My Bengal of gold, I love you
Forever your skies, your air set my heart in tune
as if it were a flute.
In Spring, Oh mother mine, the fragrance from
Your mango-groves makes me wild with joy
Ah, what a thrill!

In Autumn, Oh mother mine,
in the full-blossomed paddy fields,
I have seen spread all over-sweet smiles!
Ah, what a beauty, what shades, what an affection
and what a tenderness!

What a quilt have you spread at the feet of
banyan trees and along the banks of rivers!
Oh mother mine, words from your lips are like
Nectar to my ears!
Ah, what a thrill!

It sadness, Oh mother mine, casts a gloom on your face,
my eyes are filled with tears!
Chief Patron

- H.E. Mr. Mohammad Ziauddin, Ambassador of Bangladesh to the United States of America

Editor

- Mr. Shamim Ahmad, Minister (Press)

Advisers

- Mr. Mahbub Hassan Saleh, Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission
- Mr. Shahabuddin Patwari, Minister (Economic)
- Brig. Gen M Moinul Hassan, SPP, NDC, PSC, Defense Attaché
- Mr. Md. Shamsul Alam Chowdhury, Minister (Consular)
- Mr. Sk. Aktar Hossain, Counsellor (Commerce)
- Mr. Md Nural Islam, Counsellor (Political)
- Mr. Dewan Ali Ashraf, Counsellor (Political & HOC)
- Ms. Samia Israt Ronee, Counsellor (Political & Cultural)
- Md Shah Alom Khokon, Counsellor (Political)
- Mr. Mohammad Abdullah Al Mamun, Counsellor (Political)
- Mr. Mohammad Asphakul Numan, First Secretary (Passport & Visa)
- Mr. Md Mahmudul Islam, First Secretary (Political)
Table of Contents

Map of Bangladesh 2
Flag of Bangladesh 3
National Anthem of Bangladesh 3
Embassy Team in Washington, DC 4
Country Profile 6
Portrait of Bangabandhu, Father of Our Nation 8
Portrait of the President of Bangladesh 9
Portrait of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh 10
Message from the Ambassador 11

ARTICLES
Perspective on Foreign Policy 12
Sheikh Hasina: An Exemplary Leader 16
Working Hard for Women's Rights 20
Technology Sector Makes Unprecedented Progress 24
A Thriving Power Sector 26
Bangabandhu Satellite-1 28
Padma Bridge 32
Proud to Help Rohingya Refugees 36
Leading the way in dealing with Climate Change 40
A Brand Name in UN Peacekeeping 44
Cracking Down on Terrorists 50
The Path to Prosperity 52
Blue Economy 56
Celebrating Our Developmental Journey 58
The Politics of Peace and Development 64
Photos from Embassy Activities 74
The People's Republic of Bangladesh

Country Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Official Name</th>
<th>People's Republic of Bangladesh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father of the Nation</td>
<td>Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of the State</td>
<td>President Md. Abdul Hamid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of the Government</td>
<td>Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Geographical location: Bangladesh is situated in the eastern part of the South Asian subcontinent. It lies between latitudes 20°34' and 26°38' North, and longitudes 88°41' East. The country is bordered by India on the east, west and north, and by the Bay of Bengal in the south and having a small border strip with Myanmar in the south-east.

Area: 1,47,570 sq km (56,977 sq miles)

Administrative units: 8 Division; 64 Districts; 489 Upazilas; and 4,554 Unions.

City Corporations: 11

Municipalities: 321

Capital: Dhaka

Nationality: Bangladeshi

Official Language: Bangla

Currency: Taka/Tk. (US$ 1=83.75)

Time: GMT+6 hours

Population (as of November 4, 2015): 159 Million

Main Seasons:
- Spring (February-March)
- Summer (April-June)
- Monsoon (July-September)
- Autumn (October-November)
- Winter (December-January)


Principal Industries: Readymade garments, tea processing, paper, cement, chemical fertilizers, light engineering, sugar, oil refining, steel, shipbuilding, brick manufacturing, real estate, carpet making, ceramic-ware, pharmaceuticals, assembling buses & trucks, plastic ware, consumer electronics.

Principal Mineral Resources: Natural gas, coal, limestone, ceramic clay, glass sand, hard rock.

Principal Exports: Readymade garments, raw jute, jute goods, tea, shrimp, fish, finished leather and leather goods, pharmaceuticals, flowers fruit and vegetables, ceramic-ware, IT and ITES, handicrafts, newsprint.

Popular sports: Cricket, Football, Hockey, Kabaddi (national game), Swimming, Volleyball, Badminton, Chess.
Father of the Nation
(17 March 1920-15 August 1975)
I express my sincere thanks to the patrons and contributors for their invaluable support that helped realize our annual magazine. It has appeared this year as “Beaming Bangladesh,” reflecting the country’s many laudable successes with the optimism of a bright future. The magazine is refreshing both in design and format, and the articles are, insightful, researched and informative.

“Beaming Bangladesh” aims to enlighten readers with the nation’s amazing progress and development since our last magazine published years ago. The articles are on subjects with wide range of interest and appeal. They have been contributed by the very best in their respective areas of expertise and are inspirational, with touches of nostalgia but above all reflect enriching experiences.

For readers keen on business, trade, investment, or tourism in Bangladesh, adequate information has been presented. For those who wish to seek further details, seminars and fairs held with US trade bodies can be helpful. Additionally, supplements published in popular newspapers have also been useful in providing more information on trade and investment in Bangladesh.

The Embassy has been extremely active in promoting Bangladesh’s interests on the Capitol Hill, in government departments, think tanks, academia, business chambers, and in the media. Furthermore, annual partnerships, with dialogues under TICFA, and on security, have raised bilateral relations to a plane now higher than ever before.

The Embassy’s recent efforts have been easier due to Bangladesh’s socioeconomic successes and her magnanimity in hosting the 1.1 million forcibly displaced Myanmar Nationals. The USA appreciates Bangladesh’s successes and also her generous welcome of the Rohingya refugees. With our common interests and shared values, our relationships have remained strong.

Once again, I thank the patrons, the contributors, and all others in the United States, and in Bangladesh, and also our entire Bangladesh Embassy Team. Our combined commitment, dedication, and perseverance have made “Beaming Bangladesh” possible. Indeed, all who courses through this marvelous magazine will relish the Bangladesh experience.

Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin
In the contemporary world, a State's foreign policy engagements and securing its sustainable future is increasingly intertwined. So many competing factors and actors govern that. On the one hand, conventional military powers and alliances continue to significantly dominate global security and foreign policy agenda. On the other, 'soft power tools', like global norms, standards and practices in democracy (freedom, justice, governance, and human rights) can influence the development of a country’s foreign policy engagements.

Unlike any time before, a range of non-State actors influence foreign policy discourse of the State. Bangladesh is indeed no exception. Multilateral organizations like the entire UN System, International Financial Institutions (IMF, World Bank), global and local NGOs, civil society organizations, conventional and new media have substantial bearing on a State's foreign policy discourse and standing abroad. Negotiating platforms like G77, BRICS, G20, LDCs or the Plurilateral formations in the multilateral negotiations influence global trade, development finance or climate change influence policy approach of most States. These are far more accentuated by sharp rise of Regional Organizations and Regional Economic Communities, especially across the developing world, Last but not the least: existing and new drivers of globalization and a State's own economic, food, trade – energy – water security – all tend to have a profound influence on the foreign policy vision for a sustainable future.

In such a complex and often unpredictable scenario, how does Bangladesh articulate its Foreign Policy?

Bangladesh is mindful of the complexities and the enormous resource, demographic and environmental challenges that she is facing. Bangladesh and the present Government led by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s daughter and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has set for Bangladesh an aspirational foreign policy vision:

“To be recognized as a regionally and globally influential Middle Income Country, with a democratic, secular and inclusive identity, contributing to global peace, progress and prosperity.”

Bangladesh Foreign Policy derives its philosophical orientation from the epochal pronouncement of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, when he said: “Friendship to all and malice towards none”. The same shapes the approach to ‘national security’. As cryptic as it may appear, it dictates that, as a State, Bangladesh never intends to wage war or, go into war without convincing reason; and pursues a ‘peace and non-alignment centric’ foreign policy towards all countries globally.

Bangladesh Foreign Policy is also grounded firmly in two fundamentals of the Republic that has its rudiments in the War of Liberation.

The first fundamental lies deeply rooted in the Proclamation of Independence of Bangladesh on 10 April 1971 that clearly delineates international obligations, “commitment of the new State of the Charter of the United Nations” and that.... “we may make our full contribution to international peace and cooperation in keeping with progressive aspirations of mankind.”

The second fundamental is enunciated in Article 25(1) of Bangladesh Constitution that upholds that the State shall conduct its international relations based on the principles of peaceful settlement of international disputes, respect for international law and the UN Charter, and strive for social and economic emancipation of peoples.

Four and half decades on, these Foreign Policy fundamentals remain unchanged. Bangladesh Foreign Ministry strives to translate this Foreign Policy vision into reality with proactive diplomatic engagement bilaterally, regionally and multilaterally through 75 Bangladesh Missions abroad and indeed in close coordination with a host of line Ministries and entities at home to effectively realize the domestic policies.

Upholding these foreign policy fundamentals in letter and spirit, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s government has set some key foreign policy goals for the Republic encompassing first and second tenure of the current government in office since 2009. These were first captured adequately in Vision 2021 (that proclaimed ambition to graduate Bangladesh
as a MIC), and further expanded in Vision 2041 (that charts pathway of Bangladesh’s emergence as a developed country), namely:

- Safeguard sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bangladesh;
- Project:
  - Bangladesh as an open, inclusive, pluralistic society in respect of her ethnic – linguistic – religious – cultural identity and diversity;
  - Bangladesh’s rich repertoire of intellectual – cultural – archaeological heritage;
  - Bangladesh’s contemporary accomplishments in development as also creativity – innovation – enterprise of people – many of which are being replicated elsewhere;
- Forge, maintain and enhance outreach and partnerships with responsible civil society and private sector in Bangladesh and beyond;
- Ensure balanced and good-neighborly relations with all neighboring countries in South and South-East Asia and beyond;
- Promote regional and sub-regional cooperation that should contribute to regional peace, stability, prosperity;
- Deepen intra and inter regional connectivity and regional economic integration in Regional Organizations and Regional Economic Communities;
- Uphold multilateralism through the United Nations; and engage as a pro-active voice in various normative – policy – programmatic platforms, bodies, positions within the United National System;
- Contribute to UN Peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities for maintenance of international peace and security;
- Maintain pro-active engagement and pursue partnerships with various regional groups (including OIC, EU, ASEAN, African Union and remain proactive in OIC, NAM, Commonwealth, Asian Cooperation Dialogue, IORA, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Asia-Europe Forum (ASEM), CICA, etc.);
- Advance Bangladesh’s economic interests by:
  - Negotiating unimpeded entry of Bangladeshi manufactured goods and services in existing and emerging markets and global supply chains: bilaterally, regionally and globally;
  - Interfacing in global political – social – economic – financial – trade architecture so as to ensure that the global norms – standards – resource flows take into account the needs, interests, circumstances of Bangladesh within wider architecture;
  - Contributing to creation of enabling discourse and setting to secure enhanced inflow of resources, including private capital and development cooperation for sustainable development;
  - Ensuring migration and mobility of Bangladeshi workforce in global labor markets in safety and security, with dignity, with particular focus on the skilled and semi-skilled migrant workers and also female workers; correspondingly, explore markets and better terms of employment for Bangladesh; and promote well-being of expatriate Bangladeshi community;
  - Ensure Bangladesh’s long-term ‘resource security’ on competitive – secure – sustainable basis i.e. food security, energy security;
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is completing her second stint in office. Building on her first term (2009-’13), a key Foreign Policy priority has been to steadily situate Bangladesh at international settings as a responsive and responsible People and State.

Bangladesh as an emerging Middle Income Country is expected to face a new world – where it seems that new roles and responsibilities likely to see many of the support measures either discontinued or a new avatar. And, given the fast-changing geo-economics around Bangladesh combined with Bangladesh’s geo-strategic location, Bangladesh would quite logically be thrust in regional or global platforms together with her MIC peers to engage in new discourses.

In such an evolving context, conduct of Bangladesh Foreign Policy – as an extension of national security, economic growth and developmental aspirations – would need to be weighed in terms of certain key drivers that exist today as also that is quietly emerging.

If so many events and actions are to synthesize by the Foreign Ministry, Bangladesh Missions abroad and other stakeholders on Foreign Policy front, would perhaps identity certain following key drivers and strategies that are dominant in foreign policy engagement:

First, deepening regional economic integration and multi-modal connectivity
Like any other country, it is to be seen how best to position Bangladesh in relation to the countries and wider neighborhood. Bangladesh’s geographic location grants a distinct geo-strategic advantage; looking at the wider map of Asia-Pacific region, keeping aside the vastly unpopulated Eurasian region, it is Bangladesh, the natural connection between contiguous South and South-East Asia and beyond. Foreign policy is, therefore, conscious to project Bangladesh as a stable country, welcoming people and culture, open economy. And, government is keen to develop the country as a manufacturing – distribution – trans-shipment hub as much as for us as also for neighborhood.

Second, sharing opportunities for shared prosperity: focus immediate neighbours (India, Myanmar)
Today, Bangladesh’s relations with India are at its best in decades. There is considerable appreciation on both sides that an enduring relation and engagements between the two countries has to be rooted in people than the States; and it has to be based on mutual trust, mutual respect and also equitable sharing of benefits. Dhaka and Myanmar now has regular, direct air links. Myanmar’s concurrence to conclude and MoU in (annual) Security Dialogue, 24x7 border post and some other mutual confidence building measures are in the queue. Bangladesh awaits for Myanmar’s further engagement on resolving the protracted issue of forcibly displaced Myanmar national situation. Hon. Prime Minister once categorically told the Myanmar leadership that beyond return of the Rohingya people from Bangladesh, equally important would be to grant them citizenship under the Constitution of Myanmar.
Third, balancing competing interests of our friends and partners and engagements in Bangladesh

Bangladesh foreign policy manifest in distinctly reaching out to all friends to join in pursuit of attaining national development strategies and objectives. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s productive visits to Japan and China (2014), to the Arabian Gulf, to Europe – all were marked with a call for open engagement such that the partnership engagements would be in full trust and respect for each other and primarily meets Bangladesh’s needs and interests. By now, this surely is manifest in the menu of engagement by India, China, Japan, UK, US and so forth – across mega infrastructure, power and energy sector projects, etc. Since the closer ‘Comprehensive Partnership of Cooperation’ with Japan and China, this surely is also in sync with the long-professed fundamental on Bangladesh Foreign Policy.

