



The Embassy of Bangladesh  
Stockholm



The Colours of Bangladesh

# Kaleidoscope

Newsletter of the Embassy of Bangladesh, Stockholm  
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## First Word

Getting to the peak of Mount Everest doesn't make big news these days as the unbeaten streak of the summit was successfully challenged by a New Zealander and a Nepalese Sherpa way back in 1953. Even so, it is indeed great news and a matter of pride to ride to the peak of the earth by someone who comes from a country where highest peak is only 1230 meter high. Yes, Musa Ibrahim from the low lying Gangetic delta of Bangladesh has climbed the top of the world on 23 May 2010. We are proud of Musa. He again proved to the world that anything is achievable by Bangladesh.

May, minted with the celebrated birth anniversary of the two greatest ever-glittering jewels of Bangla literature, is a month of extreme significance to our

national life. Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam, both born in May, have built their own empires in Bangla literary world and kept reigning even after a century of their births. Their works surpassed the limit of time and national boundary and showed to the outer world the richness of our mind. Like every year, this year also, we have celebrated their birth anniversaries across the country and across the globe. 'Where the mind is without fear, and the head is held high' – the verse of Tagore reverberates in our minds and keeps us inspired to build a country and a world free from fear and sectarian divisions.

Imtiaz Ahmed  
Ambassador & Chief Editor

## Editor's Note

Warm compliments of hot summer. The May-June period this year has taken us through a very unique journey from coldest winter to hottest summer in recent history of Scandinavia. Although local people here are cooling them down in the cold water around the archipelago, the summer is a great respite for us, coming from a tropical country, no matter how hot it is.

As always, this time also we have many hot news to share with you. Bangladeshi scientists have broken the gene code of Jute. This unique discovery is hoped to change the future of Jute and Jute goods and to regain the use of Jute at a global scale for eco friendly greener packaging and many more. We have seen our sustainable farm grown crocodiles coming across the continent to Germany. We have experienced a major shift towards digital Bangladesh in the Chittagong City Corporation elections where for the first time in the history of Bangladesh, e-voting was conducted in

one council area. Success of this piloting is now paving the way for adopting electronic voting at national scale in near future. During the period, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh H.E Sheikh Hasina visited South Korea and Malaysia which strengthened our ties with the two countries and raised hope for further investment from those countries in infrastructure, RMG, shipbuilding and other important sectors. Two high-level visits from Chinese Vice President and Qatari Minister for State and International Cooperation and their willingness to invest in Bangladesh in big infrastructure projects like deep-sea port, gas and automobile sector are the reflections of confidence of foreign countries and investors in the stable and vibrant economy of Bangladesh. We hope this issue of the Embassy Newsletter will live up to your expectation.

Khandker Masudul Alam  
First Secretary

## Hon'ble Prime Minister Visits South Korea

**Bangladesh and South Korea issued a joint communiqué at the end of the Hon'ble Prime Minister H.E. Sheikh Hasina's three-day visit from 16-19 May 2010 to Seoul spelling out specific steps for enhanced ties particularly in economic fields including energy sector.** It agreed

to intensify cooperation in trade, investment, transfer of technology, energy and infrastructure development for mutual benefit. It said, Bangladesh welcomed active involvement of South Korean enterprises in the energy, communications and transportation, industry and infrastructure sectors of Bang-

ladesh, while the both sides agreed to support and facilitate the mutually agreed cooperation projects like establishing Korean EPZ. The statement said, both sides underscored the importance of working closely for environmental protection and sustainable development at the bilateral, regional and international levels, while Dhaka appreciated South Korea's 'Low Carbon, Green Growth' strategy.

In the communiqué, **Korea agreed to explore ways to accord further duty-free market access to more Bangladeshi products as Bangladesh requested for expanded duty-free coverage of its products under the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement and through the Korean duty-free quota-free scheme for LDCs under the WTO.**

Korea promised continued assistance to support Bangladesh's economic and social development alongside expressing its willingness to favourably consider increasing the amount of the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) loans. Korea also agreed to explore ways to support capacity building, including on-site training, in the emerging ship-building industry of Bangladesh. Both sides agreed to

further expand defence cooperation including training, exchange of visits, and collaboration in the defence industry alongside intensifying cooperation in softer areas like cultural sector through more exchange programmes and broadening people-to-people contact. The two sides signed the Framework Arrange-



ment Concerning Loans from the EDCF for the year 2010-12, Cooperation in the Energy Sector, Cooperation for Environmental Protection and Cultural Exchange Programme for the years 2010-14.

