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NATION PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE MARTYRS OF INDEPENDENCE WAR

The 38th Independence and National Day was observed with due solemnity at home and abroad. In Dhaka, a 31-gun salute at dawn heralded the day with ceremonies and parades at the National Parade Square. President Professor Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Advisor Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed led the nation in paying tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing wreaths at the National Memorial at Savar in the early hours of the day. On the occasion, President Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief Adviser Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed and Foreign Adviser Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury in separate messages congratulated all Bangladeshis home and abroad and urged them to work unitedly for a modern, democratic and prosperous country.

The Chief Adviser and the British Prime Minister exchange greetings at 10 Downing Street, London.

The Prime Minister and Chief Adviser agreed that credible elections would sustain democracy in Bangladesh.

Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed informed the British Prime Minister that the caretaker government would hold early dialogue with the political parties and remove restrictions to enable them to fully participate in successful democratic Parliamentary elections.

Both the heads of government agreed that strong public institutions, justice and observance of due process and human rights were the bedrock of healthy democracy. They reflected with satisfaction on the institutional reforms of the caretaker government to strengthen the mandate of the Anti-Corruption, Election and Public Service Commissions and establish a Human Rights Commission.

The Chief Adviser highlighted, among other things, the climate change challenge uniquely faced by Bangladesh due to global warming and sea level rise. Both sides agreed to work together in international forums to secure an effective and responsible international response to climate change.

Both sides agreed to work closely together to combat terrorism and enhance Bangladesh's institutional capacity to that effect. They agreed that education, women's empowerment, opportunity and prosperity in mainstream society offered the most effective defense against extremism.

THE ELECTION WILL BE HELD BY DECEMBER 2008: CHIEF ADVISER

The Chief Adviser categorically reaffirmed his government's firm resolve to hold free, fair and credible parliamentary elections in Bangladesh by December 2008. He expressed the hope to work closely with international partners such as Britain towards that end. He told this during a meeting with the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown in London on 18 March 2008. The Chief Adviser was on a three-day bilateral visit to the United Kingdom on his way back to Dhaka after attending the 11th Summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in Dakar, Senegal from 16-18 March 2008.

Hon’ble President and Chief Adviser paying homage to the martyrs at Savar National Memorial on 26 March 2008.
The two heads of government expressed satisfaction at the thriving strategic partnership between Bangladesh and Britain and acknowledged the important role played by the vibrant British-Bangladeshi community in forging that partnership. Foreign Adviser Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury accompanied the chief Adviser during his visit.


**MIGRATION IS AN IMPORTANT DRIVER FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: ADVISER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Adviser for Foreign Affairs, underscored the need for the UN to play a greater role in protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of migrant workers. He made this request when he called on the General Assembly President on 01 April 2008 at the UN headquarters in New York. The Adviser arrived in New York on a two-day official visit on 31 March to Chair a Session on poverty alleviation and education and to address the Plenary of the General Assembly on Millennium Development Goals in his capacity as Chairman of Least Developed Countries.

The Adviser for Foreign Affairs said 'managed migration' can be an effective tool for poverty alleviation and development. He added that in the past year Bangladesh sent 8,32,000 workers abroad which was a record, and the remittance received home was US$7 billion which was also a new record. He observed that if host societies are made to be more responsive to the welfare needs of the migrant workers, it can be a 'win-win' situation for both sides. Dr. Iftekhar Chowdhury thought the UN could assist this process more effectively by bringing together all stake-holders.

Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury also chaired a high-level panel discussion on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) focusing on education and sustainable development. He highlighted Bangladesh's impressive strides in achieving universal primary education (UPE) for all children. Bangladesh already attained gender parity in primary and secondary enrollment, the Adviser underscored. Highlighting the linkages between education and sustainable development, he said "Education is a *sine qua non* for innovation, technological progress and economic development."