Fourth, Shared vision for democracy, inclusion, pluralism, governance, security, sustainable development

As much appreciate deeper engagement with partners on economic front, in the same vein Bangladesh values friends and partners, particularly in the West and EU, on nurturing, promoting and realizing the universal societal and political norms and values. Again, based on the mutuality of trust and respect and on appreciation of the unique societal-cultural-religious landscape of Bangladesh, further engagement in conversation with them in the UN and other platforms are also on. Quite often there are differences in appreciation of our position approach, but wider appreciation of Bangladesh universal values across the UN membership is vindicated by consecutive election to numerous Treaty Bodies, Committees in the UN System, including in ECOSOC, Human Rights Council, Peace-Building Commission, CEDAW – to name a few.

Fifth, realization of sustainable development

The 1990s Cycle of UN Conferences and Summits have ushered in a new paradigm in global development and multilateral diplomacy. Adoption of the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) comprehensively manifest that. These now usher in new debates, new ways to approach national development, brings in new responsibilities to countries. Within this multitude, Bangladesh would need advancement of her interests and needs for support, fulfillment of the global commitments as also underline the unique challenges and circumstances she continues to face.

Sixth, ensuring safe, secure, dignified economic livelihoods of people

Over half of Bangladesh population is between 15 and 35 years. In a decade’s time, close to two-third population will be young. At the same time, in a decade’s time, around 45% of Bangladesh population will be living in urban space. Already over two million young people are entering the employment market every year a large part of whom seek employment opportunities abroad.

In foreign policy, Bangladesh continues to maintain a lead role in the UN peacekeeping operations. For decades, she has been a leading contributing nation of troops and police, including highest numbers of female peacekeepers.

A country’s Foreign Policy and its corresponding engagements are also about curving ‘space’ for the country. In spite of all challenges and limitations that Bangladesh faces, she is no exception. Over the past one Bangladesh Foreign Policy is contour pro-actively.

Its eastern Europe. Africa, Latin that direction – not merely to ‘market’ for Bangladesh exports or, dispatch more of migrant workers, but also to explore how best to ensure Bangladesh’s economic security.

Some key cornerstones of Bangladesh foreign policy vision and strategy that government continues to pursue are obviously, Vision 2021 and Vision 2041 embody, a set of important guidance. Drawing on modest yet rich history and accomplishments, Bangladesh strive to demonstrate to the world why she should matter, why the international community needs to take a fresh and positive look at her and invest in a resilient nation of 160 million people.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs Dhaka
There is little question that she has been an assertive leader. One will not be in any doubt about her political prowess, the decisive streak she has consistently demonstrated in her exercise of authority, be it in opposition or in government. Sheikh Hasina Wazed, in that broad meaning of the term, looks set to leave a lasting legacy in the history of Bangladesh for reasons which have to do with her accomplishments since she made a formal entry into politics in May 1981.

And yet when one considers the severe trauma she and her younger sibling — they are the only members of the family to have survived the orgy of death which descended on their family in August 1975 — have gone through, one cannot quite explain the courage and the resilience which have fortified them in their suffering. For Sheikh Hasina, the wonder is that she has not only been able to master the grievous wounds in her soul but has also made it known to the world, indeed to herself, that she was ready and willing to transform her tragedy into a force for public good.

That is when you observe her make a formal, careful entry into national politics. If the Awami League, in not very healthy shape in the aftermath of the assassinations of August-November 1975, needed a unifying symbol, Sheikh Hasina was ready to be that symbol. Every faction of the party coalesced into a singular platform once it was made known to the world that the daughter of the Father of the Nation was there to take charge of politics, of the future of the party. Bangabandhu would not be consigned to the forgotten regions of historical memory because his eldest child was around to build on his legacy. And Bangladesh would have its values, those which had propelled it to a War of Liberation, restored because there were the

makings of a strong leader in Sheikh Hasina. That political strength was on display from day one of her assumption of leadership of her party. Over the succeeding weeks and months and years, Sheikh Hasina would demonstrate before her people the very qualities which had once, in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, led the Bengali nation to a struggle, first, for autonomy and, second, for independence. Of course Sheikh Hasina's struggle was different in tenor and substance from that waged by her father. But both father and daughter, clearly the most decisive of political leaders in Bangladesh's history, shared a political template — they were unyielding in their belief that change was an imperative, that resolute leadership was the call of the times.

As she rounds off a decade of her stewardship of the country—fifteen, if her first term in office is considered—and prepares for a new period in power, the Prime Minister remains the pivot around which the idea of Bangladesh moves in orbit. The record speaks for her. And it speaks of those achievements which no regime or government between 1975 and 1996 and again between 2001 and 2006 were able to bring to fruition. Begin at the beginning.

“Leadership rooted in heritage, defined by pragmatism.”
— Syed Badrul Ahsan

Boeing 787-8 joins the Bangladesh Biman Fleet
Sheikh Hasina’s first government was remarkable in its handling of foreign policy, especially with neighbours. The deal reached by her with Indian Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda on a sharing of the waters of the Ganges remains a case in point. And then there is an even richer feather to her cap in the form of a peace deal reached by the government with the insurgents in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. A problem that had eluded solution for decades suddenly could be and indeed was neutralized. In a very significant way, Sheikh Hasina’s role has been that of a change-maker. Consider the powerful leadership she brought into a rolling back of the disgrace and notoriety that was the Indemnity Ordinance. The impunity enjoyed by Bangabandhu’s assassins was no more there, for what powered her government was the cardinal necessity of a restoration of the rule of law. The darkness of shame hanging low over the country was lifted through bringing the assassins to trial.

This remains the fundamental truth about the leadership of Sheikh Hasina, that she has been able to convince the world that in her hands lie the keys to Bangladesh’s future. The courage of conviction which has consistently been her defining characteristic has never wavered or waned. The tragedy of 21 August 2004, when explosions at an Awami League rally left as many as 24 people dead and scores injured, was a blatant attempt to wipe out the entire party leadership. Sheikh Hasina survived what could have turned into another manifestation of dark conspiracy. The mayhem and murder of August 2004 did not deter her from leading, both the party and the country, from the front. Nor could she be silenced in the new darkness which descended on the country through the military-backed emergency of 11 January 2007. If her enemies were made of rude arrogance, she was made of sterner stuff.

Part of that stuff has been her passionate operation of politics. And with that has come the pragmatism, touched by the nationalistic, that has served as the engine of her vision for Bangladesh. She was unwilling to be browbeaten into submission by the World Bank on the question of the Padma Bridge, on questionable grounds of corruption coming into the scheme. She found a better way of handling the bridge issue: she went for a utilization of local resources in the building of the bridge. In effect, Sheikh Hasina’s leadership of Bangladesh has been a byword for national pride, for she has refused to cave in before the world, before donors and has instead demonstrated that certain quality which boosts the spirit of a nation in times of tribulation.

Recall here the unwavering diligence and commitment which she and her government brought into the trials of war criminals at a time when many believed the trials could not be held and many others thought the trials would not be fair. The Prime Minister proved that it was possible for Bangladesh, despite the battering it had suffered under illegitimate regimes and despite the corruption of politics under governments holding little faith in the core principles of 1971, to bring the ageing war criminals to account. Those trials were once more an instance of a lifting of the burden of shame which had weighed Bangladesh down for long years. She ignored her critics; she paid little heed to the cynics around her. And she proved that, given strong and purposeful leadership, the job—any job—could be done.
With Sheikh Hasina as its leader, Bangladesh has undergone critical change. Poverty has declined drastically; industries have performed well; remittances from expatriate Bangladeshi workers have gone up; an expansion of health services has been gone through; diplomacy has worked to satisfaction on the underlying principle of pragmatism; women’s empowerment has been remarkable; education has been streamlined; sports is today a question of pride for the nation and religious harmony has been preserved to public satisfaction. Secular democracy is the inescapable reality in Bangladesh.

Forceful leadership in Sheikh Hasina, in other words, has seen Bangladesh going through a continuity of development projects with relevance to all sectors of the population. Authoritarianism has been absent, but authoritative stewardship of the country has been in abundance in all the years Sheikh Hasina has presided over the fortunes of the nation. Her interaction with the outside world — and she has been in touch with global leaders and forums throughout her long period in office --- has regularly been a demonstration of the ethos of Bangladesh she has consistently articulated at home.

Combative when it comes to defending Bangladesh’s interests, she has refused to be intimidated in any way and anywhere where provocative questions have been directed at her. On her watch, Bangladesh has developed strategically significant links with China, India and Russia, the three important neighbors which matter for Bangladesh. Her decision to open the doors to the Rohingya refugees came in tandem with her government’s determination to deal purposefully with the Myanmar regime.

And how does Sheikh Hasina come across as a person? There are the roots that clutch, for like her father, like so many millions in Bangladesh, she identifies with heritage, with the culture which has shaped the Bengali imagination through the generations. Her toughness as a leader comes in charming combination with the very basic human qualities that once were the hallmark of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Old women have felt the pull of tactility in her; ageing men have remarked on the maternal qualities which have always been a substantive affair in her dealings with people. The young have been drawn to the warmth she exudes. A huge sense of humor has been part of the Hasina persona.

Sheikh Hasina—citizen, opposition leader, Prime Minister, Bangabandhu’s child—has stamped her presence in Bangladesh’s history.

Syed Badrul Ahsan Editor-in-Charge, The Asian Age, Dhaka. He is the author of biographies of Bangladesh’s founder Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Bangladesh’s first prime minister Tajuddin Ahmad
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presses into operations “BNS Nabijatra” and “BNS Joyjatra” submarines at Bangladesh’s southeastern Chottogram seaport, 12 March 2017

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opens a multi-storey apartment complex at Motijheel, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joins Prime Ministers of six South Asian countries—India, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka to launch South Asian Satellite, 5 May 2017

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates 787-8 Boeing

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inspects activities at newly built Paira seaport in southern district of Patuakhali, 19 November 2018
The World Economic Forum recently ranked Bangladesh first in gender equality among South Asian nations for the second consecutive year. The forum’s “Gender Gap Index of 2017” highlights Bangladesh’s success in four key areas: education, economic participation, health and political empowerment.

While no country has eliminated the gender gap completely, Bangladesh has had a steady climb in the rankings, rising more than 20 places over the preceding year to number 47. Bangladesh consistently outperforms its neighbors, India and Pakistan, on measures of gender equality.

The main factor in Bangladesh’s rise in gender equality has been its focused investment in women since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s election in 2009. Under her leadership, the Awami League political party pioneered several policies that have made dramatic improvements in education, health and employment for women.

The evolving and progressive role of women in Bangladeshi society is palpable, and this progress was hard-won. Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan, gained its independence in 1971 from an occupying Pakistani military force following a genocidal campaign against the people of Bangladesh, which included systemic rapes and violence towards women. In the ensuing years, military juntas and caretaker governments stymied Bangladesh’s progress and limited opportunities and rights for women. Bangladesh ranked 91 in the Global Gender Index in 2008, but that low ranking changed dramatically when gender policies began to change and women started to hold more key leadership positions.

Women have made great strides in public life in Bangladesh, now holding positions of power in the highest governmental offices. Women have governed as prime minister since 1991, and Bangladesh’s primary opposition party, the BNP, was led by a woman until recently. Fifty seats are reserved for women in the National Parliament. Currently, 71 women serve in that body while 14,000 other women hold seats on local governing boards. Ten percent of all government jobs are reserved for women. Women are recruited into military service and participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The government has also gradually increased the funding of women’s initiatives. The finance minister recently proposed a budget that allocated nearly 30 percent of the budget for women’s development across 43 ministries and divisions.

As a part of its legislative agenda, the Bangladesh government releases an action plan every five years. In the 2017 plan, women constitute nearly 30 percent of the total 207,000 jobs created. Women also play a strong role in the private sector, comprising 45 percent of the labor force and 35 percent of the total employment. The government has established the Women’s Commission of Bangladesh, which promotes gender equality and advocates for women’s rights.
the latest, Bangladesh outlined several steps to achieve gender equality, including improving educational access, reducing violence toward women and increasing opportunity.

While not all of the ambitious goals of the sixth Five-Year Plan were met, it is clear that they had a positive effect in areas of education and employment. For example, while Bangladesh missed its goals of a 60 percent ratio of girls to boys in tertiary education, the ratio still increased to 50 percent. Under this plan, Bangladesh also passed legislation addressing domestic violence, skills development and educational inequalities. The seventh Five-Year Plan followed suit by setting four areas of strategic objectives to improve women’s human capabilities, increase women’s economic benefits, enhance women’s influence and create an enabling environment for women’s advancements. In this action plan, they list a number of measures and policies designed to achieve their goals.

Prime Minister Hasina is a recipient of the Mother Teresa Award and the UNESCO Peace Tree award in recognition of her contributions to women’s education. Indeed, she has long recognized that the future of her nation depends in large measure on the empowerment of women. “I believe that only the right kind of education can make a girl self-reliant economically, socially, and emotionally,” she has said.

Actions initiated by the Bangladesh government have echoed the prime minister’s emphasis on women’s education. In recent years, Bangladesh has invested heavily in education at all levels. Primary education is compulsory and free of charge for everyone. One result: Overall enrollment of girls in primary school rose from 57 percent in 2008 to 95.4 percent in 2017. Girls receive stipends and scholarships for schooling until the 12th grade. Textbooks are free. Consequently, women are now well represented in the classroom; the female-to-male high school enrollment ratio is now 53 percent to 47 percent, a dramatic increase from 35 percent to 65 percent prior to 2009. Bangladesh leads in the category of primary and secondary education in the Gender Gap Index.