**The Hon'ble Prime Minister H.E. Sheikh Hasina and South Korean President Lee Myung-bak vowed to strengthen bilateral economic and trade cooperation for the mutual benefit of the two countries.**

This was expressed by the two leaders during a summit talks at the President Office in Seoul on 18 May 2010. President Lee praised H.E. Sheikh Hasina's leadership enabling the country to achieve 6.5 percent economic growth last year despite global economic turmoil. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina lauded South Korean government for its deep involvement in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh since the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

**Bangladesh and South Korea have signed two agreements and two Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) on 18 May 2010 for strengthening economic and cultural cooperation between the two Asian nations.** The agreements are on economic development fund loan and cultural exchange programme, while the MoUs are on energy cooperation and environmental protection. ■

## Foreign Minister visits France and Spain

The Hon'ble Foreign Minister H.E. Dr. Dipu Moni held bilateral talks with the French Foreign and European Affairs Minister Mr. Bernard Kouchner in Paris on 23 June 2010. H.E. Dr. Dipu Moni briefed her French counterpart on Bangladesh government's initiatives to strengthen democracy, secularism and human rights in Bangladesh and the development initiatives of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina under the Vision 2021 programme.

Mr. Kouchner praised Bangladesh for its achievement in development, good governance, and women em-



H.E. Dr. Dipu Moni & Mr. Kouchner

powerment, human rights, fight against terrorism and in UN Peace Keeping Operations. He recommended the people of Bangladesh for their secular values and acknowledged Bangladesh's active and assertive role in regional and international forum. He assured H.E. Dr. Dipu Moni of his country's continued assistance for Bangladesh. He expressed his country's readiness to work closely on climate change issue in the run up to Cancun. He expressed interest of France in investing and developing connectivity, communication, infra structure, energy sector including renewable type, support under clean development mechanism, cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors, boosting trade, extending technical cooperation or training, capacity building and cooperation in hydrology, marine and undersea resources exploitation and management and cooperation in dredging rivers and flood management. In addition, the French Foreign Minister proposed formation of an efficient joint mechanism between the two countries led by their respective Foreign Ministries.



H.E. Dr. Dipu Moni & Mr. Moratinos

The Hon'ble Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni also visited Spain and held a bilateral meeting with her Spanish counterpart Mr. Miguel Angel Moratnos in Viana Palace, Madrid on 23 June 2010. In the talks, the entire gamut of bilateral relations was reviewed and the two Foreign Ministers agreed to widen and intensify cooperation in a number of areas such as trade, investment, culture, tourism, education, agriculture, Spanish language learning, migration, technical cooperation and scholarships, women empowerment, etc. Spanish Foreign Minister Mr. Moratnos agreed to extend his country's cooperation in the field of renewable energy and climate change adaptation of Bangladesh. They agreed to conclude trade agreement, investment agreement, avoidance of double taxation agreement and cultural agreement. They also agreed to send delegations to expedite cooperation and undertake joint initiatives.

Mr. Moratinos praised Bangladesh's active and responsible role in the UN organizations and the UN peace keeping operations, OIC, and its pioneering role in regional cooperation frameworks. Recognizing its active role and global leverage as a moderate Muslim democracy and global confidence that Bangladesh enjoyed in building bridges with its voice of moderation, Spanish Foreign Minister invited Bangladesh to play lead role in the Alliance of Civilization, a forum initiated by Spain and Turkey to promote inter faith and inter civilization understanding and cooperation. ■

*For more information about Bangladesh Foreign Ministry and its activities, please visit the website [www.mofa.gov.bd](http://www.mofa.gov.bd)*

## Destination: Bandarban

*- the roof of Bangladesh*

Lots of hills and hilly areas, waterfalls, River Sangu, lakes and the tribal culture are the main attraction of Bandarban. Bandarban is the home of Bomong chief who heads the Mogh tribe. Bandarban is also the home of the Murang tribe who are famous for their music and dance.