Earlier, Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury called on the UN Secretary General at the UN Headquarters in New York on 31 March 2008. Dr. Iftekhar Chowdhury apprised Mr. Ban Ki-moon about the determination of the Caretaker Government to hold "free, fair and credible elections in accordance with the Road Map before the end of December this year". Mr. Ban Ki-moon lauded the reforms initiatives being undertaken in Bangladesh during the meeting and expressed the hope that this would render democratic institutions sustainable.

**THIS IS THE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO GET THINGS RIGHT IN BANGLADESH: CONGRESSMAN CROWLEY**

“This is the best time to get things right in Bangladesh and there is an urgent need to strengthen democracy through free, fair and transparent election for receiving continued US support” said the Co-chair of US Congressional Bangladesh Caucus, Congressman Joseph Crowley at the Capitol Hill in Washington DC on 12 March 2008 during the first ever formal meeting of the Congressional Bangladesh Caucus with the Bangladesh Embassy.

Referring to the ongoing anti-corruption drive, Mr. Crowley also suggested the need for maintaining due process of law during trials of the arrested leaders. Earlier, Co-chair of the Caucus Congresswoman Nancy Boyda expressed her keen interest in the developments in Bangladesh and assured the readiness of Bangladesh Caucus to extend all possible cooperation to Bangladesh in her efforts to strengthen democracy. Mentioning the vastness of change in Bangladesh, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee has
said that Bangladesh Caucus would work to strengthen democracy in Bangladesh. She appreciated the leadership of the Embassy in working with the Caucus. Congressman Dennis Moore of Kansas, Congressman Bill Pascrell of New Jersey, Jr, Congressman Michael A. Arcuri of New York also attended the meeting.

Ambassador and others are seen meeting with Congresswoman Nancy Boyda, Congressmen Dennis Moore and Michael Arcuri.

In his introductory remarks, Bangladesh Ambassador to the US M. Humayun Kabir termed the Congressional Bangladesh Caucus as a strong pillar of support for Bangladesh in the USA and sought their support for promoting a mutually beneficial and dynamic bilateral partnership between Bangladesh and the USA. During his presentation Ambassador Kabir reiterated the commitment of the Caretaker government to strengthen democracy and outlined the progress toward holding the parliamentary elections before the end of 2008. He also highlighted the initiative of the Caretaker government to address the challenge of extremism and terrorism in Bangladesh, improve human rights situation including the progress toward the formation of the Human Rights Commission and efforts to improve workers' rights. He sought the support of the Caucus for the post-Sidr relief package, which was being worked on in the Administration, passage of NPDA to accord duty free market access to US, and inclusion of Bangladesh in the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program. Ambassador Humayun Kabir also sought US support for Bangladesh to deal with the climate change challenges on medium and long term basis. The Members promised to support Bangladesh on these issues and expressed their intention to remain engaged in dialogue with the Embassy of Bangladesh in Washington.

Leading members of Bangladesh Community from Kansas and Georgia Mr. Rehan Reza, Mr. Rabiul Karim and Mr. Jashim Uddin were present during the meeting.

The Bangladesh Caucus in the US House of Representatives is a bipartisan body and currently has 33 members.

BANGLADESH OUTSHINES INDIA, PAKISTAN IN WOMEN’S STATUS, GENDER EQUALITY: WORLD BANK REPORT

Bangladesh outperforms India and Pakistan in many areas concerning women's status and gender equality, although more progress needs to be done on access to reproductive health services, labor markets and decision-making process, said a World Bank report.

The report said Bangladesh stands out as a shining new example in South Asia achieving impressive gains in gender equality despite facing economic challenges. After Sri Lanka and the Indian state of Kerala, Bangladesh dwarfs Pakistan and India in many areas, said the WB report titled "Whispers to Voices: Gender and Social Transformation in Bangladesh". The Report was jointly sponsored by the World Bank and AusAid, and was launched on 13 March 2008.

The report said "Between 1971 and 2004, Bangladesh halved its fertility rates. In much of the country today, girls' secondary school attendance exceeds that of boys. Moreover, the gender gap in infant mortality has been closed," it said.