Bangladesh’s policies have also been successful in helping women get jobs. Bangladesh has seen a 35 percent increase in female employment in the last decade, with about 18 million women working. Although women still represent only about 30 percent of the workforce, their growth rate outpaces that of men. “We aim to ensure 40 percent participation of women in every sector by 2021 and 50 percent by 2030,” Prime Minister Hasina has said. She attributed 34 percent of Bangladesh impressive Gross Domestic Product growth to women. Established industries such as agriculture and apparel comprise most of this growth.

Bangladesh’s women represent most of the workforce in the apparel industry. Apparel is Bangladesh’s largest export. Female employment drives this critical industry for Bangladesh and underscores the need to increase the employment and standing of women in the country.
Prime Minister Hasina frequently raises the issue of women's empowerment on the international stage as well. At a 2017 United Nations' panel on women's empowerment, she stated: "Through empowerment of women in all sectors, the world can most effectively succeed in the realization of sustainable development for all.... We believe, women should be supported with education, proper training, the right tools and access to equal opportunities."

Bangladesh has helped women start and grow their own businesses. Several policy initiatives have assisted female entrepreneurs in gaining access to financing. The Bangladesh Bank opened a Women Entrepreneurs Development Unit and told other banks to follow suit. In addition, it eased requirements for women entrepreneurs to gain financing by requiring banks to offer Tk 25 lakh loans without collateral. The Bangladesh Bank also eased the process by which Small to Medium Enterprises (SME) can obtain loans and also mandated low interest rates on these loans. These policies and others greatly accelerated the amount of financing available to female entrepreneurs. In 2016, banks financed USD $543 million for women-led enterprises compared to USD $231 million in 2010. The amount of micro, small and medium enterprises led by women also increased from 13,233 to 32,842 during this time frame.

For women in Bangladesh, the future looks brighter than ever. Women are better educated, safer and more economically prosperous than their mothers. Women are accepted and valued not only as wives and helpmates, but also as farmers, parliamentarians and entrepreneurs. The whole nation benefits.

Bradford Orr is studying Systems Engineering & Computer Science at Washington University, St. Louis
When Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took her post in 2009, few observers of the region thought the developing nation would ever become a powerhouse of innovation and technological prowess. But fast forward just a few years and Bangladesh's Information, Communications, and Technology (ICT) sector is producing unprecedented economic growth and opportunity.

Under Sheikh Hasina's leadership, the governing Awami League government introduced a first-of-its-kind plan – known as Digital Bangladesh – that is leveraging digital tools and know-how to deliver government services to the country's 166 million residents. Its Digital Bangladesh goals envision accelerated development of information and communications technology in both the public and private spheres. Programs long underway are already making many facets of society more transparent and accountable, helping to boost the Bangladesh economy.

Because of this concerted digital push, Oxford University's Internet Institute discovered something remarkable last year: Bangladesh is the world's second-largest supplier of online labor for companies around the globe, trailing only India. The work includes software development, sales, and marketing support and the creation of multimedia content. This is the future of Bangladesh – a Digital Bangladesh.

Since 2009, annual exports resulting from Bangladesh's ICT sector have grown from $26 million to more than $300 million, a more than tenfold increase.

The Digital Bangladesh program has already transformed the lives of more than 100 million Bangladeshis. Prior to the Awami League government's digital push, only 20 million of the country's citizens had access to a mobile phone, and since the government won election in 2009, the government's Digital Bangladesh program has expanded rural internet access to millions of people. Access to affordable broadband internet will allow Bangladesh's rural population – approximately 75 percent of the country's total population – to access vital information and e-government services that play a major role in reducing poverty and increasing employment.

Digital Bangladesh is leveraging digital tools and know-how to deliver government services. The government has built 5,000 digital centers that provide internet and other information technology services to citizens, enough so that no village is more than 2.5 miles away from one. The Teacher's Portal, with more than 220,000 teachers participating is an online tool that allows experienced teachers to train less-experienced ones remotely, thereby improving the quality of education.

All of this comes at a time when Bangladeshis are rushing online and going mobile. In 2012, 31 million citizens had internet subscriptions. Today, 80 million – or roughly half the country’s population – do. Total mobile phone subscriptions stand at 145 million, or nearly the entire country, up from 87 million in 2012. In addition, 2 million ICT professionals and 10,000 ICT entrepreneurs have become self-reliant, generating an additional $300 million for Bangladesh's economy.

The high cost of mobile broadband service is constraining Bangladesh from tapping into its freelancing employment potential. Bangladesh is already ranked second in the world for the number of freelance workers in relation to the country's population, at 16 percent, only trailing India, with 24 percent. With the proper implementation of broadband access – which is coming soon – Bangladesh is poised to be the world's leader in the IT freelance economy.

Mobile phone usage grew from less than 1 percent in 2003 to 67 percent in 2013, which has helped connect millions of Bangladeshis to entertainment, basic communications, and social media.
To truly become a global leader in ICT, Bangladesh needs to increase broadband infrastructure, which it is doing. Most cable TV operators have already developed a fiber optics system capable of transmitting large amounts of data at a reduced cost.

A prime example of expanded technological opportunities is illustrated by Moheshkhali, a small island located along the southeast tip of Bangladesh. It is home to 320,000 people and is one of the nation’s densest, poorest and most remote areas. Many basic educational, medical and government services were inaccessible due to its remote location. As part of its Digital Bangladesh initiative, the Bangladesh government connected Moheshkhali to the mainland with 14 miles of fiber optic cable. The lives of citizens there have improved markedly as a result. Schools are linked to the internet for the first time, finally giving many children a chance to see the outside world. Thanks to high-speed web video, students on the island can interact with teachers on the mainland in real time.

Healthcare has also improved. The Digital Island project introduced handheld ultrasonic devices to four community clinics — with more to follow. These will allow doctors at hospitals in bigger cities such as Dhaka and Chittagong to examine and diagnose patients remotely.

Bangladesh has introduced many programs focused on giving lower income women and young people ICT skills.

More than 3,300 people have been trained under the Women ICT Freelancer and Entrepreneur Development Program, which is aimed at helping underprivileged women.

Another example of Bangladesh’s coordinated effort to create a pool of skilled labor is the Skills and Training Enhancement Program or STEP. STEP offers workers vocational training and gives development grants to 33 polytechnic institutions to improve quality of skills-training programs.

Developing skilled ICT human resources is necessary not only to manage the increase in ICT infrastructure but also to increase productivity, which is necessary for Bangladesh to maintain its robust gross domestic product growth of more than 6 percent annually. Expansion of Bangladesh’s ICT economy has played a major role in this economic diversification effort. Much of Bangladesh’s growth in the past years came from the ready-made garment industry. The garment industry employs between 3.5 million to 4 million people and accounts for about 12 percent of Bangladesh’s GDP.

Bangladesh’s $28 billion garment industry is the second largest in the world, only trailing China.

While the ICT sector in Bangladesh accounts for a relatively small percentage of total GDP, since the Digital Bangladesh initiative was first enacted, the industry has enjoyed a staggering 40 percent rate of growth in the past several years. With mobile phone subscribers reaching 120 million this year, Bangladesh is now the fifth largest mobile market in the world. Bangladesh’s large population and predominantly flat land has helped the country become a significant telecommunications hub for the region and lucrative investment for both foreign and domestic companies.

Bangladesh’s ICT innovations have not gone unnoticed on the global stage. Consulting firm A.T. Kearney recently selected Bangladesh as one of the top 50 IT destinations in the world. The increasingly skilled technical workforce has led to Samsung and Accenture establishing research and development centers in Bangladesh. Google, Dell and Microsoft are outsourcing many of their technical needs to Bangladeshi Companies.

Bangladesh’s ICT companies are also beginning to form partnerships with tech companies from around the globe. These partnerships can be attributed to conferences such as Digital World 2015, which brought 120 private companies and governmental organizations from 25 countries to the capital city of Dhaka for a four-day conference. While the primary focus of the event was to highlight the advances of the Digital Bangladesh initiative as well as potential growth opportunities in the ICT sector, Digital World also offered the opportunity for Bangladeshi tech start-ups to learn from some of the world’s biggest tech firms.

Casey Botticello is a veteran of several Tech Startup companies & an expert in cryptocurrencies
Electricity plays a pivotal role in poverty alleviation and socio-economic development of a country. The present government has given high priority in the power sector adopting short, mid and long-term power generation plan after assuming office. As a result of the quick decision of the government, power generation capacity including captive has radically increased. The remarkable progress in the power sector is the consequence of undertaking and implementing apt plans, attracting more private investment and importing electricity through regional cooperation from the neighboring countries. Government is committed to achieve declared “Vision 2021” and to turn Bangladesh into an upper middle-income country by 2021 and by 2041 aiming at transforming it into a developed country. Bangladesh is going to generate 24,000 MW, 40,000 MW and 60,000 MW of electricity by 2021, 2030 and 2041 respectively. Power Division is working relentlessly to ensure “Electricity for all” and government is hopeful that before 2021, it will be possible to bring the whole country under 100% coverage of electrification.

**Bangladesh: Vision 2021 for Power Sector**

“To provide access to quality electricity to all people at an affordable price by the year 2021”

**Power Sector at a Glance:**
- Generation Capacity: 20,430 MW (Including captive)
- Maximum Demand: 12,000 MW
- Highest Generation: 11,623 MW (September 19, 2018)
- Per Capita Generation: 464k Wh
- Transmission Line: 11,293Ckt KM
- Distribution Line: 4, 76,000 KM
- Number of Consumer: 31.5 Million
- Access to Electricity: 91%
- Electricity Growth: 9%
- New connections: 20.7 Million
- Overall System loss: 11.87%

**Significant Initiatives in Power Sector during last 10 years:**
- Fuel diversification plan adopted to ensure smooth primary fuel supply to generate electricity;
- Quick Supply of Power & Energy (Special Act) Law 2010 was enacted to implement power sector projects;
- Adequate budget allocated for power sector in the annual development plan;
- Innovative Financing introduced in power sector;
- Government has formulated and updated different policies to attract local and foreign investment in the power sector through exemption of VAT, tax and stamp duty;
- Different transmission and distribution projects are going on for the smooth transmission and distribution of the generated electricity;
- Projects are going on to ensure 100% electrification;
- To ensure supply of electricity in the off-grid areas, Solar Home System and Solar mini-grid projects are being implemented;
- Pre-paid metering system and ICT based services to the consumers for transparency and accountability are being provided;
- Last ten years approximately 17 billion US$ invested in power sector (US$ 12 billion in public sector and US$ 5 billion in private sector).

**Achievement during last 10 years:**
- At present, generation capacity has been tripled compared to the installed generation capacity of Jan.
2009 and reaches 20,430 MW including captive;
• Since 2009, contract of 137 power stations with a generation capacity of 24,656 MW has been signed and commissioning of 105 power stations with 12,132 MW has been completed;
• Up till now, 1,160 MW has been added to national grid through regional cooperation;
• Since 2009, access to electricity reaches 91% from 47% including renewable energy;
• Since 2009, transmission line reaches 11,293ckt. km. from 8,000 ckt.km;
• Since 2009, total 260 thousand km new distribution line is constructed and total distribution line reaches 476 thousand km;
• Since 2009, overall system loss reduced to 11.8% from 16.85%;

Future of Power Sector
To realize Vision 2011, the government of Bangladesh (GOB) has adopted Power System Master Plan (PSMP) 2016 as the basis for future projects to be undertaken in this sector. As per PSMP electricity generation would reach to 24,000 MW by 2021, 40,000 MW by 2030 and 60,000 MW by 2041. Transmission and distribution network capacity will be increased vis-a-vis the increased generation. To reduce system loss, accounts receivable and load management system, more than 1.5 (31 July 2018) million prepaid meters have been installed. Government has taken initiatives to replace all the meters by prepaid/smart meters within next 3 years. Whole system will be brought under SMART Grid. Cities distribution network will be underground. Whole power sector will be brought under automation.

Investment Potentials in Bangladesh Power Sector
Bangladesh is an investor friendly country. There has never been an instance of nationalization of FDI nor any case of default in repayment. Its incentive package for FDI and for the power sector in particular, is one of the most competitive. Its capital account is freely convertible for FDI. The Independent Power Policy of Bangladesh has been able to attract FDI since 1996s and the track records on all counts have been excellent. By 2041 approximately US$ 80 billion investment will be required where 40 billion for generation sector, 24 billion for transmission and 16 billion for distribution sector in Bangladesh.

Challenges:

Primary Fuel Supply
• Enhanced gas exploration and production
• Coal Import (Long term contract) and deep-sea port for coal handling
• LNG Import and infrastructure development

Project Financing
• Ensuring financing for Public and Private sector projects
• Availability of foreign currency
• In 2041, around $80 billion required to materialize Power system Master Plan (PSMP)

The Father of the Nation of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, dreamt of launching a satellite of its own during the inauguration of the Betbunia ground station in June 1975. In line with his dream, his capable daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made the plan of launching the first ever satellite of the country as a part of the vision of implementing “Digital Bangladesh.”

Accordingly, the country’s long awaited Bangabandhu Satellite-1 was successfully launched on 12 May 2018 at Bangladesh time 2:15 A.M. from Cape Canaveral of Florida by Falcon 9 Rocket of Space-X. The project has been implemented by the projects named “Preparatory Function and Supervision in Launching a Communication and Broadcasting Satellite” and “Bangabandhu Satellite Launching Project” under Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) and in care of Posts and Telecommunications Division and under the intense supervision of Prime Minister’s Honorable ICT advisor Mr. Sajeeb Ahmed Wazed. A France based satellite manufacturing company ‘Thales Alenia Space’ made the satellite and the orbital slot was leased from “Inter Sputnik” of Russia. With the launching of Bangabandhu Satellite-1, Bangladesh have become a prestigious member of satellite club.

**Bangabandhu Satellite-1 (BS-1)** is a communication and broadcasting satellite. Like many other developed countries of the world, Bangladesh has achieved this space technology as the 57th (fifty seventh) country of the world, which is a memento and symbol of country’s development. The main reason for the creation of this high-end technology is to become self-sufficient in the satellite industry. With the development of the country, dependency on satellite of many industries of the country is increasing for the telecommunication service. At present, they are to take this service from foreign satellite service providers at the cost of valuable foreign currency.