Some 92 km from Chittagong by metalled road through the green forests and hills is tucked away the quiet haven of peace and tranquility known as Bandarban. The unspoilt setting of this little township, rich in tribal heritage, attracts a large number of tourists. Its flora and fauna, the pretty bamboo cottages made by the ethnic people and their colourful lifestyle have distinguished this charming hill resort a preferred destination of tourists from home and abroad. The panoramic views of Bandarban will surely induce visitors to extend their stay, so that they may roam around at leisure in the natural wilderness of this hilly district. Tourists can also have good access to a wide variety of activities like hill trekking to remote tribal villages, bird watching, visiting waterfalls on daytrips, and a better chance of interacting with the indigenous locals and appreciating their ethnic culture.



Bandarban includes the following places of interest:

**Bagakain Lake**, popularly known as Baga Lake, is a natural waterbody. The lake attracts tourists because of its amazing scenic beauty but it is inaccessible by any means of

transport. Only those who take the challenge of trekking through the hilly bushes can visit the lake whose main source of water are natural springs. The local tribal people use the water of the lake for drinking. Mt. Keokeradong Discovery Trek is another typical trek which includes a river journey by country boat to Ruma, then a day's hike up a river bed to the lily-filled Baga Lake and a lakeside Bawm tribal village. Below the lake one will find a Marma village. Mental strength and physical fitness are essential to take part in such trekking in Bandarban. Another noteworthy site is Chimbuk hill, which in the Bangladeshi context is an out-of-the-ordinary tourist attraction. It is called 'the Darjeeling of Bengal' and is 700 metres above sea level. Located Chimbuk hill is 25 km south of Bandarban town, approached by a zig-zag road and offering a stunning view of the Sangu river, it can give the visitor the experience of a lifetime. The top of this hill is plain and just like a plateau. The dance of the clouds increases in liveliness with the rise of the morning sun and immediately before sunset, and tourists can have the delightful experience of touching clouds with their hands. ▶▶

## Bandarban – the roof of Bangladesh



*Kayaking in the river Sangu, Bandarban Hills*



*The famous Buddhist Pagoda at Bandarban*

▶ The entire ambience is so captivating that one would surely like to return here again and again.

**Ruma Bazar**, 60 km southeast of Bandarban, is another attractive tourist destination. The place is famous for its scenic beauty and visitors can while away a few pleasant hours before making the journey back to Bandarban by sampan (boat). Ruma is full of diversity: *Rijuk Waterfall*, *Prantik lake*, the *Bromang Raj Bari* and museum are also worth seeing. But, a visit to Bandarban remains incomplete if *Meghla* is left out. Situated about 6 km from the Chittagong-Bandarban highway, it boasts a lake of extra ordinary beauty. *Alikadam* is well known for the settlements of the *Murang* and *Khumi tribal* people. Another attraction is the *Shailapropat* (waterfall), 8 km from Bandarban. The walk to this spot involves several ascents and descents. *Buddha dhatu jadi* is an attractive temple located at a height of 60 meters on a hill at Balaghata, 2 km from Bandarban town. Its golden colour and eye-catching architecture make it a feast for the eyes.

**Sangu** river is another attraction of this hilly district. Tourists can take a boat from Kaptai lake and travel down stream along the *Sangu* to go to Bandarban.

### **How to Reach:**

Comfortable AC and Non-AC coaches are available from Dhaka to Bandarban by road via Chittagong. It is also possible to hire a car or microbus from Dhaka to Bandarban.

Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation has modern and luxurious hotel, motel, & cottage accommodation with restaurants, auditoriums, bars, speedboats and other facilities in Bandarban.

Interested tourists may contact Bangladesh Parjatan (Tourism) Corporation for detailed information and packgae tour with guides about the visits to the Bandarban. ■

### **Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation**

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*The peak of Hill of Bandarban*

## Bangladesh a role model for food security

Bangladesh will be showcased at the upcoming Group of Eight (G8) summit in Canada and Asia Food Security Investment Forum in the Philippines as a model among developing countries due to its success in steadfastly pursuing sustainable food security. Dr Shenggen Fan, Director General of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) disclosed this to one of the leading news media of Bangladesh, namely *The Daily Star* in an exclusive interview on the sidelines of the two-day 'Bangladesh Food Security Investment Forum' rounded off in Dhaka on 27 May 2010.



