourcing in the ready-made-garment market. With about \$15 billion in exports in 2010, ready-made garments are the country's most important industrial sector; they represent 13 percent and more than 75 percent of GDP and total exports, respectively. McKinsey forecasts export-value growth of 7 to 9 percent annually within the next ten years, so the market will double by 2015 and nearly triple by 2020.

## **Rural economy witnesses major wage uplift**



According to a report on Rural Wages in Asia published by Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Britain's leading independent think tank on international development and humanitarian issues, average rural wages in

Bangladesh rose to \$2.21 a day in 2010 from \$1.52 in 2005, marking a 45% increase.

## **Extreme poverty to be zeroed down by 2030**

A latest study on Bangladesh's social and economic development by UK government and USAID showed that extreme poverty level would come down to almost nil (2.4%) by 2030 even if the economic growth rate remains similar to those recorded since 2000. The study also acknowledged that Bangladesh has made remarkable progress over the past two decades, lifting millions out of poverty and sustaining expanding levels of economic growth.

*Sheikh Hasina... the symbol of liberal and progressive world leaders. When I look at the MDG chart, I see Bangladesh green in all aspects.*

**Anthony Lake**, Executive Director  
UNICEF

## **Credit strength reflects healthy economy**

According to a global credit research report Bangladesh's underlying credit strengths reflect a healthy outlook for economic growth, limited vulnerability to fiscal and external funding stress and steady progress on policy (fiscal) reform. Despite political turmoil and uncertainty which prevailed before January 05, 2014 election, Bangladesh is doing well in maintaining steady GDP growth, rising export, maintaining a moderate trend of debt-to-GDP ratio.

## **Won 'Global ICT Excellence Award'**

Bangladesh has won the 'Global ICT Excellence Award' at the World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) held in Mexico's Guadalajara in the 'Public Sector Excellence' category.

# Bangladesh in Different Global Indexes

*Bangladesh has shown remarkable progress in achieving MDG goals, which should serve as encouragement for other emerging economies to adopt similar strategies and approaches.*

**Roberto Azavedo**, Director General,  
World Trade Organization

## Human Development Index, 2014

Bangladesh has improved one step in Human Development Index (HDI) to rank 142 globally, up from 143, as per the Human Development Report 2014 released by UNDP. Bangladesh is among the 18 countries globally, which has shown extraordinary progress in terms of HDI. Apart from Sri Lanka, only Bangladesh from South Asia has been able to improve on its previous standing.

## World Bank Gini Index, 2014

According to the World Bank's latest Gini Index, Bangladesh has fared considerably better than many of its South Asian neighbours in tackling inequality in distribution of income and expenditure. The report titled 'Addressing Inequality in South Asia', which was presented by World Bank's Chief Economist for South Asia Martin Rama on Monday in Dhaka, places Bangladesh as third among the eight countries of the region in the inequality index.

## Global Hunger Index (GHI), 2014

Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2014 by the International Food Policy Research Institute, Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide revealed significant improvements by Bangladesh along with 9 other countries between the GHI of 1990 and 2014 regarding hunger levels.

## UNIDO and CPI Index



According to the latest Competitive Industrial Performance (CPI) Index released by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the World Economic Forum (WEF), Bangladesh has advanced

25 notches up to rank 77th. Its position in the 1990 CIP was 102nd. The CIP index is a composite index that measures the ability of countries to produce and export manufactured goods competitively, using several individual indicators to proxy various dimensions of industrial performance. Apart from Bangladesh, only Poland and China showed such phenomenal growth.

## Social Progress Index, 2014

According to the Social Progress Index (SPI) 2014, Bangladesh produces another 'development surprise' in the SAARC region. For the last six years, government has taken numerous initiatives to develop the social scenario of the country. As a result, Bangladesh achieved extraordinary improvement both in its economic niches and human development index.

## Safe Mother Index, 2014

Bangladesh advances by six spots to secure 130th position in a global survey covering 178 countries, showing the country's status in saving and improving the lives of mothers and children. The index is part of the agency's annual State of the World's Mothers report, now in its 15th edition, according to a statement issued yesterday by the Dhaka office of Save the Children.

## Global Peace Index by Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)

According to the Global Peace Index 2014, Bangladesh is safer than its neighbors India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Bangladesh's state of peace has been described as 'medium', securing it the 98th position among 162 countries covered in the Index while India ranked behind at 143, Pakistan at 154 and Afghanistan at 161.



## Trade Confidence Index, 2014

According to HSBC's latest Trade Confidence Index, trade confidence on Bangladesh has risen sharply, by 38 points in 6 months, which is the second highest among 23 countries globally.

Bangladesh outpaced several countries including India, Turkey, China, UK, Brazil, Canada, Malaysia, USA, Singapore, Germany, Hong Kong, Australia and France. The report also forecasts



steady growth for Bangladesh's share of garments & textiles exports, rising from 2.8% in 2010 to 3.8% in 2020, boosted by recent initiatives to further strengthen its health and safety standards.

### KPMG Index, 2014

The KPMG Index of Change Readiness have showed Bangladesh securing an overall rank of 54th, with a balanced scorecard: 55th in enterprise, 54th in government and 66th in people/civil society, unlike its neighbors which display a heavy tilt towards one dominant pillar.

### MasterCard Worldwide Index

According to the MasterCard Worldwide Index of Consumer Confidence, consumer confidence in Bangladesh jumped 25.9 points in the first half of 2014 to 66.4 points from the previous six months, making Bangladesh the recorder of the biggest improvement among the 27 countries from the Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa region covered in the study.





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