Bangabandhu Satellite-1 is the country’s first ever GEO satellite located at 119.1° East longitude. It has 40 transponders, out of them 14 are of C band and 26 are of Ku band. Platform of BS-1 is SPACEBUS 4000B2. It has 3- Solar Array panels per wing and Thales Alenia Space Avionics 4000. The mission life will be at least 15 years.

**Frequency Distribution of BS-1:**
Total capacity of Bangabandhu Satellite-1 is 1,600 MHz and capacity of each transponder is 40MHz.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Band</th>
<th># of Transponders</th>
<th>Uplink Frequency</th>
<th>Downlink Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ku Band (FSS)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12750-13250 MHz</td>
<td>10700-10950 MHz &amp; 11200-11450 MHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ku Band (BSS)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14500-14540 MHz</td>
<td>11700-11740 MHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Band (FSS)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6725-7025 MHz</td>
<td>4500-4800 MHz</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coverage Area of BS-1:**

BS-1 has 5 (five) separate beams and, accordingly, the coverage area of BS-1 is divided in 5 regions, which are then categorized into two service areas: Primary Service Area (PSA) and Secondary Service Area (SSA).

Regions 1, 2 and 5 are included in Primary Service Area (PSA). The regions are as follows:
- Region 1: Ku-Band Beam over Bangladesh and its territorial waters in the Bay of Bengal.
- Region 2: Ku-Band Beam, herein referred to as “India Plus” Beam, over Bangladesh (including its territorial water land, in the Bay of Bengal), India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka.
- Region 5: C-Band Beam covering Bangladesh (including its territorial water land in the Bay of Bengal), India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan (A part of it), Indonesia and the Philippines.

Region 3 & 4 are included in Secondary Coverage Area. The regions are as follows:
- Region 3: A Ku-Band Beam covering Indonesia
- Region 4: A Ku-Band Beam covering the Philippines

**Ground Stations:**

For the maintenance and control the Bangabandhu Satellite-1, two ground stations are established at Gazipur and Betbunia, Rangamati. Gazipur will act as main ground station and Betbunia will act as redundant. An inter facility link (IFL) with complete redundancy connects the ground stations for ensuring uninterrupted service. Both the ground stations are equipped with uninterrupted power supply providing electrical power to all critical equipment.

Bangabandhu Satellite-1 will provide Direct to Home (DTH), VSAT Network, Broadband, Video Broadcasting, Communication Trunk etc services.

The advantages of Bangabandhu Satellite-1 (one) are mentioned as follows:
- Currently, TV channels depend on foreign satellites for
broadcasting their programs. As a result of launching Bangabandhu Satellite-1, there will be no dependency on foreign satellites and a huge amount of foreign currencies, which are to pay as rent of services from foreign satellite, will also be conserved.

- In DTH (Direct-to-Home) technology, without any cable connectivity from outside, satellite TV channels can be seen by installing a receiver at home through Bangabandhu Satellite-1.
- Through VSAT network, government or non-government organizations will be able to establish their own secured networks. Various ministries of the country such as Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Disaster Management, Ministry of Education and other ministries / departments / institutions / agencies can avail the services very easily.
- Where the optical fiber cable or radio transmission network is unable to reach, there uninterrupted telecommunication, backbone of mobile communications including broadband internet services can be provided on water and land through Bangabandhu Satellite-1.
- During the time of natural disaster like storm, flood or earthquake, when fiber cable and radio transmission networks are damaged, it will be possible to provide uninterrupted telecommunication service through Bangabandhu Satellite.
- It will enable the scope of modern services like E-learning, telemedicine etc.

- Through the expansion of technology and services, direct and indirect employment will be created which will help in reducing the country’s unemployment.
- It will also create business opportunities for other sectors related to satellite.

A company named “Bangladesh Communication Satellite Company Limited (BCSCL)” has been formed under the Posts and Telecommunications Division to manage all the activities related to the satellite including operation, control and marketing of its services.

Since 04 September 2018, Bangladesh Television started test broadcasting of SAFF football tournament through Bangabandhu Satellite-1. Commercial activities of Bangabandhu Satellite-1 will be started very soon.
The Government of Bangladesh has given top priority to develop an integrated transportation network throughout the country. After successful completion of the largest infrastructure project in Bangladesh like Bangabandhu Bridge, the current government has taken the initiative to construct the Padma Multipurpose Bridge over the mighty river Padma. The feasibility study reveals that the project is technically feasible and economically viable.

The Padma Multipurpose Bridge is one of the signature projects of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Her bold and courageous leadership and firm determination has made it possible to start the construction works on this mega project with its own fund. The implementation works is progressing in full swing, and 60% of physical works have already been completed.

This Padma Multipurpose Bridge is also a symbol of the national pride and competency.

Progress of Major activities up to October 2018:

Total Project cost: Main Bridge BDT 30,193.39 Crore

- Length: Main Bridge-6.15 km, Road Viaduct-3.148 km, Rail Viaduct-532 m
- Contractor’s name: China Railway Major Bridge Engineering Group Co. Limited.

River Training Works

- Length: Main Bridge-14 km (Mawa-1.6 km, Janjira-12.4 km)
- Contractor name: Sinohydro Corporation Limited, China.
- Contract amount: BDT 8,707.81 Crore Physical progress: 46%
Janjira Approach Road & Selected Bridge End Facilities

- Length: Main Bridge-10.50 km
- Contractor name: AML-HCM JV.
- Contract amount: BDT 318.99 Crore
- Physical progress: 100%

Service Area-2:

- Length: Main Bridge-1.617 km
- Contractor name: AML-HCM JV.
- Contract amount: BDT. 193.39 Crore
- Physical progress: 100%
- Facilities: Mosque, Motel, Mess Hall, Resort, Duplex House, Supervision office, etc.
- Contractor name: Abdul Monem Limited
- Contract amount: BDT. 208.71 Crore
- Physical progress: 100%
This Padma Multipurpose Bridge is not just a dream of making a 6.15 kilometers infrastructure but also a symbol of the national pride and competency. The Bridge will connect 19 districts of the south-western part with the eastern part including the capital. The Bridge lies on the Asian Highway rout AH-1 and with the construction of the Bridge, it will bring revolutionary changes not only in internal transportation system of Bangladesh but also pave the way to the regional connectivity.

The Padma Bridge will also bring significant changes in poverty alleviation by reducing poverty 0.84% per annum and socio-economic uplift of the people by an increase in 1.23% growth in GDP.
Nearly a million Rohingya refugees have crossed from their homes in western Myanmar into southeast Bangladesh since August 2017, joining hundreds of thousands of their brothers and sisters who made the same journey in previous years. The Rohingya fled what the United Nations calls “a textbook example of ethnic cleansing,” recounting horrific stories of burned villages and killings at the hands of Myanmar’s military.

Bangladesh has accepted the Rohingya on humanitarian grounds and has worked hard to help them. At the same time, Bangladesh negotiated with Myanmar to facilitate their voluntary repatriation, and the two sides recently agreed to do so over the next two years.

Bangladesh has expanded and improved existing refugee camps for the Rohingya and is building new ones. The government is vaccinating children, registering Rohingya so they can receive assistance and building living quarters and other infrastructure.

These actions have been praised around the world, including by Pope Francis who visited Bangladesh in December 2017.

Even so, the government of Bangladesh has drawn criticism for limiting the Rohingyas’ movements to inside the camps and by not granting them permanent residency. Neither is the result of a lack of compassion. Rather, the policies are designed to protect the security of the Bangladeshi people.
The media are reporting that the military crackdown on the Rohingya – though clearly unjustified in its scale and cruelty – began as a response to the killing of 12 Myanmar security officers by the Rohingya militant group known as ARSA or the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army. The group has been linked to ISIS and al-Qaeda, though ASRA denies this, saying it is fighting for the rights of the Rohingya.

Bangladesh’s security concern stems from the fact that the armed ARSA militants that have crossed into Bangladesh along with the waves of other Rohingya make the refugee camps a breeding ground for radicalization.

In an article in the Financial Times, analyst Richard Horsey, who lives in Myanmar, wrote: “Any long-term hopeless situation is very conducive for recruitment by radical groups who want to pursue their agenda.” He added, “ARSA will have no problem in identifying young people willing to join” in the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh.

This is why Bangladesh cannot safely allow countrywide freedom of movement to the Rohingya. The government can’t ensure that terrorists will not recruit new members to carry out cross-border attacks into Myanmar or, more importantly, to wage terror in Bangladesh.

Over the years, Bangladesh has granted refugee status to about 30,000 Rohingya that have fled from Myanmar. But absorbing all 1.3 million Rohingya would constitute an instant population increase of nearly one percent. That may sound small, but similar spikes have contributed to destabilization in other governments around the world. Further, nearly all of the Rohingya in Bangladesh are at the lowest end of the economic spectrum and thus would present an outsized burden on the nation’s social safety net.

Bangladesh is proud of its rapid development. In 2015, the World Bank said Bangladesh moved into its lower-middle-income bracket and its annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is more than...
7 percent. Bangladesh can only help the Rohingya in the short-term and is expending resources to do so. But granting all Rohingya permanent residency would shock the economy and set back hard-won gains for everyone.

Assisting hundreds of thousands of refugees is a burden, of course. But Bangladesh is proud to bear the bulk of the cost of helping the Rohingya.

Bangladesh has its own history with genocide and refugee status. During its 1971 Liberation War, the Pakistani army and its Bangladeshi collaborators undertook a genocide that killed 3 million people. Members of the Pakistani military and supporting Islamist militias raped 200,000 women and girls. They displaced 40 million others, 10 million of whom took refuge in India.

Before Bangladesh achieved independence, Pakistan treated residents of East Pakistan – the area that is now Bangladesh – as second-class citizens. Their actions were cruel and calculated. For example, the government intentionally delayed aid to the Bengali people after a 1970 cyclone that killed 500,000 Bengalis. The Pakistan government even suspended parliament rather than seat a prime minister from East Pakistan.

In other words, Bangladesh understands the plight of the Rohingyas all too well. When Bengalis desperately needed assistance a half century ago, India responded by taking in millions of refugees. Bangladesh is eager to extend the same helping hand to the Rohingyas.

Bangladesh has had to buttress its efforts to protect the Rohingyas. In addition to the two existing refugee camps in the southern city of Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh has made an additional 2,000 acres of land available. Bangladesh issued identification cards to the Rohingyas and provided them with access to government services, including childhood immunizations. Bangladesh has also constructed sturdy shelters to house the most vulnerable and handing out hot meals.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited the Kutupalong refugee camp and promised to help the Rohingyas: “We gave them [the Rohingya refugees] shelter in our country on humanitarian grounds. Our houses were also burnt down in 1971. Our people fled to India when they had nowhere to go. So, we are doing everything in our power to help the Rohingyas.”

The government of Bangladesh has crafted a plan that would relocate the Rohingya population to Thengar Char, an island in the northern Bay of Bengal at the mouth of the Meghna River, north of Cox’s Bazar and south of the capital of Dhaka. Conditions in this new settlement will be far better than what the Rohingyas have in Cox’s Bazar. The government will build housing, schools, hospitals and health centers, mosques and roads.

During a recent hearing of the Tom Lantos Commission on Human Rights in the U.S. House of Representatives, Matthew Smith, CEO of Fortify Rights, who has visited the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh, said he is sympathetic to the challenges the Bangladesh government faces from the crush of refugees.

Another witness at the hearing, Andrea Gittleman, program manager of the Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide, recently visited Rohingya population living in Bangladesh and said that the Bangladesh government believes that the root of the Rohingya crisis must be solved in Myanmar.

Correct. The solution to the Rohingya crisis must be based in Myanmar and it will take many international hands. Bangladesh asks its international friends for help in developing Thengar Char and transporting the refugees there. It also seeks support for the sustainable return of the Rohingyas to their homeland in Myanmar, in safety, security and dignity.

Sajeeb Wazed is the Information & Communications Technology Advisor of Bangladesh and the son of the prime minister.
Experts are sounding alarms about the many threats posed by climate change. Severe weather ranging from cyclones and hurricanes to droughts and extreme flooding have been credibly linked to the warming of the planet. Such disasters contribute to social unrest around the world as citizens struggle to deal with the shock and turmoil of having their homes destroyed and food sources decimated.

The many low-lying regions of Bangladesh are particularly susceptible to the ravages of climate change. That makes its battle against the effects of climate change urgent. The government of Bangladesh understands the seriousness of the situation and has pioneered ways to fight back.

German Watch, the think tank that produces an annual Global Climate Risk Index, ranks Bangladesh as one of the top 10 countries most vulnerable to climate change. Analyses by other respected entities have come to similar conclusions. The threats are manifold from increasing floods: displacement, agricultural damage and destruction of infrastructure. In Bangladesh, where millions of people live in or near flood zones, geography and demographics are the largest contributors to this high risk.

Of the 166 million living in Bangladesh, most live in rural areas or along the coast. Two-thirds of Bangladesh is fewer than five meters above sea level. Indeed, a large portion of its landmass is delta and lies between the Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers, which flow into the Bay of Bengal. The alluvial soil is rich but vulnerable to flooding and drought brought on by extreme weather. Storms and sea level rises are constant dangers. About 28 percent of Bangladeshis live near or on these low-level coasts.

Making matter worse, Bangladesh is often in the bullseye during monsoon season each June to October. In 2017, Cyclone Mora displaced more than 900,000 people, and in 1970, Cyclone Bhola destroyed 65 percent of the fishing capacity of coastal Bangladesh, which was then East Pakistan. Bhola also eradicated $63 million of crops and killed 280,000 cattle. The devastation was so severe that three months after the storm, 75 percent of the population needed food aid.

Because of this constant battering, experts say Bangladesh is at risk of losing 11 percent of its low coastal lands by 2050. In addition, one in seven Bangladeshis could be forced to move because of flooding during this same period. Dhaka, Bangladesh’s capital and largest city, already takes in roughly 1,000 to 2,000 people a day for this reason. Displaced citizens struggle to find work. Women who relocate in this way are at higher risk of being sold into the sex trade. Other complications from extreme poverty also abound.