“The reasons why Bangladesh’s case will be projected as a model are: 1) *its achievement in the past in augmenting food production*; 2) *Bangladesh government’s strong commitment to ensure food security*; and 3) *its advancement in drafting a national food policy plan of action*,” explained Dr Shenggen Fan. “Bangladesh will be showcased at Asia Food Security Investment Forum and also at G8 summit so

that other nations get inspired in pursuing food security,” said Mr. Shenggen Fan.

“In the past decade especially, Bangladesh has made impressive economic and social progress towards achieving many of the Millennium Development Goals. Poverty, for example, has fallen from 57 percent of the population in 1990 to 40 percent in 2005 despite repeated natural disasters and external shocks, and economic growth during the last decade has averaged an impressive annual growth rate of 6 percent,” said Fan, who joined IFPRI in 1995 and took over as its DG in December last year. The number of people in the world suffering from hunger and poverty has risen to more than one billion, and Bangladesh is not immune to this reality, he said. He also noted that with population continuing to rise, arable land getting scarcer and climate change forcing the weather pattern to become erratic, Bangladesh is bound to face more challenges in the future than in the past in sustaining food security. (Source: *The Daily Star*). ■

## The first Bangladeshi conquers Everest



This is the first time that a Bangladeshi, Mr. Musa Ibrahim, have reached the highest peak in the world, Mount Everest.

The 30-year old Mr. Musa, sub-editor of an English daily newspaper in Bangladesh, had reached Everest

on 23 May 2010 from the Tibetan side. Besides Musa, three Montenegrins, six Britons, one American and a Serb were in the team. **The Hon’ble Prime Minister Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina congratulated Musa Ibrahim on his conquest of Mount Everest.** She was delighted at the news of this achievement. ■

## Genome Sequencing of Jute by Bangladesh Scientist



Bangladesh has innovated ‘Genome Sequencing’ of jute (mystery of origin of jute) after long research by Bangladeshi scientists and researchers. With this great scientific success, Bangladesh joined a few countries in the world and is the

only developing country except Malaysia that could innovate the genome sequencing of a plant.

This innovation would help to develop the jute fiber, increase production of new jute seeds compatible with hostile weather caused by the climate change, curb diseases and help development of the jute industry. ■

## “Digital Bangladesh by 2021 achievable”



The secretary general of International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Dr Hamadoun I. Touré said that the Bangladesh government’s vision for building a 'Digital Bangladesh' by 2021 is ambitious but achievable

during his visit in Bangladesh in the month of June 2010. “If trained properly, existing Bangladeshi manpower can become the major catalyst to fulfill the government’s ambitious vision of digitalizing the country by 2021,” Mr Toure said.

He also called the concept ‘Digital Bangladesh’, if properly achieved, would be a major move towards

social development of the country. Talking to the media, he termed stable regulatory rules in a particular country 'vital' to encourage investment in the telecommunication industry from both the domestic and international investors.

“No investor would risk their investment in a country with unstable and rapidly changing regulatory rules and laws. But

we have observed the rules and laws much stable in Bangladesh and favorable for investment,” he said. “We consider Bangladesh a country with a tremendous opportunity in the field of telecommunication, and ITU would ensure all-out support for facilitating the sector here,” Mr. Toure ended. ■



## China to assist Bangladesh for building deep seaport

China proposed to give assistance to Bangladesh for building deep seaport in Chittagong and installing the country’s first space satellite. Beijing also agreed to quick disbursement of its assistance for Pagla Water Treatment Plant and Shahjalal Fertilizer Factory. This was disclosed during the official talks between the Hon’ble Prime Minister H.E. Sheikh Hasina and Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping on 14 June 2010 at Dhaka. **The two leaders agreed to boost co-operation in political, economic and cultural fronts. Briefing newsmen on the outcome of the talks, the Hon’ble Foreign Minister Dr. Dipu Moni said, the Chinese side assured more investment in Bangladesh and reduce the bilateral trade imbalance by allowing more Bangladeshi products to have duty-free access to the Chinese market. She said, China also agreed to extend co-operation for the development of telecommunication and infrastructure in Bangladesh.** The two sides agreed to exchange data and information about the flow of the common river