The report further said the micro-credit revolution continues to boost women's solidarity groups and earning potential. As a result, a vast number of the young women are leaving their villages to work in garment factories.

While gender inequalities in children's health have diminished, Bangladeshi women still lack adequate access to reproductive health services. About women's role in decision making, the report said most women's influence over decision-making is confined to household functioning despite the presence of formidable women's groups in rural areas. Low access to land and property is an important part of their low voice in decision-making.

SPECIAL ASSISTANT PROF. TAMIM VISITS WASHINGTON DC


The WIREC 2008 hosted by the State Department of the USA drew more than 3000 delegates including Ministers, entrepreneurs, NGOs, activist from 113 countries. Earlier, the Global Renewable Conferences were held in Germany and China in 2004 and 2005 respectively. India declared to host the next conference in 2010.

The WIREC 2008 produced broad consensus among the policy makers leading to Washington International Action Plan where countries committed pledges towards developing renewable energy. The WIREC 2008 also provided vision toward the creation of a fund for global facility for renewable energy. Delegates form Infrastructure Development Company (IDCOL) and German Development Cooperation (GTZ) in Bangladesh also attended the conference.

During his stay in Washington DC, the Special Assistant also visited Embassy of Bangladesh in Washington DC and had a meeting with the Officers in the Embassy. During the meeting he was briefed about the current issues on US-Bangladesh relationship. He also attended a meeting with the World Bank task team members for power sector to discuss issues relating to that sector.

BANGLADESH EMBASSY CELEBRATED 38TH INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONAL DAY IN WASHINGTON DC

Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC celebrated the 38th Independence and National Day in Washington DC in a befitting manner. On the occasion, the Embassy hosted a reception at the Embassy premises in the evening of 26 March 2008. High US government officials, diplomats, Congressional staff members, academicians, members of think tanks, businessmen, members of the press and media, other professionals and a large number of Bangladeshi American community members attended the reception. US Ambassador-designate to Bangladesh Mr. James F. Moriarty also attended the reception. The guests were served with traditional Bangladeshi cuisine. Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir and Mrs. Rokeya Kabir welcomed the guests at the reception.

The Governor of Maryland issued a proclamation declaring 26th March as "Bangladesh Day" in the State of Maryland. A formal proclamation in this regard was handed over to the Ambassador by Ms. Jane Nishida, Chair of the Governor’s Commission for Asian Pacific American Affairs during the reception at the Embassy. Mr. Anis Ahmed, member of the Commission was also present during the ceremony.

Earlier in the morning, Ambassador Humayun Kabir ceremonially hoisted Bangladesh’s National Flag at the Embassy premises. A special prayer was offered recalling the sacrifice of millions, who laid down their lives during the war of Liberation in 1971, seeking the salvation of the departed souls and for the continued peace, progress and prosperity for Bangladesh. To mark this year’s Independence Day, the Embassy of Bangladesh has published a Souvenir.

BANGLADESH IS THE LEADER IN BUILDING HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL: AMBASSADOR KABIR

Bangladesh is the leader in building human and social capital among the developing countries and believes that such a process could be accelerated through continuous innovation and knowledge networking. This was stated by the Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States M. Humayun Kabir during his remarks at the lunch hosted to celebrate the 117th Founders Day Convocation of the Elizabeth City
State University (ECSU) in North Carolina on 4 March 2008.

The Bangladesh Ambassador was invited to attend the 117th Founders Day Convocation of the Elizabeth City State University (ECSU) in North Carolina as a distinguished international leader. In his speech, Ambassador Kabir highlighted the need for more exchange of students and faculty members between the universities of Bangladesh and the USA. He also highlighted the importance of the conduct of research on issues of common concern and interest involving the Universities of both the countries. Ambassador Kabir informed the gathering that under the Education Interaction Program, which is currently underway in the Embassy of Bangladesh in Washington DC, the Embassy was ready to reach out to the students and teachers in the United States to apprise them of the creative social, economic and political efforts undertaken in Bangladesh, and to facilitate cooperation between the academia in Bangladesh and in the United States.