But the Bangladesh government refuses to accept these outcomes as inevitable. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has made combatting climate change a centerpiece of her administration and has become a leading voice at the United Nations and other international forums about the need to address climate change.

At a United Nations meeting about climate change challenges this year, Prime Minister Hasina reiterated Bangladesh’s commitment to “low carbon, climate-resilient development.” This isn’t a new position. In 2015, the United Nations awarded her one of its Champions of the Earth awards for her government’s work in addressing climate change.
Bangladesh established a climate change trust fund in 2014 and was one of the first countries to do so. The government also amended its constitution to include provisions on protecting natural resources and the environment.

As far back as 2009, Bangladesh’s leadership put forward what it called the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. That was seven years before the world took a unified stance with the Paris Agreement.

Bangladesh’s plan includes a wide variety of social protections and careful disaster preparations. Bangladesh forged partnerships with a number of organizations such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the World Bank to complete its plans.

Bangladesh has maximized its limited resources and developed pioneering approaches to energy conservation and reforestation to reduce carbon emissions associated with climate change. Through partnerships with the UNDP, for example, Bangladesh has deployed more than 4 million solar home systems that generate more than 150 megawatts of electricity and 1.5 million cook stoves in rural areas. Bangladesh also has replanted mangroves to increase oxygen creation and rural areas’ defenses against the damage caused by severe weather. It also partnered with scientists to increase the diversity and resiliency of crops to hold back flooding. The government has even pioneered the use of foldable houses so its citizens can relocate rapidly.

Resiliency projects around the country have improved the situations for many citizens. Because of Bangladesh’s vulnerability to severe weather, programs that boost resiliency to and protection from climate change are just as necessary as those that curb greenhouse gas emissions.

For example, Bangladesh’s Cyclone Preparedness Program seeks to educate citizens by using public discussions, posters, leaflets, film screenings and in-person performances. These efforts have saved many lives. The program also includes an early warning system that is activated by state-of-the-art meteorological radar stations. The stations, located in
Dhaka, Kehpupara and Cox’s Bazar, transmit minute-by-minute weather updates that identify potentially devastating storms long before they make landfall.

The Cluster Village Project settles victims of natural disasters on donated lands and builds modern, clean dwellings that are flood and storm resistant. A typical house consists of private living quarters for four families clustered around a service block that includes shared cooking and bathroom facilities. In addition, the project provides relocated families with working utilities such as safe drinking water, sanitation and electricity. The government of Bangladesh also has pursued creative solutions to the hardships that climate change presents. Its Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, for instance, sets out 44 short, medium and long-term initiatives that include food security, disaster management, infrastructure improvement and development of low carbon fuels. To fund these, the government established the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund in 2010, which allocated more than $365 million to implement these initiatives. The government also regularly earmarks 6 to 7 percent of its annual budget for climate change-related efforts. To date, Bangladesh has spent more than $400 million from its Climate Change Fund on projects aimed at curbing climate change impacts. These particularly focus on efforts to protect people in low-lying areas from floods and reduce pollution caused by urbanization and industrialization.

Bangladesh has woven climate change into its national budget. It developed the Climate Fiscal Framework, which tracks and promotes climate funding projects in many parts of the government.

Bangladesh, in short, is a model for developing and developed nations alike on the issue of climate change preparation and mitigation. Other nations should take note.

Bradford Orr is studying Systems Engineering & Computer Science at Washington University, St. Louis.
Bangladesh: A Brand Name in U.N. Peacekeeping

Bangladesh's contribution to the UN peacekeeping is a story of glory and success. The journey of Bangladeshi peacekeepers attiring the Blue Helmet began in 1988 by sending 15 observers to the Iraq-Iran military observer mission (UNIIMOG). Bangladesh Police joined in the next year (1989). Subsequently, Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Air Force joined United Nations peacekeeping operations in 1993. Bangladesh is highly dedicated and stands firmly committed to the principles laid down in the United Nations Charter, namely peaceful settlement of international disputes and maintenance of global peace and security. Bangladesh also participates in UN missions under Chapter VII. The vow for establishing peace and security by Bangladeshi peacekeepers emanates from the principles enshrined in the Constitution of Bangladesh. The Preamble to the Constitution reads ".... We may prosper in freedom and may make our full contribution of Bangladesh towards international peace and co-operation in keeping with the progressive aspirations of mankind." Bangladesh has always been responding promptly to the United Nation's call for strengthening world peace and stability by contributing her troops and police for peacekeeping.

To date, out of total 69 peace missions since 1948, Bangladesh has successfully completed 54 Peace Keeping Operations in around 40 countries wherein 158,610 peacekeepers have taken part. Bangladesh is one of the leading troops contributing country with a total of 7,161 peacekeepers deployed in 10 countries. At present, Bangladesh stands as 2nd in terms of troop contribution with a total of 6,347 peacekeepers and 3rd police contributing country with 814 peacekeepers.

The footprints of Bangladeshi peacekeepers are now evident in almost all the troubled areas of the world. Bangladeshi peacekeepers’ performance is loudly applauded by UN hierarchy as well as many heads of state where Bangladeshi contingents performed the Peacekeeping Mission. President of Liberia Ms Ellen Sirleaf conveyed her thankful gratitude to the Bangladeshi peacekeepers for their contributions and commented, “Bangladeshi contingent has gone beyond its protection mandate and helped build up the manpower capacity of the country.”

[The] “Bangladeshi contingent has gone beyond its protection mandate and helped build up the manpower capacity of the country.”

30 years of UN Peacekeeping by Bangladesh

In 2018, Bangladesh had achieved 30 years of participation in UN peacekeeping missions. UNHQ has already recognized this glory and success through a newsletter published on the UN website. To mark this glory, Bangladesh has also organized a thematic display titled “30 years of UN Peacekeeping of Bangladesh” in UNHQ on 25 April 2018. UN Secretary General Mr. António Guterres, President of the General Assembly Mr. Miroslav Lajcak and Hon’ble Finance Minister and Home Minister of Bangladesh graced this occasion. The UN Secretary General and the President of UNGA expressed their deepest satisfaction and praised the Bangladeshi peacekeepers for their outstanding contribution in UN peacekeeping operation.

Sacrifices Made for the Cause of Peace

Bangladeshi peacekeepers have never retreated in the face of danger when confronted with ‘unknown enemies on foreign soil’. Peacekeepers working under complex and dangerous circumstances often endangered...
their lives. So far, 145 peacekeepers made supreme sacrifices and 225 sustained major injuries for the noble cause of the peace process.

**Preparedness in Terms of Training.**

Bangladesh fulfils her solemn obligations by providing mission specific training to contingents and individual officers and ensure that they are capable of delivering as per the UN mandate. In order to match the current and future challenges of UN Peacekeeping operations, new modalities have been adopted for pre-deployment preparation and training. To increase the cohesiveness, inter-operability and operational efficiency, adequate preparation time is given to the deployable contingents.

**Preparedness in Terms of Equipment.**

Bangladesh is equipping the deployable contingents with new technology to meet the UN current and emerging requirements. To ensure the security and protection of peacekeepers, Bangladesh has recently deployed 18 X Mine Resistance Ambush Protected (MRAP) Vehicles in MINUSMA, Mali at her own cost and arrangement. In addition 15 X LAV (MRAP) are in the process of procurement. Moreover, to meet the upcoming requirement, Bangladesh is in the process to procure new equipment like LAVs, night flying capable helicopters, C-30J aircraft, etc.

**Deployment of Rapid Deployable Battalion**

Presently, one Rapid Deployable Battalion as BANRDB/1 is deployed in DR Congo which will be replaced by BANRDB/2 in February 2019. Bangladesh is also prepared to deploy one more Rapid Deployable Battalion. Besides, a total of 4 units are registered in PCRS for RDL. Verification Team from UN Headquarters and Force Headquarters have visited Bangladesh from 31 July to 03 August 2018. The contingents are ready to deploy.

**Effort of Bangladesh for Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace**

Since its independence, Bangladesh has always been promoting the idea of global peace and stability. Following this spirit, Bangladesh has been taking the lead in tabling the resolution on “Culture of Peace” every year in the General Assembly since 2000. Bangladesh has remained actively engaged with the work of the UN Peace Building Commission (PBC) since its inception. In 2012, Bangladesh served as the Chair of the Peace Building Commission and organized the first-ever summit level meeting of the commission under the Chair of the Hon’ble Prime Minister in New York. Bangladesh firmly supports the potential role of the UN peacebuilding architecture and innovative proposals of the Secretary General on financing for ‘sustaining peace’. In this connection Bangladesh has already made a token contribution of USD 100,000 for the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) which was announced by the Hon’ble Prime Minister in 72nd session of the General Assembly.

**Role of the Bangladesh Armed Forces in Peace Building Activities.**

The Bangladesh Armed Forces, through its participation in different peace keeping missions and working with civil administration at home, have displayed the most common functional and occupational skills of rosters that serve multilateral peace operations in the field of human rights, rule of law, humanitarian affairs, election administration, human resources and training, medical support and security. Additionally, Bangladesh Armed Forces personnel have experience at home in infrastructure development i.e. roads, bridges, buildings etc, disaster management i.e. flood, cyclone, earthquake, national biometric ID card project, national Machine Readable Passport Project, housing projects for homeless people, emergency water supply, food distribution etc.

**Preparedness of BD for UN Peacekeeping Operations**

Bangladesh resolutely reiterates her firm commitment to undertake any UN assignment for global peace and stability in future. Bangladesh puts special emphasis on preparing its force to meet the future challenges of UN Peacekeeping. Preparedness of Bangladesh for UNPKO can be defined as following:

Pledges Made by Bangladesh under United Nations Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (UNPCRS). To meet the future peacekeeping requirement of UN and off course as a leading peace promoter, Bangladesh has pledged nine army components, six naval components, three air components and five police components under UNPCRS. Details of pledges made under UNPCRS are as following:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Key Components</th>
<th>Pledge</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BD Army</td>
<td>Infantry Battalion (BANBAT)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>RDL, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quick Reaction Force Company (BANQRF)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>RDL Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signal Company (BANSIG)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>RDL Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special Force Company (BANSFC)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Force Protection/ FHQ Support Company</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engineer Company (BANENGR)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>Level 2, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level-II Hospital (BANMED)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Level 2, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military Police Company (BANMP)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transportation Company (BANPT)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Riverine Unit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy</td>
<td>Maritime Unit (Frigate/ Corvette)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maritime Unit (Offshore Patrol Vessel/ Large Patrol Craft)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shore Based Radar Unit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special Operations Unit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Port Operations Unit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Force</td>
<td>Utility Aviation Unit (BANUAU)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>comprising of 03 x Bell – 212 helicopters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Utility Aviation Unit (BANUAU)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>RDL, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>comprising of 04 x Mi-17 helicopters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bangladesh Airfield Services Unit (BANASU)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>Formed Police Unit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>140X2=280</td>
<td>One is in Level 1 and the other is in Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formed Police Unit (Female)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Police Guard Unit</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>140X2=280</td>
<td>Level 1, Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>09 X Components from Army, 06 from Navy, 03 from Air Force and 05 from Bangladesh Police</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3655</td>
<td>Out of 23 Components, 04 in RDL (1 likely to be deployed as RDB) 17 in Level 1 and 02 in Level 2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Level 1 means: Registering a pledge under PCRS by submitting all the necessary documents of a particular unit.

Rapid Deployment Level (RDL) means: It is the 4th and last level of PCRS. After successful negotiation of MOU, Load list in the required format are submitted to the DFS Movement Control Section (Movcon) in Level 3. After that, a contingent is placed in RDL by a further pledge by the TCC/ PCC declaring its ability to deploy within 30/60/90 days.

**Increase of Female Participation**

Women are often the most appropriate peacekeepers to interact with vulnerable members of the population, who often prefer to speak with other female. Bangladesh strongly desires to be one of the leading female peacekeepers’ nations.
The deployment state is as followed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Org</th>
<th>Participated</th>
<th>Currently Deployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Army</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Navy</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Air Force</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Armed Forces</strong></td>
<td><strong>359</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Police</td>
<td>1,185</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,544</strong></td>
<td><strong>144</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In regard to the increase of female peacekeepers, Bangladesh has taken all possible measures to reach the target set by UN of 15% female Staff Officer/Military Observer in UN Peacekeeping Operations. To meet the UN Goal of 15% women employment as SO/UNMO by 2018, Bangladesh is required to deploy **20 Female Officers** as SO/UNMO. Bangladesh Armed Forces have **already deployed 12 Female Officers**. At present **5 Female Officers are in the process of deployment** and others are in the process of selection. Hopefully, Bangladesh will deploy more female officers gradually to fulfill the target by the year 2018. Bangladesh deployed female officers as Contingent Commander of military and police contingents in UNOCI, Ivory Coast, MINUSTAH, Haiti, MINUSCA, Central African Republic and MONUSCO, DR Congo. It is worth mentioning that Bangladesh has deployed two female helicopter pilots in DR Congo for the first time. Besides, Bangladesh is making steady progress in deploying a female engagement team with the contingent by 2020.

**Response of Bangladesh Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA).**

Bangladesh assures Zero Tolerance to SEA. Bangladesh has already signed the voluntary compact between UN and Member States for the protection against SEA. Bangladesh has given the highest priority to guard against any Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Cases. Bangladesh has taken note of two previous lapses and incorporated them as a learning tool during pre-deployment training. Currently, a case of SEA against a Bangladeshi Peacekeeper is being dealt with utmost priority to set an example for others. Besides, steps are being taken to check the mental health/psychological test of the peacekeepers prior deployment.

**Role of Bangladesh Peacebuilding Center.**

Bangladesh Peacebuilding Center started its activities from 01 November 2016 with technical support from The Japan Peacebuilding Center. The core objectives of Bangladesh Peacebuilding center are to impart training in light of the expertise required in emerging peace building opportunities worldwide for developing a skilled, experienced and quickly deployable workforce, to conduct research on peacebuilding in order to contribute to fostering sustaining peace around the world, to engage national and international stakeholders in the effort to peacebuilding and to disseminate information about peacebuilding initiatives among prospective professionals and other Peacebuilding Centers. Training in Bangladesh Peacebuilding Center will commence soon.