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Chinese Vice President*

Brahmaputra. The Chinese side agreed to help Bangladesh combat adverse impact of the climate change as well as extend co-operation in curbing militancy and terrorism. Vice President Xi stressed the need for exchange of visits at the political level between the two countries. The two sides agreed to make memorable the 35th anniversary of the diplomatic ties between Bangladesh and China this year. The talks followed the singing of an economic co-operation agreement under which Beijing will give grant of 40 million RMB to Dhaka. ■





## Qatar to help in Bangladesh's development sectors

Qatar will intensify its cooperation in the development sectors of Bangladesh, including river dredging, construction of road infrastructures, community health clinic and power stations. The assurance came when a 7-member Qatari delegation led by the visiting Qatari Minister for State and International Cooperation Dr. Khaled Bin Mohammad Al Atiyah called on the Hon'ble Prime Minister H.E. Sheikh Hasina on 11 March 2010. During the meeting, they discussed various bilateral issues and cooperation between the two Muslim countries including Qatar's assistance to Bangladesh's development endeavors, trade and business and export of Bangladeshi workers to that country.

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh attaches great importance to its brotherly relations with the State of Qatar based on commonality of history, culture and region and expressed the hope that the relations will reach newer heights in the days ahead. The visit would pave the way for a meaningful cooperation and would add significantly in further strengthening the bonds of fraternity between the two countries, the Hon'ble Prime Minister added. Laying emphasis on further strengthening the cooperation in trade and business specially in the private sector, the Prime Minister said frequent exchange of visits in the fields of education, art and culture and trade and commerce between the two countries should be expedited for the benefit of two peoples. Calling upon



the Qatari government and entrepreneurs to import more skilled and semi-skilled personnel from here, H.E. Sheikh Hasina said that the Bangladeshi manpower have internationally standard experiences in construction, civil aviation, power, water, petro chemical and gas, automobile, health and hospitality sectors. According to statistics, at present more than one lakh Bangladeshi workers are working in Qatar. Inviting Qatari private sector investment in the country's banking, agro-based industries, road infrastructure, tourism, power generation, oil, gas and mineral exploration, education and IT sectors, the Prime Minister said her government has formulated an excellent investment friendly policy for foreign investors. In reply, the Qatari minister assured of his government support to this end as well as Bangladesh's development sectors.

## Dhaka International Trade Fair'2011



The Export Promotion Bureau of Bangladesh (EPB), in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh, is organizing the 16th 'Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) – 2011' in Dhaka from 1-31 January 2011. The event will provide immense opportunity for both buyers and sellers to establish new business

contacts. The participants in the Nordic region are advised to submit their application form for participation in the fair through this Embassy or through their own Embassy in Bangladesh. The application form can be downloaded from the EPB website ([www.epb.gov.bd](http://www.epb.gov.bd)). Any queries regarding participation may be directed towards EPB or to this Embassy. ■



## Prime Minister calls for greater Malaysian investment

The Hon'ble Prime Minister H.E. Sheikh Hasina on 20 May 2010 invited Malaysian entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh and take advantage of the existing favourable investment climate. The Prime Minister said this while addressing a roundtable discussion of Malaysian investors, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



The Hon'ble Prime Minister suggested to investment in the country's labour intensive RMG, textile, and light engineering industries as well as in the electronics, agro-based product, ICT, power and infrastructure industries. During the meeting, H.E. Sheikh Hasina also requested the Malaysian businessmen to increase import of world class Bangladeshi products like jute and leather goods, RMG, ceramics and pharmaceuticals for the mutual benefit of both countries. The Prime Minister said Bangladesh is pursuing a free market policy and the government has liberalized its trade regimes, and investment policies. She also

said the country had reduced interest rates, the cost of doing business and infrastructure bottlenecks as well as improving port facilities. She elaborated that the investment climate in Bangladesh was now attractive with liberal fiscal policies, such as tax holidays, concessionary duties on imported machinery, remittances on royalty, technical know how, and technical assistance fee. Adding that the country now allows 100% foreign equity and full repatriation facilities of dividend and capital.

