US CONGRESS INTRODUCES RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BANGLADESH’S INDEPENDENCE

The US House of Representatives introduced a resolution titled “Commemorating the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh’s independence” on March 16, 2021. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (New York) submitted the resolution, which was co-sponsored by three democratic representatives Rashida Tlaib (Michigan), Jimmy Gomez (California), and Chair of House Committee on Foreign Affairs Gregory W. Meeks (New York). The resolution was then referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. The House congratulated Bangladesh’s people on the 50th anniversary of their independence, hailed our valiant freedom fighters’ courage in the struggle for independence and democracy, and lauded Bangladesh’s contributions for hosting Rohingyas fleeing genocide in Myanmar. The resolution mentioned that “on March 26, 1971, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared Bangladesh’s independence from West Pakistan.” It highlighted the history of Bangladesh’s long struggle for self-determination, culminating in the War of Independence in 1971.
MOVING FORWARD AS A NATION- A NEW MILESTONE

Bangladesh was included in the Least Developed Countries (LDC) list in 1975 when its poverty rate was at the peak of 83%. By 2019, the rate fell to 20.5% and it keeps going down as the nation grows. For the second consecutive cycle, Bangladesh has met all three eligibility criteria for LDC graduation: income per capita, human assets, and economic and environmental vulnerability. The country’s foreign exchange reserves touched a new record of over US$44.0 billion. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who has provided political stability, has expressed optimism that by 2031, Bangladesh would be an upper-middle-income country, and by 2041, it would be a high-income and prosperous country.

FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS WASHINGTON DC TO DEEPEN BILATERAL TIES

Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP. has requested the new U.S. Administration to play a leading role, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to bring about a durable solution to the Rohingya crisis. Foreign Minister Dr. AK Abdul Momen visited the U.S. recently to reach out to the Biden Administration to strengthen the relationship between Bangladesh, and the U.S. Dr. Momen revealed how the Bangladesh government is working for the wellbeing of the Rohingya during the pandemic and, as a result, not a single case was found in the camps. He noted that the Bangladesh government is looking forward to working with the U.S. government to solve the Rohingya issues and arrange their voluntary, safe, and dignified return to Myanmar.
PRESIDENT BIDEN ACCEPTS CREDENTIALS OF NEW BANGLADESH AMBASSADOR

The U.S. President Joe Biden has officially accepted the credentials of the newly appointed Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA, M. Shahidul Islam. President Biden welcomed the new Ambassador in an acceptance letter signed on February 17 of this year. President Biden expressed wishes to advance the common goals and deepen the existing friendship between the two countries. Through a “paper-based” process, the U.S. Administration accomplished a formal acceptance of the credentials due to the COVID-19.

ROADMAP TO BECOME A DEVELOPED COUNTRY

Bangladesh Government is preparing for a smooth transition from least developed to developing country in the next five years. Finance Ministry sources said that they are working on signing trade agreements with Sri Lanka and Nepal during this transition. According to news reports, the National Taskforce formed for this purpose will sit soon, discuss and draw up a roadmap for this transition to graduate smoothly.
BANGLADESH WAS SUCCESSFUL IN PROTECTING ROHINGYAS FROM COVID-19

The Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), which coordinates humanitarian activities of the United Nations, INGOs, and local NGOs in Cox's Bazar, lauded Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government for successfully addressing the Covid-19 situation in Rohingya camps. The ISCG, in a statement, said that the Bangladesh Government has successfully protected the Rohingyas amid the Covid-19 pandemic despite fears of a spike in the number of affected people living in the congested camps in Cox’s Bazar. According to news reports, advanced precautionary measures, strict implementation of Covid-19 protocols, and assistance from different United Nations organizations, International NGOs (INGOs), and NGOs have helped the authorities keep the situation under control.

EMBASSY HOLDS WEBINAR PORTRAYING LINGUISTIC VALUES

On February 21 this year, the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington D.C. hosted a webinar to celebrate the Shaheed Dibash and International Mother Language Day, upholding the theme “Fostering Multilingualism in Education and Society.” Ambassador M. Shahidul Islam paid rich tribute to the language martyrs who laid down their lives on 21st February 1952 in Dhaka to protect the dignity of our mother language, “Bangla” and established it as the ‘State Language’ of the country. He added that 21 February this year is even more significant as the country celebrates the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh’s independence. Two former Ambassadors of the U.S. to Bangladesh, Harry K Thomas and Marcia Bernicat, former Cabinet Secretary and Alternate Executive Director of the World Bank Shafiul Alam, participated in the webinar as panel speakers. Deputy Chief of Mission, Ferdousi Shahriar, moderated the webinar.
SHEIKH MUJIB’S ACTIONS AND WORDS STILL INSPIRE PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

The Embassy of Bangladesh in Washington D.C., with the support of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs of the U.S. State Department, organized a webinar on Sunday, March 07, 2021, to commemorate the historic March 07 speech delivered by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. After the welcome remarks by Bangladesh Ambassador to the U.S. M Shahidul Islam, Professor Dr. Syed Anwar Husain delivered the keynote address on Bangabandhu’s life and ideals attaching a particular focus to the 7th of March speech. Ambassador Tariq A. Karim, South Asia Analyst Seth Oldmixon, and Ambassador of the U.S. to Bangladesh Earl R. Miller were among the panel speakers in the webinar. Acting Assistant Secretary of Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs of the U.S. Department of State Dean Thompson attended the webinar as the special guest and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md. Shahriar Alam, MP, was the Chief guest. The speakers highlighted the significance behind Bangabandhu’s speech and how it inspired the people during difficult times. Dean Thompson said that Sheikh Mujib was a “towering figure of the twentieth century” who shaped modern Bangladesh. He added that the historic speech inspired Bangladesh’s people to fight for independence and continues to inspire the people of Bangladesh to develop their country even further. The webinar ended with the concluding remarks by the Ambassador of Bangladesh to the USA, M Shahidul Islam. Deputy Chief of Mission, Ferdousi Shahriar, moderated the webinar.

BANGLADESH EMBASSY LAUNCHES ONLINE PASSPORT TRACKING

The Embassy of Bangladesh in Washington DC has recently launched an online tracking system to keep the applicants updated about the status of their applications for passports, visas, and no visa required stamp and dual nationality certificates. Using their current passport numbers and dates of birth, the applicants can track the status directly on the Embassy’s website. The Embassy is working tirelessly to improve the quality of consular service on the birth centenary of the Father of Nation, Bangabahundu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Online Tracking of application status is an addition in this regard. Ambassador M. Shahidul Islam officially launched the online tracking mechanism recently. Link: [https://bdembassyusatracking.org/](https://bdembassyusatracking.org/)
In celebration of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Embassy of Bangladesh in Washington DC organized a special consular camp in Michigan to provide service to the expatriate Bangladeshis. The Embassy will organize such Consular camps in the USA throughout the Mujib Year.