Welcoming the Ambassador, Professor Willie J. Gilchrist, Chancellor of the Elizabeth City State University said that his University had developed program to address the challenges of global diversity with a view to keep the University competitive. He assured the Ambassador that the University would be happy to join hands with the Embassy to promote the shared objectives of academic cooperation between these two friendly countries. Dr. Ali Khan, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs of the University introduced the Ambassador to the guests.

Vice Chancellors, members of the Board of Trustees, Faculty members and leading officials of Elizabeth City participated at the Founders Day Convocation lunch. In the evening, the Global Leadership Academy and the International Program of the University hosted a reception in honor of the Ambassador, which was attended by the Chancellor of the University, Vice Chancellors, faculty members and students.

**NEWS FROM BANGLADESH**

**0.832 Million people sent abroad in 2007:**

Expatriates’ Ministry

Bangladesh saw a phenomenal increase in overseas employment during the last year, as some 8,32,000 workers were sent abroad in 2007 against 3,81,000 of the previous year. A spokesman of the Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment came up with the statistics in a release on 8 March 2008. The government, the release stated, acknowledged the huge contribution of the expatriate community to the nation’s development, and would make every effort to advance the welfare of expatriate Bangladeshis.

**Source:** Abridged version from the New Age, 02 March 2008, Front Page.

**Body formed to enforce tougher anti-money laundering act**

The government has formed a national committee on prevention of money laundering and terror financing to successfully enforce a more stringent law to deal with the financial crimes with global implications. On 2 March 2008 the Council of Advisers approved the Anti-money Laundering Act 2008, which will come into effect after promulgation of the presidential ordinance soon, finance ministry officials said.

The ‘national committee on anti-money laundering/counter financing of terrorism’ has been given the authority to update the act considering the needs in line with global perspectives..

**Source:** Abridged version from the New Age, 03 March 2008, Front Page.

**Government toughens labor law**

Nat’l Identity Registration Authority Ordinance approved

The Council of Advisers on 30 March 2008 approved Bangladesh Labor (Amendment) Ordinance 2008 with provisions for allowing only one trade union organization to continue activities at Chittagong and Mongla ports each. The earlier law had allowed more than one organization for both ports.

A regular meeting of the cabinet chaired by the Chief Adviser Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed approved the new ordinance by amending Bangladesh Labor Act. According to the 2008 labor ordinance, although a trade union can conduct activities, no office of any organization can be set up within 200 meters of the ports. The ordinance has a provision for three months’ jail term and a fine of Tk 25,000 for violation of the labor law. The earlier law had a provision for three months’ jail term and a fine of Tk 10,000.

The Council of Advisers also approved the National Identity Registration Authority Ordinance that clearly
spells out strict punishment to offenders. The registration authority will work under the home ministry.


2,728 Bangladeshi peacekeepers awarded UN medal

On March 26, 2008, a contingent of Bangladeshi peacekeepers numbering 2,728 received the United Nations peacekeeping medal after serving for more than six months in Cote d'Ivoire. The force commander of the UN operation in Cote d'Ivoire, General Marcel Fcmand Amoussou, presided over an award giving ceremony honoring the Bangladesh contingent in Daloa, 380km from Abidjan, said a release of the UN Information Centre in Dhaka on 30 March 2008.

Brigadier General Mustafa Kamal Khan, the commander of the Cote d'Ivoire operation’s Sector West, thanked all actors in civil society, the United Nations and the Ivorian military for assistance to the Bangladesh contingent. He said he was proud to receive the medal on Bangladesh’s Independence Day. Mustafa Kamal said they were proud to participate in the resolution of the conflict in Cote d’Ivoire and expressed their resolve to collectively defend the United Nations mandate for peace in the place.

Since 1998 Bangladesh has provided more than 60,000 soldiers to UN Peacekeeping Missions. Currently, more than 9,600 Bangladeshi soldiers and police are working in 11 UN peacekeeping operations, making Bangladesh one of the top providers of uniformed personnel to the United Nations.