Referring to Public Private Partnership (PPP) policy, the Hon'ble Prime Minister said that Malaysia, with its experience with PPP, could support Bangladesh in building these projects. At present Malaysia is the fifth largest investor in Bangladesh with a total investment of nearly US \$150 crore, with 72 Malaysian joint venture projects in the private sector creating employment for over 13,000 people. ■

## 'Made by D-8' cars to be manufactured in Bangladesh

An Iranian automobile manufacturer, namely **SIPA**, is likely to build its new car producing plant in Bangladesh to meet domestic demand, the Hon'ble Industries Minister Mr. Dilip Barua said news-men on 13 May 2010. "It will be really a good news, if a foreign company invests here solely or under joint venture to manufacture car for the country," he said. The Hon'ble minister disclosed the news at a press briefing at his office after attending the first D-8 ministerial meeting on industries affairs.

The Iranian automobile company decided to manufacture a common brand car for the D-8 countries, and Iran, Turkey and Malaysia were

given nod to supply design. "We will try to set up the plant in our country, and after meeting the D-8 countries' demand, the cars would be shipped to other countries," Mr. Barua added.

The countries have agreed to use 'made by D-8' logo for familiarizing the products and to expand their market. The minister also informed that Iran would form a fund to encourage internal investment among the member countries, and it would share out 15 million Euros in this regard. The member countries exchanged views on bilateral interest in the meeting for identifying the areas of assistance in the industrial sector and exchanging technologies. ■



## Bangladesh is exporting crocodiles

Another unconventional product was added to Bangladesh's export basket as the country's lone crocodile farm has finally been able to send 67 crocs to Germany on 5 June 2010.

Bangladesh is the first country in South Asia to export farm grown crocodiles. Managing Director and CEO of the Reptile Farm Limited (RFL) Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed said Germany's Heidelberg University is importing the crocodiles for research purposes. "The export of crocodiles from Bangladesh would fetch US Dollar one hundred thousand, ushering in a hope of croc business in the country".

The project was aided by the South Asian Enterprise Development Facility (SEDF) and with financial support from the Equity and Entrepreneur Fund (EEF) unit of Bangladesh Bank. The farm started its operation after acquiring 75 reptiles ranging from 7 feet to 12 feet in lengths from Malaysia for commercial breeding of crocs at a cost of Taka 12.5 million (approximate USD 178,000).

Different countries, including France, Germany, Italy and Spain, have shown keen interest in im-



porting croc skins from their farm, said Mr. Mushtaq, expressing hope that their farm would be able to export 500 croc skins by next two or three years. Mentioning that there is a huge demand for croc skins, meat and bones in Europe, America and other developed countries like Australia, Japan, Singapore and China, and charcoal made from crocodile bones is indispensable to the global perfume industry. Mr. Mushtaq said their farm follows the Australian standard and fulfills the criteria of IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) and CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) in breeding crocs. ■

## BATEXPO-2010



Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA) is going to organize the 21st Bangladesh Apparel and Textile Exhibition 'BATEXPO-2010' from 25-27 November, 2010 at the

Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Dhaka, Bangladesh. **BATEXPO** is one of the largest expositions in the Asia-Pacific region organized by BGMEA since 1989 as per its trade promotion. This is a unique opportunity for apparel and other buyers to mingle around the same roof and choose their business partners. Business forums, associations, companies, trade bodies and investors of the Nordic countries are welcome to take part in the **BATEXPO-2010** in Bangladesh. More information about the event will be found [www.bgmea.com.bd](http://www.bgmea.com.bd) ■

# DIGITAL BANGLADESH

Bangladesh, like most developing countries, recognizes the potential of ICTs as an effective lever for economic emancipation as well as an enabler for poverty reduction and human development. e-Governance, the electronic services provided by public administration and facilitating citizen participation, is no longer a dream or luxury for country like Bangladesh. Bangladesh government has been taking several initiatives to

introduce e-Governance in the country. The government has declared the "Vision 2021" which targets establishment of a resourceful and modern country by 2021 through effective use of information and communication technology-a "Digital Bangladesh".