**Role of Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation and Training (BIPSOT).**

BIPSOT is a prestigious institute of Bangladesh dedicated to train peacekeepers for employment in all types of UNPSO (UN Peace Support Operations). The mission of BIPSOT is to impart specialized multifaceted training to national and multinational military, police and civilian participants on peace operations in accordance with current international standards through research, education and professional programmes. The vision of BIPSOT is to promote global peace and security as an international Centre of Excellence. Besides providing training to the peacekeepers of national, regional and international participants, BIPSOT also conducts various exercises, seminars and workshops related to peacekeeping and peacebuilding round the year.

**Role of Bangladesh in Handling the Recent Exodus of Rohingya.**

Bangladesh is currently facing a colossal challenge due to the unprecedented level of influx of forcibly displaced Myanmar Nationals (Rohingya people) from the neighboring Rakhine state of Myanmar. The Hon’ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh has taken a humane approach and provided temporary shelter and other basic services for over a million of Rohingyas. She has also put forward a ‘five-point proposal’ at the 72nd UN General Assembly and urged the international community to take effective measures for safe, sustainable and dignified return of the Rohingyas to their homeland in Myanmar. Under severe space and resource constraint, Bangladesh Government is providing food, shelter, health and other basic humanitarian services to over a million Rohingyas. Bangladesh government has allocated 3500 acres of land for building temporary shelters, resources for roads and other infrastructure construction including...
logistic support for smooth distribution of relief materials. Rohingya children and women are being vaccinated and given health services in Government hospitals. Administration, military, police and other government agencies have been deployed to ensure comprehensive support. Bangladesh, as a responsible and responsive nation, remains bilaterally engaged with Myanmar to ensure safe, sustainable and dignified return of these forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals.

Role of Bangladesh in Counter Terrorism.

The Government of Bangladesh maintains ‘zero tolerance’ policy to all forms of terrorism and violent extremism. Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism. The Government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy to address this menace. While the law enforcing agencies are running strong anti-terrorism drives to wipe out the home grown extremist groups by dismantling the terror hideouts, necessary measures have been taken to address violent extremism through community engagement and awareness building. Bangladesh has effectively engaged the community leaders, public representatives, teachers, and Imams (religious teachers) across the country to build a social movement against terrorism and militancy.

Being inspired by the constitution of the nation, Bangladesh is firmly committed to promote world peace. Bangladesh shall remain on stand by to respond as and when called upon by the United Nations for the noble cause of peace.

Source: Bangladesh Army
When Bangladesh was just four years old in 1975, it experienced a horrific act of terrorism. Rogue members of the Bangladesh military assassinated the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and most of the members of his family except for two daughters who were traveling outside the country. Now, 41 years later, one of those daughters, Sheikh Hasina, is the prime minister of Bangladesh. Not surprisingly, she has made anti-terrorism a centerpiece of her administration. She drafted the nation’s first zero-tolerance policy on terrorism and has worked with officials at all levels of Bangladesh’s government to create nationwide awareness of extremism and to wage a massive effort to combat the scourge.

No country is terror-free these days, and Bangladesh is no exception. On the night of July 1, 2016, five gunmen stormed into the Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka, the country’s capital and its largest city. They took hostages in this quiet, upscale neighborhood. In the end, the attack claimed 24 innocent lives and was one of the deadliest acts of terrorism in Bangladesh’s history.

Just before this internationally known tragedy, Bangladeshi authorities had launched an unprecedented campaign to root out terrorists within the nation’s borders. As part of this effort, the governing Awami League, backed by a 14-party alliance, implemented a plan to pinpoint terrorist suspects and to undermine their ideological justifications for violence. In the weeks following the Holey Artisan massacre, Bangladesh security forces arrested several dozen potentially dangerous militants, including members of banned organizations like Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), Hizb ut-Tahrir, Ansarullah Bangla Team, Ansar al-Islam, Harkat-ul-Jihad and Allahaer Dal. Security forces also arrested leaders of Jama’atul Mujahideen, Ansarullah Bangla Team, and Islami Chhatra Shibir. These crucial arrests weakened the most threatening organizations in Bangladesh as well as those groups that were likely behind the July 1 attack.

These entities aren’t well known outside of Bangladesh, but they have long been breeding grounds for local felons who increasingly wave the flag of ISIS. As a result, ISIS and related terrorist organizations were significantly set back and the people of Bangladesh were safer.

By almost all accounts, Bangladesh’s terrorist problem is homegrown. Yes, some of the extremists operating in country have claimed connections to ISIS, but it is unclear if their acts were directed by ISIS or if the terrorists were boasting about an allegiance that never existed. Most likely, the so-called terrorists were local thugs seeking the notoriety of an ISIS association.

The government has taken ownership of this fact. Since 2016, authorities have stepped up efforts to locate and arrest extremists and have sought to remedy radicalization at its root – in schools, mosques and online. Police have also erected more security barriers and have begun to use new methods of intelligence gathering, including a mobile app that allows citizens to quickly report crimes and suspected acts of terrorism.

The Bangladesh government also amplified its counterterrorism efforts by increasing its military’s involvement and strengthening relations with U.S. counterterrorism experts. The government also developed the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit (CTTC) to quicken the country’s responsiveness. Bangladesh has
also hardened its borders against infiltration by ISIS and other transnational terrorist groups.

The recent flood of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar has made this process more difficult. The media reported that the Myanmar military crackdown on the Rohingya – though clearly unjustified in its scale and cruelty – began as a response to the killing of 12 Myanmar security officers by the Rohingya militant group known as ARSA, or the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army. The group has been linked to ISIS and al-Qaeda, though ASRA denies this.

To prevent the Rohingya refugee camps from becoming a breeding ground for radicalization, the government of Bangladesh has deployed thousands of police to patrol the Rohingya camps and has restricted Rohingyas’ movements inside the country. So far, these initiatives have succeeded in preventing terrorist acts.

Politics has been a source of terrorist violence as well. The opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has continued to stir unrest and perpetrate acts of violence. For example, on August 21, 2004, the terrorist group Harkat Ul Jihad (HuJI) targeted Prime Minister Hasina and several fellow Awami League leaders. At the behest of then-Prime Minister Khaleda Zia’s son, Tarique Rahman, as well as members of the highest echelons of the BNP’s ranks, HuJI members hurled grenades into an Awami League rally in Dhaka, ultimately killing 24 Awami League leaders and activists and injuring more than 300 others.

The BNP once again lashed out in the run-up to Bangladesh’s 2014 general elections, when BNP candidates found themselves trailing in opinion polls. Having failed to win over Bangladeshi voters, the BNP tried to disrupt and delegitimize the election by boycotting it. The BNP and its affiliates organized nationwide strikes and a campaign of violence that claimed 230 lives and injured 1,200. The BNP deliberately targeted innocent people going about their daily lives, even rickshaw-pullers.

When law enforcement officials arrested and tried the wrongdoers, BNP officials complained that they were being persecuted because of their party affiliation. Only naïve outsiders and committed opponents of the government bought that line. Bangladeshis understood that the government was addressing the threat of terrorism, not opposition politics.

Given its history of political violence, the government takes no chances. While awaiting the verdict in a corruption case against the head of the BNP in February, the police and its Rapid Action Battalion fanned out in Dhaka with the assignment to maintain the peace in the event of an outburst.

Bangladesh has also reached out internationally for counterterrorism assistance, especially to the U.S., through the 2017 Anti-terrorism Program. The U.S. has provided training for Bangladesh soldiers and health care officials, including training on best practices for handling cyber-attacks, evidence collection and other crime scene investigation techniques.

Bangladesh is also spending more on anti-terrorism. The latest budget includes a 10 percent increase from the previous year in counterterrorism funding for the military. Over the last 10 years, there has been a steady increase in military expenditures meant to combat terror threats, much of which has been focused on protecting regions frequented by tourists and foreigners.

Bangladesh’s zero tolerance policy toward violent extremism has been praised worldwide and was highlighted in the U.S. State Department’s Country Report on Terrorism last year. Political violence has decreased dramatically, and while Bangladesh remains a safe haven for Rohingya refugees, the border has been made far more secure. Prime Minister Hasina appears to be winning the war against terrorism.

Izabella Jade is a student at American University, School of Public Affairs, Studying Law and Justice.
Bangladesh is known globally for its success in reducing poverty and advancing development. At the time of its independence in 1972, Bangladesh was one of the poorest and most densely populated countries in the world. Since then, the country, with a strong cultural and intellectual tradition and a national will to build a prosperous nation, has achieved impressive progress despite its limited resources and vulnerability to natural disasters.

Bangladesh’s development innovations – such as conditional cash transfers and financial inclusion, stipend programs for girl students, and family planning – are working. Its Female Stipend program, widely acclaimed as a model for achieving gender parity in school enrolment, has been replicated in several countries. According to the World Bank’s Human Capital Index, girls in Bangladesh today have a better chance than boys of completing school and surviving to the age of 60.

With a vibrant economy that has grown at more than 6 percent a year since 2000, Bangladesh has reduced extreme poverty in record time from 44.2 percent in 1991 to 13.8 percent in 2016 (based on the international $1.90 per capita per day poverty line). Today, more Bangladeshis are living longer, healthier lives, and more children are stepping into classrooms. The country has become the world’s second largest ready-made garments exporter after China.

In fiscal year 2014, the country crossed the World Bank’s threshold for lower middle-income country status. With higher income, better infrastructure and healthier, more educated citizens, Bangladesh now aspires to become a middle-income country by its 50th anniversary as a nation. With its strong development progress, it is no surprise that Bangladesh has qualified for graduation from the United Nation’s Least Developed Countries list.

Bangladesh’s homegrown development approach is working, and the impacts are more and more visible. This is evident in the girls who can now go to school, mothers getting treatment at community clinics, and communities fighting bravely to counter the effects of climate change on their agricultural yields. Despite being severely affected by climate change, Bangladesh has been a frontrunner in adaptation and disaster preparedness.

With a vibrant economy that has grown at more than 6 percent a year since 2000...[and] reduced extreme poverty in record time...

The country has come a long way and is making progress in achieving its Sustainable Development Goals. Yet, much more needs to be done. Millions of people are still living below the poverty line. As the government has rightly identified, Bangladesh will do well by addressing infrastructure, energy and regulatory bottlenecks to increase productivity, make exports more competitive, and attract more domestic and foreign investment. These are the goals that the World Bank Group (WBG) is pursuing with the Government of Bangladesh.
Bangladesh and the World Bank Group’s Common Vision

The WBG’s Country Partnership Framework supports Bangladesh’s growth aspirations. It is aligned with national priorities, to help Bangladesh overcome barriers to higher growth and create more and better jobs for the 2.1 million youths entering the job market every year.

The WBG identifies five transformational priorities where a concerted effort will have the greatest impact on sustainable growth and job creation — energy, inland connectivity, regional and global integration, urbanization, and adaptive delta management. Further, it highlights the need to build on the foundational priorities such as macroeconomic stability, human development, and institutional and business environment, where Bangladesh is doing well and would benefit from continued strong performance. Guided by these priorities and building on a strong existing partnership, the WBG’s engagement includes a robust program of technical and financial support focusing on three broad objectives—accelerating growth, fostering social inclusion, and strengthening climate and environmental management.

A Long-Lasting Partnership Bringing Results

To boost shared prosperity, the World Bank provides critical support for essential social services. In the education sector, net enrollment rate at the primary school level increased from 80 percent in 2000 to above 90 percent in 2015, and at the secondary school level it has increased from 45 percent in 2000 to 62 percent in 2015. The health sector has also seen substantial gains with 40 percent reduction in maternal mortality between 2000 and 2010. Since 2014, there have been more than 13,000 community clinics.

In Bangladesh, rural life used to come to a grinding halt after sunset due to lack of access to electricity. Even for those with access, frequent power cuts led to loss of economic productivity and reduced study time for children, and women often felt unsafe walking through the streets. Since 2003, the World Bank is helping Bangladesh increase access to electricity through renewable energy. More than 4 million households and shops in remote areas – such as the remote island of Sandwip – have installed solar home systems with support from IDA and other development partners. Further, the World Bank helped add 2,147 Mega Watt electricity to the national grid and 100 Mega Watt to off grid through solar home systems in the last decade.

Severely affected by climate change, Bangladesh has been vulnerable to natural disasters. The World Bank has stepped up efforts to aid its climate change program: 240 new cyclone shelters have been constructed; 387 km of embankment repaired; 17,500 hectares of block plantations and 2,000 km of strip plantations completed in climate vulnerable areas.

Many of these successes had been achieved through strengthening the country systems and developing stronger institutions. For example, the World Bank helped the government to digitize its public procurement. The use of electronic government procurement has generated up to 20 percent in savings of overall costs in procurement.

Support to Deal with Rohingya Crisis

Since end-August 2017, Bangladesh has faced an unprecedented crisis with 730,000 Rohingyas fleeing from violence in Myanmar and taking shelter in Bangladesh. The Rohingya have fled from Myanmar regularly since the 1970s, and the recent influx has pushed the total number to about one million. Cox’s Bazar is the site of one of the world’s largest refugee camps, with the number of Rohingya about three times more than the local population.
The government is taking the lead and continues to deliver much needed basic assistance to the refugees, coordinating with various humanitarian agencies, development partners, and local and international non-governmental organizations. So far, this has helped prevent major disease outbreaks and mitigate the impacts of natural disasters. Given the unparalleled nature of the refugee crisis, there is a need for sustained international support. On an exceptional basis, the World Bank has mobilized nearly half a billion dollars on grant terms. Since June, the World Bank has approved the first two financings totaling $75 million: a $50 million grant to help the Rohingya receive much-needed health services and a $25 million grant to help Rohingya children access learning opportunities. Equally important, the World Bank is also helping the host communities through new and existing projects.

The World Bank Group remains a committed partner in improving the lives of the people of Bangladesh.