OPINION:
A MEETING WITH BANGLADESH'S FUTURE - MARK WARD

Two months ago I had the pleasure to visit Bangladesh, to check on USAID’s activities in the south after the devastating Cyclone Sidr. To date, USAID has provided more than $26 million to support relief and early reconstruction activities, including shelter, water, sanitation, hygiene and emergency food assistance.

When I returned to Dhaka, I had the pleasure to meet with a group of students from of Bangladesh's finest universities: University of Dhaka, BRAC University, North South University, Independent University and East West University. I gave them a quick lecture about US foreign assistance in Bangladesh, how we provide our aid and how we monitor the results. I answered a few questions about US foreign policy in the region. They were polite but threw good questions.

Then I asked the students about their plans for the future. I am responsible for more than 20 Asian countries, and I always try to meet with university students. Students are a great barometer for "hope" in any country. But sometimes I am sorry I ask students about their future -- because they tell me that their future lies outside their country. Not in Bangladesh. The students I met with were full of enthusiasm for their future...in Bangladesh. Every one of them, boy and girl, had a plan -- whether in the private or public sector -- and the plan was for a career in Bangladesh.

Those students recharged my batteries, to work even harder for economic development in Bangladesh. And they gave me a pretty good picture of the bright future that awaits Bangladesh.

The writer is Acting Assistant Administrator, Asia Bureau, USAID.

NEW YORK BANGLADESH PRESS CLUB LAUNCHED

New York Bangladesh Press Club, an organization comprising representatives of the local and Dhaka based Bangladeshi media was formally launched in New York on 28 March 2008 through installation of the Executive Committee and celebration of the Independence Day of Bangladesh. Mr. Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman of Bangla Patrika is the President of the Club while Mr. Shihabuddin Kislu is its General Secretary.

Speaking as the chief guest during the ceremony, Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States M. Humayun Kabir said that the Embassy was ready to work with the community media to promote Bangladesh’s interest in the US. In his speech, Mr. Kabir assured of all possible cooperation to the newly found body and offered to help them to improve their professionalism by linking them to the mainstream media here. He also urged the media community to
remain united for effectively articulating the interest of the Bangladeshi community living in the US.

**INDEPENDENCE DAY OBSERVED BY THE BANGLADESH COMMUNITIES**

Bangladesh community organizations around the United States observed 38th Independence and National Day in a befitting manner. Discussion meetings and colorful cultural shows were arranged to celebrate the occasion. On 29 March 2008 Bangladesh Association of America Inc. (BAAI) in greater DC area organized a program to celebrate the Day. On 30 March 2008 Bangladesh Society of New York organized another program in New York to mark the day. Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir attended both the events as Chief Guest. In his speech, the Ambassador urged the community to support the good work being done to make Bangladesh a dignified and decent nation. He also urged the community members to work with the local leaders, such as Senators, House Representatives and government officials so that community so that the interest of Bangladesh community could be advanced in the US. He assured them that the Embassy would work with them in this pursuit. He also reassured them that the Embassy was engaged with the relevant US authorities to designate Bangladesh under the provision of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program. Ms. Nargis Ahmed, President of Bangladesh Society, New York and Mr. Mosharraf Hussain, President, BAAI presided over the functions of their respective organizations. Both the functions were attended by a large number of community activists and other guests. Several other programs were also organized in Los Angeles, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and elsewhere in the US.

**BANGLADESH ELECTED VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMONWEALTH WOMEN ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON DC**