**The following are some examples of digitalization in Bangladesh:**

- ◆ **Computerized Land Management System, Demra Circle, Ministry of Land:** Printouts of updated land records including all ownership, mutation, and litigation information are supplied to citizens instantly. This reduces long delays and can significantly prevent land-related forgery, fraud and collusion.
- ◆ **Hajj Management System, Ministry of Religious Affairs:** Internationally renowned, this system allows citizens to get information about pilgrims through SMS. This has fundamentally transformed citizen services that traditionally required face-to-face interaction with government officials and staff.
- ◆ **Polling Station Information, Bangladesh Election Commission:** Citizens can obtain polling station information over SMS. During the City Corporation and *Pouroshava* elections of 2008, tens of thousands of citizens received information through this system.
- ◆ **Railway Ticket Reservation System, Bangladesh Railway:** Citizens may avail necessary information such as train schedules, fair and seat availability through SMS.
- ◆ **Automation of Chittagong Customs House:** Shipping agents, freight forwarders and stakeholders can submit online IGM, EGM, and handle other documents. This system is currently using by 10,000 live user and this system has reduced Trade clearance from 42 steps to 6 steps, reduce cost more than 60% and saved time more than 80%.
- ◆ **Accessing Long and Short PDS, Ministry of Establishment:** Government officials have easy and convenient access to PDS and tracking of ACR submission over the internet. This reduces associated cost, time and hassle.
- ◆ **Management Information System, RAJUK:** Citizens have internet access to lottery results of plot allotment, notices, rules and acts, citizen charter etc. This makes tracking of vital information much easier than depending on traditional newspaper-based notices. ►►

- ◆ **National Web Portal, Prime Minister's Office:** This national Web Portal of Bangladesh aims to create a single window access to information and e-services provided by the Government of Bangladesh for citizens, businesses, foreign tourists, investors and other stakeholders.
- ◆ **Disaster Forecasting System, Ministry of Food and Disaster Management:** Enriched with most upto-date weather and river situation reports, and database of disaster incidents and damage, this system provides life critical information and alerts to citizens through SMS, email and fax. The timeliness and responsiveness of this systems save lives.
- ◆ **Voter Database, Bangladesh Election Commission:** This database of voters with photographs has laid the foundation for delivering with efficiency and transparency various citizens' services such as birth and death registration, VGD/VGF cards, passports, driving licenses, vaccination and school enrolment tracking, among many other social benefits.
- ◆ **Water and Costal Resource Planning, Ministry of Water Resources:** National Water Resources Database (NWRD) and Integrated Costal Resources Database (ICRD) help planners, researchers and managers associated with water sector and costal resource. NWRD consists of data on surface water, groundwater, soil, agriculture, fisheries, forest, meteorology, and environment, among other things.
- ◆ **GIS-based Education Planning, BANBEIS:** This Geographic Information System (GIS) map-based software is a powerful planning tool for the policy makers. It quickly helps identify areas for intervention based on priority criteria such as underserved status, poor teacher training, lacking or disaster-affected infrastructure, and other critical educational issues.
- ◆ **GIS-based Agriculture Resource Planning, Agriculture Division, Planning Commission:** The database contains information on the country's land resources including physiographic, soils, climate, hydrology, cropping systems, and crop suitability. This database has been used to generate readily accessible information on the physical land resources of the country for use by researchers, extension workers, and decision makers in land and agricultural resources management as well as agricultural development planning.
- ◆ **Process Automation, Bangladesh Bank:** Following reports are now efficiently generated through different customized software: export receipts; import payments; invisible receipts; invisible payments; scheduled bank advances; scheduled bank deposits; scheduled bank bills; scheduled bank debits; cooperative bank advances; co-operative bank assets/ liabilities; summary statements etc. This has greatly reduced the need for telephone inquiries and personal visits to Bangladesh Bank.
- ◆ **Financial Planning, Finance Division:** iBAS helps the government improve financial management and financial control by consolidating accounting data and supporting the standardization of budget preparation process for line ministries and Finance Division.
- ◆ **Roads and Highways Planning:** R&D website provides roads and bridges data, personal data, financial project information, different manuals, standard test procedures, design standards for roads and bridges as well as management plans. Planners can prioritize areas for development intervention.

# Embassy Activities

## Celebration of the Birth Anniversaries of Two Great Poets



The Embassy celebrated the birth anniversaries of Bishwakabi Rabindranath Tagore and National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam jointly on 12 June 2010. A cultural function was held in a big hall adjacent to the Embassy on that day, which was attended by a large number of expatriate community members of Bangladesh, along with their spouses and children.