Qimiao Fan is Country Director at the World Bank in Bangladesh
Oceans of the world cover 72% of the surface and harbors 95% of biosphere. In a variety of ways e.g. from maintaining the climatic variables to trade, commerce, connectivity, food security and livelihood, seas and oceans play pivotal roles in sustaining lives on earth. Recognizing centrality of our seas and oceans there is growing interest in Blue Economy approaches across the globe. The Blue Economy conceptualizes oceans and seas as "Development Spaces" for sustainable use of resources, extraction of oil and mineral wealth, sustainable energy production and marine transport. The Blue Economy approach aims to ultimately incorporate the real value of the natural (blue) capital into all aspects of economic activity. Blue Economy is now being termed as the ‘next frontier’ of resources and humanity’s "global common".

For Bangladesh, Blue Economy holds keys to prosperity and well being for her growing population. Under the leadership of the Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Bangladesh successfully established its sovereign rights over 1,18,813 sq km of sea area through peaceful international arbitration with her neighbours. Bangladesh is working to establish its rights on Continental Shelf which would grant further territory for economic use. As such, now more than ever, the potentials and opportunities of Blue Economy beacons Bangladesh for sustainable harnessing of resources for the benefit of the peoples.

In order to embrace opportunities of Blue Economy, maritime trade and connectivity is extremely important. Sea ports are expected to serve as gateways of Bangladesh's export led economy for a long time to come. Around 94% of our foreign trade is conducted through maritime ports. With our economy growing at higher rates, modernization and capacity enhancement of our ports along with building deep sea ports would be essential. At the same time we need to add more ships to our existing fleet to keep pace with the fast expanding global fleets.

Marine fisheries as blue resources, have the potentials to contribute hugely to our food security in a sustainable manner. Currently, our annual fish catch from the Bay Bengal is very low (73,000 tons; 2013) in comparison to the total catch of 8 million tons. Number of modern fishing vessels is far less than required (69,000 artisanal and 200 industrial scale) to tap the potential of the vast expanse of EEZ of 200 miles. Current depth coverage (of around 40 m) impedes diversification of marine harvest as well as value addition. On the other hand we are yet to utilize full potentials of maritime aquaculture including for seaweed, pearl and oyster utilizing modern biotechnology. These are opportunities that Blue Economy offers which can add value significantly to our current low-tech traditional mariculture practices. Strengthening regional fisheries bodies, national fisheries management agencies, fishing community and fish workers organisations and private sector associations is critical to sustainable and equitable use of marine resources through aquaculture.

Marine-based renewable energy such as wind, wave and tidal range and currents and Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) is another area of Blue Economy offering low-carbon energy supplies. A wind generator with a capacity of 2 MW has been installed in the coastal area of Kutubdia, Bangladesh, but remains inactive. To harness the variety of clean energy sources from our seas incentives such as grants, subsidies and tax credits are required to encourage private investments in the large, expensive infrastructure that is required to move from small prototypes to pilot plants.

Along with traditional extraction of hydrocarbons vast potentials of minerals from coastal sands remain to be utilized. There are evidences of heavy minerals in our coast from Patenga to Teknaf. There are also potentials
of finding deposits of as many as 17 valuable minerals e.g. Zircon, Rutile, Ilmenite, Leucoxene, Kyanite, Garnet, Magnetite and Monazite etc. in our sandy beaches. It is estimated that by 2030 up to 10% of precious minerals would come from ocean floors. Therefore, Industrial application of these minerals is huge.

Bangladesh seeks to underline the need for a renewed and comprehensive focus on Blue Economy

Bangladesh organized the first International Workshop on Blue Economy on Sep 1-2, 2014 in Dhaka. During the workshop, the Honorable Prime Minister emphasised that the Blue Economy could play an important role in the economic upliftment in the context of poverty alleviation, ensuring food and nutrition security, combating climate change impacts. She, however, identified the lack of skilled human resource, institutions and technology as key challenges for Bangladesh to effectively utilize the marine resources. Bangladesh is once again organizing the second Workshop on Blue Economy on November 22-23, 2017 in Dhaka. This would keep the agenda of Blue Economy afloat along with generating technical knowledge and policy inputs towards Blue Economy as a priority area to supplement overall economic activities.

Bangladesh is fully aware of the fact that mutual trust and cooperation among the coastal countries is key to sustainable utilization of blue capitals. At the regional/global level, Bangladesh seeks to underline the need for a renewed and comprehensive focus on Blue Economy and remains ready to join any collaborative endeavour in this regard. Existing (and emerging) international regimes have started governing Blue Economy practices. In order to leverage maximum from collaborative arrangements Bangladesh must be at the forefront of Blue Economic practices through; building capacity and infrastructures, developing legal frameworks, mobilizing funds, generating knowledge and skills in order to avail full potentials.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka
At the time of independence, after the devastation of nine months of war, the odds were stacked against Bangladesh’s development. Defying all fears, Bangladesh’s progress to a lower middle-income country is a model of development under democracy. In the last 25 years, after democracy was restored, poverty has fallen by two-thirds and national income has grown by nearly four times and per capita income has tripled. Life expectancy is nearly 73 years, significantly higher than the neighboring countries of India and Pakistan. Women’s empowerment has led to gender parity in school education, a welcome sharp decline in population growth and their participation in the work force in large numbers. Bangladesh is already a manufacturing and exporting powerhouse in textiles and shows promise of becoming so in other sectors. But there are many challenges ahead and no room for complacency.

Bangladesh belongs to a select group of countries that fought its way to freedom by winning a war of independence. Victory in that war came on the evening of December 16, 1971, bringing profound joy and dreams for building a “Golden Bangla.” The victory indeed had deep implications for Bangladesh’s development. But at the time of independence, in the wake of devastation after nine months of war and destruction, the odds were stacked against Bangladesh. The war had destroyed thousands of roads, bridges, and culverts. Chittagong port – the only lifeline to the global economy - lay blocked due to mining and sunken ships. Ten million displaced persons who had taken shelter in India were returning to their homes many of which have been burned and destroyed. Then there was the trauma of the families of millions killed, assaulted, and raped during the war. In that bleak landscape of 1972, it is no wonder that Bangladesh was hailed “as the test case for development.” If Bangladesh could overcome her challenges and develop, it would become a model for other countries. In the event, Bangladesh is facing the challenges with vigor. On the 47th anniversary of our victory in our war of independence, Bangladesh now indeed stands as an example for many developing countries. As the distinguished development economist Jean Dreze once wrote, Bangladesh “shows the way” to development and poverty reduction. In this article, we make a brief survey of her economic achievements, discuss some of the factors that made these achievements possible and conclude by noting some future challenges.

Most notable among its achievements has been Bangladesh’s progress in human development and poverty reduction. Extreme poverty – defined as those living below Purchasing Power Parity Rate Dollar (PPP$) 1.90 a day – declined from 44 percent of the people in 1992 to 14 percent of the people now. On the way to achieving this poverty reduction, Bangladesh has reached full primary school enrollment and gender parity at primary and secondary education. It also
made significant progress in reducing the prevalence of underweight children, lowering infant mortality and maternal mortality rates, improving immunization coverage for all three diseases, DPT, HepatitisB3, Measles, to about 95 percent of the population. In some key indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality, or maternal mortality Bangladesh performs well above its income level.

Bangladesh’s economic growth has not only accelerated over the years, but growth has also been inclusive. The economy’s growth rate accelerated especially after the restoration of democracy in 1991. Since then, over the last 25 years, growth rates have been 5.6 percent p.a. on average, accelerating to 6.6 percent in the current decade. In the previous three years, economic growth rates have exceeded 7 percent p.a. and touched nearly 8 percent in the past year, making Bangladesh’s growth among the top ten countries globally. Thanks to high economic growth and a sharp decline in population growth, real (adjusted for inflation) per-capita income has tripled since independence. According to IMF’s estimates, in 2018 per-capita income now stands at the internationally comparable PPP$ 4,084 while in nominal dollars the per capita income is $1,736 or nine times what it was at independence.

Because Bangladesh followed a labor-intensive and export-oriented manufacturing strategy, growth in Bangladesh has been inclusive and broad-based. Although there was an initial increase in inequality after growth accelerated in the early 1990s, the Gini coefficient of consumption, a widely used measure of economic inequality, has been relatively steady in the 0.33 range. Economic inequality in Bangladesh is lower than in neighboring India and even more significantly less than in China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, and Vietnam.

Bangladesh has been an impressive performer in creating jobs. Jobs grew at a rapid rate of about 2.4 percent annually. More than two-thirds of job growth in the past decade has been in high productivity manufacturing, construction, trade, and services. Bangladesh now has a large economy. Aggregate GDP or national income in 2018 is PPP$ 687 billion making it the 32nd largest economy in the world, in the same size range as Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, and Vietnam. One way to gauge the growth of the Bangladesh economy is to appreciate that the share of foreign aid in national income has fallen from about 7 to 8 percent in the late 1970s to about 1 percent today.

**What Made these Economic Achievements Possible?**

Most of all, victory in the liberation war made these achievements possible. It was decisive for several reasons. First, most broadly, the liberation war tremendously mobilized the energy and idealism of the people for creating a just and equitable society. Victory over a highly trained and well-equipped Pakistani army gave hope and indomitable courage to
think all their dreams were possible. The pent-up energy and patriotism built up during nine months of war finally had their release in development efforts after the war. Bangladesh’s now world famous non-governmental development organizations, including BRAC and Grameen Bank, were a direct outcome of the war.

Second, the victory liberated Bangladesh from not only foreign, dictatorial, and, ultimately, genocidal rule, it also freed the people from the yoke of the feudal, oligarchic, and military rule of Pakistan. Bangladesh’s progress would not have been possible without liberation from these elements. Bangladesh’s small farmers would not have had the resources and infrastructure to flourish, and its private sector would not have been allowed entry and to display their dynamism. Victory in the liberation war, on the other hand, created a much flatter and socially mobile society where there were no feudal elements, no oligarchs, or a powerful military-bureaucratic clique to constrain the aspirations of the people. Into this space, there rose Bangladesh’s now world famous non-governmental (non-profit) organizations, a dynamic private sector that has led Bangladesh’s growth, and an experimental and development-minded state which was relatively less shackled by bureaucratic inertia, and which forged a highly productive partnership among these three elements.

One outcome of this non-profit, private-sector, and Government partnership has been that Bangladesh has been the birthplace of some of the innovative practices in global development. Particularly famous among these is the microfinance revolution that has spread across the world and honored by the Nobel prize. But they also include the use of non-formal health workers; oral saline to reduce diarrhea-related deaths; the brilliant success of both integrated preventive health care through better water and sanitation facilities and the energetic implementation of the vertical immunization programs. The generic drug policy introduced in the 1980s was another frontier innovation in medical care not only among developing countries but also for developed countries. In education, the female stipend program to promote secondary school attendance by girls has also become a model in development. On the economic side, significant innovations took place in the effective use of the bonded warehouse systems, the back-to-back letters of credit that allowed new entry into ready-made garments industry by those who had limited access to working capital, the community based rural electrification programs, and the more recent household solar panel dissemination program.

Victory in the liberation war led to women’s empowerment as a part of the progressive and inclusive society born after independence. That became a central factor in Bangladesh’s development for at least three reasons. First, women became more educated. Government programs targeted female education through enrollment drives and training female teachers, who are now 60 percent of all primary school teachers. Gender parity in primary and secondary education was achieved by 2010.

In some key indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality, or maternal mortality Bangladesh performs well above its income level.

Second, women had greater reproductive rights thanks to pro-active family planning program under which contraceptive use by women rose from eight percent at independence to over 62 percent in recent years. That led to a sharp decline in annual population growth to about 1.1 percent now and faster per-capita income growth. Third, women became entrepreneurs and workers. The government supported microfinance programs, directly and indirectly through non-
government organizations, targeting the financing of women entrepreneurs across the country. One result of this is that nearly half a million women now head non-agricultural enterprises, a number that quadrupled over the past decade. Bangladesh's female labor force participation ratio increased to 35 percent, as high as in Sri Lanka and markedly higher than in India or Pakistan. At present, there are almost 20 million females in the labor force – or roughly 1/3rd of the entire labor force.

The farmers laid the foundation for Bangladesh's development achievements. The steady growth in agricultural value added and productivity – that has tripled cereal production since independence - provided food security and released labor for other sectors. Investment in irrigation, rural roads and electrification, research, higher and more efficient use of fertilizers, more liberal distribution systems and agricultural credit contributed to this brilliant performance. There has also been diversification. For instance, fisheries production has doubled from less than 700,000 tons to 1.65 million tons – providing most of the protein for the people.

Disaster management was another key to development. There have been more than 200 major natural disasters, mainly hurricanes and floods, since 1980. Bangladesh is a delta floating on the lower-riparian end of fifty-seven rivers and 300 rivers in all that are prone to overflow and flooding. It is also the destination of heavy monsoons and tides coming in from the Bay of Bengal that lies south of the country. The Government adopted a vigorous total disaster management strategy under which significant investment has taken place building 9,000 km of embankments, 12,000 hydraulic structures, hundreds of flood control, drainage, and irrigation schemes, and nearly 500 disaster shelters. The strategy has mobilized communities through the world-famous Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP), which has trained more than 43,000 volunteers, including 14,225 women, as first responders and equipped them with communications technology.

The rise of ready-made garments (RMG) manufacturing and exports to the global economy made progress possible by transforming the economy. Ready-made garments exports value grew from a mere $ 32 million or 4 percent of Bangladesh's exports in 1983 to an estimated $ 30 billion in 2017 accounting for 84 percent of all merchandise exports and almost half of manufacturing GDP in the country. The growth of this industry established Bangladesh as a textile-manufacturing powerhouse and exporter second only to China. Bangladesh's successful engagement with globalization extends beyond ready-made garments. More than four million workers have gone for overseas work, mainly to the Gulf states, over the last ten years. Their remittances rose from $2 billion in 2000 to over $15 billion in recent years.