Mrs. Rokeya Kabir, lady wife of the Bangladesh Ambassador, has been elected as Vice President of the Commonwealth Women Association (CWA) for next one year. A new CWA committee was formed with Mrs Josette Micheli (wife of the Ambassador of Malta) as its President. The election conducted by Mrs. Donna Karen, the immediate past president of CWA was held during a monthly meeting of the Commonwealth Women Association (CWA) at the Bangladesh House on 31 March 2008. A total of 25 members, including representatives from the United Kingdom, Australia, India, Pakistan, Canada, Malta, Jamaica and host Bangladesh attended the meeting. The CWA comprises the lady spouses of the diplomats from the Commonwealth Nations posted in the Washington DC and they meet every month on a rotational basis. In March, it was Bangladesh’s turn to host. Mrs. Rokeya Kabir welcomed the ladies at the Bangladesh House and briefly apprised them of the history, nature and cultural heritage of Bangladesh. Following the briefing, the Bangladesh Embassy ladies presented a fashion parade to show the Bangladeshi costumes. There was a rich display of different types of saris, variety of garment products, jewelleries, leather and porcelain products from Bangladesh. The guests also enjoyed a colourful documentary on vibrant nature of Bangladesh. At the end, the invited guests were served with traditional Bangladeshi cuisine.

**BANGLADESH EMBASSY HOSTS STUDENTS FROM UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA CHAPEL HILL**

As part of the Embassy’s Education Interaction Program (EIP), 14 students of various graduate programs under Liberal Arts Faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and 3 students from the University of Pennsylvania participated in a discussion program with the Embassy officials on 20 March 2008. EIP is a unique outreach initiative undertaken by the Bangladesh Embassy in order to better disseminate ideas about Bangladesh to the young students in the US. It is also designed also to offer participants a first-hand look at the Embassy functions and individuals responsible for shaping and managing relations with host country.
Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir is speaking to the students from Universities of North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Ambassador Itoh (2nd from right) looks on.

At the outset of the program, Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir welcomed the team and gave an overview of the situation in Bangladesh and the growing nature of relations between Bangladesh and US. On Bangladesh, Ambassador Kabir explained to the students that three things were shaping modern Bangladesh, namely water, women and creativity. Bangladesh is a country that is nourished by water and at the same time water related challenges, particularly as the impact of climate change is having a heavy toll on Bangladesh, deserve a special attention, he added. The other big story revolved around the women empowerment process, which is transforming the landscape in Bangladesh. Consequently, new activities are being generated through microfinance schemes, along with attendant positive impact. Better primary health care and improved school education system along with ongoing political and economic reforms will harness the potential of the people and equip them to navigate better in today’s globalized world. Social creativity engendered new energy in the society that is helping Bangladesh to reinvent itself from time to time, he further explained. At the end of the discussion, students were engaged with the officials in a lively Q-A session. During the interaction, Embassy officials also provided information about politics, economy and society of Bangladesh emphasizing mainly on the resilience of the people of Bangladesh.

Ambassador William H. Itoh, Director of Washington International Programs for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill led the team. Many of the participating students are currently engaged in internship assignments with offices of US Members of Congress, Congressional committees, offices of international organizations, foreign embassies, international business and non-governmental organizations.

BIMAN PLANS TO BUY 8 BOEING AIRCRAFTS

Biman, Bangladesh's national carrier will buy eight new Boeing aircraft for an amount of $1.26 billion. It is the first time in its 35-year history that the national flag carrier is purchasing aircraft directly from the manufacturer.

'We want to give a new face to Biman,' said Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser for Civil Aviation Mr. Mahbub Jamil recently. 'Biman's board has decided to procure four Boeing 777-300ER and four 787-8 aircraft as part of the fleet overhaul,' the Special Assistant informed. The eight aircraft will bring Biman Bangladesh Airline Ltd's fleet strength to 20.

Before the new planes are delivered, Boeing will lease Biman four used 777-300 ERs in 2009 and 2010 and four used 787-8s in 2011-12 to help the airline cope with a growing passenger load. The Boeing plane
purchases will be financed by the US Export-Import Bank and a syndicate of local banks.

[Latest update: Biman Bangladesh Airlines has extended the deadline for signing the final deal with Boeing by seven days on purchasing eight new aircraft worth US$1.265 billion. Both the sides agree to sign the agreement now on April 22, 2008. However, there would be no rise in Boeing's existing price offers due to the change in the deadline.]

