Growth and prosperity of South Asia will be driven by Bangladesh and India, says U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ambassador Kelly Keiderling

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The U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Ambassador Kelly Keiderling has said that her country greatly values its partnerships with Bangladesh and India and the two countries will largely drive future growth and prosperity of the South Asia region. She made these remarks as the U.S. Government representative at a Reception, organized by the Embassy of Bangladesh jointly with the Embassy of India in Washington, D.C., to celebrate the ‘Maitri Dibosh (Friendship Day)’ on 06 December 2021. Ambassador Keiderling also said that the United States observes the abiding friendship between Bangladesh and India and that has remained as a source of strength and stability in the region in the changing geopolitical scenario.

The Reception was organized as a part of the joint commemoration of the historic ‘Maitri Dibosh’ in 18 foreign capitals, as agreed by the Governments of Bangladesh and India. The program was attended by a number of high-ranking U.S. officials including the Senior Director of the White House National Security Council Ms. Sumona Guha, Director General (nominee) of U.S. Foreign Service Ambassador Marcia Bernicat and President of the US-Bangladesh Business Council as well as US-India Business Council Ms. Nisha Biswal, among others. Invited guests from the U.S. government and chambers, diplomats, representatives of business houses and think tanks, members of Bangladeshi and Indian diaspora in the U.S. and officials from both the Embassies also attended the event.

The ceremonial part of the Reception began with the observance of ‘one minute silence’ to honor the martyrs of Bangladesh and India in the War of Liberation. In his welcome remarks, Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States M. Shahidul Islam paid deep tribute to the memory of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for his unwavering leadership to unite and mobilize the entire nation in their fight for independence. He also remembered with great respect the 3 million martyrs of Bangladesh’s war of liberation and numerous Indian soldiers who fought side by side
and gave their lives. The Ambassador recalled the great support extended by India during Bangladesh’s independence war and stated that the relations between the two countries have deepened, matured, and expanded in many areas of cooperation over the years. Ambassador Islam also highlighted the tremendous socio-economic transformation that Bangladesh has experienced in the recent years under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He hoped that Bangladesh and India together with the U.S. would continue to work together in a spirit of mutual support and cooperation to ensure for a prosperous South Asia.

Indian Ambassador to the United States Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, in a video message, said that India and Bangladesh today share comprehensive ties that has its origin in the deep-rooted friendship between the two countries since the war of liberation. He recalled the ‘inspiring leadership’ of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his relentless efforts in the emergence of an independent Bangladesh. Ambassador Sandhu stated that friendship between Bangladesh and India keeps growing stronger, as many long-standing matters between the two countries have been resolved amicably. He underscored the importance of both the countries working together to address the common challenges like terrorism and COVID-19 pandemic to ensure peace and security in the region.

The Reception was followed by cultural performances both by Bangladeshi and Indian performers. A documentary on the 50 years of Bangladesh-India relations was also screened at the event. The invited guests were served traditional Bangladeshi and Indian cuisines at the end of the program.