Industrial diversification, long overdue, has also started contributing. Following the classical pattern of industrialization, Bangladesh has followed the growth of garments and textiles industries with diversification into other sectors such as food processing, pharmaceuticals, leather and jute, information technology enabled services, light engineering industry, and even shipbuilding. As of now, Bangladesh has exported over 31 ships to nearly a dozen countries including to a few in Europe. In fact, in 2017 Bangladesh exported over 1637 distinct products of which 1438 products were in other sectors. But after ready-made garments, jute and jute goods, footwear, and leather goods, however, the other exports show great promise but are still at an embryonic state.

The dynamic rise of the modern, formal private sector - virtually non-existent at the time of independence – has led to Bangladesh's transformation. To take one telling indicator, credit to the private sector has increased by some 250 times since independence where it now stands 44 percent of GDP, i.e., at about $120 billion. The sharp rise in private investment, which now accounts for more than three-fourths of all investment, has mainly driven growth. Private sector-led industries such as trade, construction, and information technology-based services have flourished. Information technology, mobile phone, and internet connectivity have been growing explosively:
in 2010, 32 percent of the population, still a sizable 49 million people, subscribed to mobile services. In 2017, however, the number of mobile phone subscribers has jumped to about 141 million or more than 85 percent of the population. More than half these users, 74 million, access the internet using mobile phones, while another five million use internet services providers or landlines to access the web.

Bangladesh’s democratically elected governments have played a central role in these development achievements. Sound economic management kept deficits and inflation rates low and real exchange rates competitive. Governments have invested effectively in human development, rural infrastructure, and more recently in large-scale infrastructure. The increase in rural access to electricity from about 5 percent to 67 percent has been particularly noteworthy. Road density in Bangladesh, especially in rural areas, is considerably higher than that in India or Pakistan. Government expenditure also funds some of the most extensive safety net programs among developing countries ranging from government pensions, employment programs, and community-based cash and food transfer programs targeted to the elderly, women, and children.

Promisingly, the annual public investment program has quadrupled to over $20 billion since the current government took office. One result is the tripling of installed electricity capacity from less than 5000 megawatts (MW) in 2008 to 16,048 MW today. As part of its drive to improve communications and power infrastructure, the government is now funding several mega-projects such as the Padma Bridge, Paira Sea Port, Dhaka Metro Rail, the Karnaphuli river tunnel, the Bangabandhu rail bridge on Jamuna, the power projects of Matarbari and Rampal, the Rooppur Nuclear Power project and a Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) terminal.

Finally, as discussed earlier, Bangladesh’s governments to their credit have supported the vigorous growth of private sector development and forged effective partnerships with non-government organizations in development work.

Dr. Ahmad Ahsan is Director, Policy Research Institute, Bangladesh and a former faculty member of the Economics Department, Dhaka University, Bangladesh and a World Bank economist.
Decades back, Albert Einstein said, “I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be sticks and stones.”

As we look at and try to secure Indian Ocean, it would be important to see the concept of Peace within a broader context of absence of conflict and violence – rising inequality and the imperative to sustain peace.

Bangladesh regards peace as just not absence of violence and war. It is also about cooperation on securing the basis of peace – that is ensuring sustainable development. In our view, peace is an essential precondition for development.

...Peace is an essential precondition for development.

We ought to relate to the global context within which peace is evolving. The Preamble of Agenda 2030 says, "... This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom." The Agenda 2030 envisages a world free of fear and violence. It also suggests that sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security and without which sustainable development could be at risk.

The Agenda recognizes the need to build a peaceful, just and inclusive society based on, among others, effective rule of law and good governance at all levels.

For quite some time, we have been talking about effectively engaging on the Indian Ocean, its adjoining seas and the hinterland. We all aspire to create a stable, secure and peaceful Indian Ocean region. The significance, potential and possibilities are adequately mapped by now. While so much of mutually beneficial ways and potential exists to harness in the Indian Ocean, the key issue remains: how do we have a narrative and scheme balancing geopolitical and geostrategic interests which secures well-being, dignity and sustainable of people in the Region.

As a Bay of Bengal littoral State, Bangladesh has been engaged in every possible discourse to emphasis on a principle-driven, people-centric, transparent, objectively beneficial approach. We try to draw a balance between our own national interests as that of the interests of other people in the Region.

With that end in view, Bangladesh and large majority of UN Member States articulated the unanimous Declaration and Program of Action on Culture of Peace at the UN General Assembly in late 90s. That continues to serve as an important component of peace in the United Nations. In adopting the International Decade for a Culture of Peace, the UN General Assembly recognized (1999) that "...peace not only is the absence of conflict, but also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation."

Ensuring equality and 5Ps

We cannot be remiss that peace is also profoundly related to inequalities in all forms, indeed absence of inclusion. To ensure equality within and among the States is a defining challenge of our times. SDG Target 10.3 asks us to "ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action" at all levels.

It is important to see the linkages between peace – equality–governance and weave our collective pledge around the 5 Ps: people – planet – prosperity – peace – partnership. We pledged to a vision of ‘shared prosperity’ through ‘shared responsibility’, pledged on shared principles and commitments.

We pledged to be guided by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter where all people and States commit on “...paying full respect for international law ...” in spite
of the asymmetries in endowment, capacities or size and the kind of complex challenges arising. It is in the context that our Leaders agreed on the need for a “... a new approach” in Agenda 2030.

**Conservation and sustainability**

As we build a new development structure to secure long-term global peace, SDG 14 solely focuses on “conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”. We must embark on the unfinished business in linking sustainable development and governance as far as oceans, maritime resources and services are concerned.

For instance: to connect with target 16.3 [promoting rule of law at national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all] as well as target 16 [promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies at all levels]. Clarity and acceptability of these linkages would ensure promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development for all around the Indian Ocean.

We also need to look at the interface between peace and connectivity as well as mobility of people. As much as absence of peace hinders realization of the fruits of connectivity, it also leads to unwarranted manifestation of mobility and obstructs wider people-people contact.

UNCLOS originally aimed at establishing a legal order to promote peaceful use of seas and oceans, equitable and efficient use of their resources, conservation of their living resources and protect and preserve the marine environment. In order to ensure peaceful oceans and seas, we need a new regime supplementing and completing the UNCLOS.

In that context, UN member states has most recently agreed to launch negotiations for the elaboration of an international legally-binding instrument dedicated to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond national jurisdiction. This upcoming instrument would further strengthen the existing instrument i.e. UNCLOS.

**Principles of engagements**

The Indian Ocean also needs to be looked through the prism of connected — enabled — technology-aided world that we live in. Across wider discourse on maritime affairs, our oceans and seas are a key ‘global common’. And, ‘oceanic [i.e. marine ecosystem services] services’ as a key ‘public good’. Oceans offer us a last resource frontier contributing to sustainable development. It holds eminently true for Indian Ocean. But, as we approach an economically-crucial and strategically-significant space as Indian Ocean, we are often constrained by absolute ‘sovereignty’ considerations.

We would need to get the principles of engagement between countries and stakeholders right. The activities and undertakings should yield fair and equitable outcomes. Given that Indian Ocean countries are at different levels of development, it would be important to factor in the capacity constraints and need for capacity development of the countries in need.

In that context, certain Principles should guide all our cooperative undertakings in the Indian Ocean:

In a cooperative activity and overall engagement, all parties should demonstrate mutual respect to others’ views, contributions, traditions, etc. and recognize and comply with national laws, regulations, decision-making procedures so as to create a mutually comfortable environment.

In any activity, a country would cooperate with utmost sincerity, inclusiveness and in full consideration of the interests and needs of others. If any difference arises on any aspect or activity, efforts must be made to continuously enhance the level of trust amongst all entities, institutions, peoples.

In any cooperative endeavor or activity, every effort should be directed to yield maximum level of mutual benefit to the parties. The countries should also design and implement activities in such a manner that
the accrued benefits are shared equitably among the parties involved, with full respect for the interests of the others.

Cooperative activities e.g. Projects should be designed and carried out in a pragmatic and efficient manner, with result orientation.

Cooperation has to be open and intended to boost the development of all parties in the Indian Ocean.

**Bangladesh**

Four years back, Bangladesh vindicated its resolve in these Principles through peaceful delimitation of our maritime boundary with our neighbours — India and Myanmar. Thus, we unlocked ways to explore enormous economic opportunities in the Bay of Bengal. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had called for regional unity and re-focusing on Blue Economy at the first-ever IORA Leaders’ Summit (Jakarta, March).

Bangladesh has always attached due importance to maintenance of peace and stability, maritime security, freedom of navigation and overflight for international trade and economic cooperation. We affirm our belief in peaceful settlement of all international disputes through dialogues, negotiations and universally recognised principles of international law, including the UNCLOS (1982).

In context of disputes among the Indian Ocean littoral States, Bangladesh has stressed promoting peaceful, friendly and harmonious environment in all Seas; and of enhancing favourable conditions for peaceful and durable solutions of differences and disputes among countries concerned for shared prosperity in the region.

Considering the increasing trade and economic ties Bangladesh enjoys with the countries across the Indian Ocean (Far-east, South-East Asia and beyond), Dhaka has encouraged all the parties concerned to reaffirm their respect for and commitment to the freedom of navigation in and overflight above the Seas and Bays.

In 1972, Father of the Nation of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, while attending the first banquet hosted in his honor by the Indian Prime Minister in Kolkata,
The Politics of Peace and Development

Beaming Bangladesh

said, "...as for us, we will be wanting to cooperate with all for creating an area of peace in South Asia where we could live side by side as good neighbours and pursue constructive policies for the benefit of our people...

**Shared prosperity**

It is time that we seriously engage on de-securitizing and desensitizing the discourse on peace vis-à-vis our appreciation to all oceans, seas and their resources and services. To secure the maximal outcome out of the engagements, we need to create ‘buy-ins’ for all states—nations—communities around Indian Ocean, such that it secures ‘shared prosperity’ in a common space as Ocean.

It should be on a shared vision of prosperity i.e. where each nation and community would step forward in 'shouldering' its commensurate ‘responsibilities’ in guarding our Commons. We need innovative ways to bring result-orientation to manifestations of ‘peace’ vis-à-vis oceans and seas. We need to articulate the intersections between peace and innovation.

In setting a right narrative to peace and to focus on sustainable development, our cooperative endeavors and structures on peace and development – at bilateral or, regional levels — should be premised on sovereign equality of all participating countries.

The Indian Ocean region has been host to almost all major global civilisations. Let us build on our evergreen values, principles, and wisdom and strive to shape a brighter tomorrow for all of us.

*Source: Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs*
Beaming Bangladesh

UNESCO World Heritage Site Somapura Mahavihara.

Kantaji (Kantanagar) Temple Dinajpur.

Sixty Dome Mosque of Bagerhat, 15th century

Bangladesh Independence Monument.

Bangladesh Martyrs Monument.
Bangladesh Parliament House, also known as the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Bangladesh Supreme Court.

President’s Palace, also known as The Bangabhaban.

Baitul Mukarram National Mosque

St. Thomas Cathedral in Dhaka

Bandarban Golden Temple

Dhakeshwari Temple

Eternal Flame at Suhrawardy Uddayan, Dhaka

The Lalbagh Fort from the 17th century.
Spouses of the officers rendered folk songs.

The Ambassador along with officers & employees of the embassy, standing in solemn silence marking the National Mourning Day in 2018.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith visits Bangladesh Embassy.

Shilpakala Academy artists with Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Ambassador Mohammed Ziauddin & Shilpakala Academy Director General Liyakat Ali Lucky.

The Ambassador attends Iftar at White House with US President.
Ambassador Mohammed Ziauddin placing a wreath at the portrait of the Father of the Nation on National Mourning Day, August 15, 2018

Ambassador Mohammed Ziauddin along with officers and employees paying tribute to the Father of the Nation on National Mourning Day 2018

Invitees enjoying cultural soiree marking the celebration of the Bangali New Year

Performers with Madam Yesmeen Ziauddin (middle)

Private Dinner hosted by the US Secretary of State in the Madison Room, October 22, 2018
Reception on the Armed Forces Day

Ambassador Mohammed Ziauddin & Mrs. Yasmeen Ziauddin placing wreath at alter of Sheheed Minar on 21st February 2018

Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin presents crest to Brig Gen Hubert C. Hegtvedt

Paying tributes to the language martyrs on 21st February on the embassy premises

School children cutting cake with the Ambassador to celebrate the National Childrens’ Day 2018

Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin and Defence Attaché Brig Gen Moinul Hassan, Lt. Gen Daniel R. Hokanson, the Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau of USA, & Maj Gen A C Roper, the Deputy Chief of Army Reserve of USA, at Armed Forces Day Reception 2018.

Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin with Lt. Gen Daniel R. Hokanson, the Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau of USA, at Armed Forces Day Reception 2018.
Celebration parade marking UNESCO’s recognition of Bangabandhu’s historic March 7th speech as World Documentary Heritage

Artists of different foreign missions performed cultural show marking the International Mother Language Day, 2018

School children who participated in different programs on National Children Day, 2018

Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin and Defence Attaché Brig Gen Moinul Hassan, Lt. Gen Daniel R. Hokanson, the Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau of USA, & Maj Gen A C Roper, the Deputy Chief of Army Reserve of USA, at Armed Forces Day Reception 2018.

Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA Mohammad Ziauddin and Defense Attaché Brig Gen Moinul Hassan, SPP, ndc, psc, Lt. Gen Daniel R. Hokanson, the Vice Chief of the National Guard Bureau of USA, Chief Guest & Maj Gen A C Roper, the Deputy Chief of Army Reserve of USA, special guest.

Independence Day Reception 2018
Celebration cake cutting on Armed Forces Day 2017

December 16, 2017 46th Anniversary of the Glorious Victory Day 2017

Ambassador Ziauddin presents Letters of Credence to Argentine Foreign Minister

Victory Day Reception 2018

Victory Day Reception 2018

Victory Day Reception 2018
Candlelight vigil in front of the embassy, to mark Genocide Day 2017.

Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin meets Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) & Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) on Rohingyas issues.

Ambassador Mohammed Ziauddin presents Letters of Commission to OAS Secretary General.


Victory Day Reception 2018.

Victory Day Reception 2018.

Candlelight vigil in front of the embassy, to mark Genocide Day 2017.