In the beginning of the programme a brief note was presented on the life and works of Rabindra Nath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam.



Paying his homage to Bishwakabi Rabindranath Tagore and National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, **H.E. the Ambassador discussed some aspects of lives and works of the two poets. He said that Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam were the two brightest luminaries in the field of Bangla literature. He**

requested the audience, specially the second generation Bangladeshis, to make a practice of reading literary works of these two great poets and remarked that this will help our new generation in abroad to know about the richness of our culture and would help them better understand the Bengal philosophy of life. Being brief in his speech, he has pointed out that words are not enough to describe their talent and contribution and invited everyone to enjoy Embassy's cultural programme where their works would speak of them.



The cultural programme was designed with songs, poetry recitations and dances from both the poets performed by local Bangladesh artists. The performances were of a high standard and won the hearts of the audience. Participation of young local artists was encouraging and demonstrated their love for our culture even being the second generation in abroad. ■



## Other Embassy Activities



– His Excellency the Ambassador had a meeting with Mr. Lars Hagberg, President, Hagberg Oil and Food Grain, Representative Office for York Corp, Stockholm about supply of wheat to Bangladesh at a competitive price.

– H.E. the Ambassador had a meeting with Secretary General of Swedish parlia-

ment Mr. Anders Forsberg on 01 June and Mrs. Birgitta Sellen, Second Deputy Speaker on 16 June on matters of forth coming Swedish Parliamentary election.

– His Excellency the Ambassador met Mrs. Agneta Rickardsson of Motivation AR, a journalist who writes on tourism matters and discussed preliminarily about the possibility of inclusion of Bangladesh tourism in her writings. ■

## IMPORTANT LINKS

### Government Organizations

- Bangladesh Government Website :**  
<http://www.bangladesh.gov.bd/>
- Prime Minister's office :**  
<http://www.pmo.gov.bd/>
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs :**  
<http://www.mofa.gov.bd/>
- Ministry of Commerce :**  
<http://www.mincom.gov.bd/>
- National Board of Revenue :**  
<http://www.nbr-bd.org/>
- Bangladesh Tariff Commission :**  
<http://www.bdtariffcom.org/>
- Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics :**  
<http://www.bbs.gov.bd/>
- Bangladesh Bank :**  
<http://www.bangladesh-bank.org/>
- Biman Bangladesh Airlines :**  
<http://www.bimanair.com/>
- NGO Affairs Bureau :**  
<http://www.ngoab.gov.bd/>

### Tourism & Media

- National Tourism Corporation:**  
<http://www.bangladeshtourism.gov.bd/>
- Hotel and Travel Guide :**  
<http://www.bangladesh.com/>
- The Daily Star (English) :**  
<http://www.thedailystar.net/>
- The Financial Express :**  
<http://www.financialexpress-bd.com/>
- The Daily Ittefaq (Bangla) :**  
<http://www.ittefaq.com/>

### Trade, Business & Investment

- Board of Investment :**  
<http://www.boi.gov.bd/>
- Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) :**  
<http://www.epzbangladesh.org.bd/>
- Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) :**  
<http://www.bgmea.com/>
- Export Promotion Bureau :**  
<http://epb.gov.bd/>
- Registrar of the Joint Stock Companies & Firms :**  
<http://www.roc.gov.bd/>
- Privatization Commission of Bangladesh :**  
<http://www.pc.gov.bd/>
- The Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry :**  
<http://www.fbcci-bd.org/>
- Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry :**  
<http://www.dhakachamber.com/>
- Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry:**  
<http://www.chittagongchamber.com/>
- Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry :**  
<http://www.ficci.org.bd/>
- Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry :**  
<http://www.mccibd.org/>
- Dhaka Stock Exchange Limited :**  
<http://www.dsebd.org/>
- Chittagong Stock Exchange :**  
<http://csebd.com/cse/start.html>
- Business Information :**  
<http://www.bizinfo-bangladesh.com/>
- Bangladesh Yellow Pages :**  
<http://www.bgyellowpages.com/>

For More Information on Bangladesh as well as consular, trade, business and tourist information, please visit Bangladesh Embassy website at <http://www.bangladoot.se>

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