SOUTH ASIA’S LARGEST SHOPPING MALL IN BANGLADESH

The biggest mall in South Asia is going to be opened to public by mid 2009. The construction work started on the site in 2001.

At present around 80 percent of work has been completed and the aim is to open the first phase of the complex by mid 2009. A second phase involving the construction of a hotel and hospital will come later. Being the largest ever private infrastructure venture it will be three times the size of Bashundhara City, the country’s current number one shopping mall.

With space for more than 4,300 shops, a food court, children's theme park, cinema halls, an exhibition centre and offices, the centre will be the world’s fifth largest shopping mall area wise having 4.5 million square feet of shopping, entertainment facilities and offices. The centre will have parking spaces for 5,000 cars and is surrounded by a 26 feet ring road in order to allow customers to bring their own vehicles.

The Future Park, with its entertainment focus ranging from restaurants to karaoke and bowling lanes to swimming pools, would attract non-shoppers too. The Mall Authority also plans to install its own power generation facility to supply uninterrupted power to the shops and other facilities.

BANGLADESHI SCIENTIST LEADS A TEAM OF RESEARCHERS TO INVENT COST EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

In the midst of recent erratic behavior of international oil market, the news of cost effective oil production from micro-algae may be a sigh of relief for car owners around the world. It is now evident that production of oil in traditional oil exporting countries could not match the ever-increasing demand of energy in many parts of the world. The search for gainful production of bio-fuel is not a new thing for the people of the world. However, it is a matter of pride for the Bangladeshis living in the US and all over the world that a Bangladeshi Scientist Dr. Mohammad Ataul Karim is leading a team of researchers who are doing the research for transforming algal biomass into bio-fuel.

Dr. Mohammad Karim, Vice President for Research in the Old Dominion University (ODU) of Virginia has informed recently that the team’s project has been submitted to the US patent authority for necessary approval.

According to Dr. Karim, this new invention will undoubtedly be a great achievement for the human civilization considering its easy productivity, cost efficiency and environment friendly nature. Production of oil from algae will also save huge amount of food grains such as wheat, maize etc. now being used for making Ethanol. It has been found during the research
that cost of production of bio-fuel from algae will reduce about 40% cost needed to make the same amount of bio-fuel using food grains.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has assigned Old Dominion University the leadership role in the Virginia Coastal Energy Research Consortium (VCERC), with the mission to seek out and develop new alternative energy research directions and evaluate viable renewable energy sources for Virginia.

**SEVEN US-BANGLADESH STUDENTS SELECTED FOR ADMISSION INTO BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGES**

Seven US students of Bangladesh origin were among 17 students who have been selected for admission into 1st year MBBS-BDS course (session 2007-2008) in different Medical Colleges of Bangladesh. Every year Bangladesh government provides opportunity for students of SAARC and non-SAARC countries to apply for admission into Bangladeshi government Medical Colleges against a predefined quota under self finance education scheme.

It may be mentioned that the government of Bangladesh invites application for admission into the 1st year MBBS/BDS courses from foreign students usually around the month of December each year. The Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC and Bangladesh Consulates in New York and Los Angeles post the application procedure in their websites.

The selected students for this session were directed to get themselves admitted into the Medical College mentioned against their names by 30th March 2008. All the original certificates and mark sheets are to be submitted to the principal during the admission process.

The selected foreign students will have to pay US$-2000 (Two Thousand US Dollar) only for each academic year. Tuition fee is to be deposited during their admission. The other fees for them will be as per local Bangladeshi students.

**Non SAARC: (MBBS Course) 2007-2008**

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<td>01.</td>
<td>Nabila Mahbub Lopa C/o Dr. Abu Zafar Mahbub Ahmed, Civil Surgeon Office, Sylhet, Bangladesh.</td>
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<td>Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka</td>
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<td>Zarin Tasneem Fariha C/o Kaniz Fatema Khan, 36-08.29St. # 1-D, Astoria, NY -11106, USA (Ph: 7182850043)</td>
<td>U.A.</td>
<td>Begum Khaleda Zia Medical College Dhaka</td>
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<td>03.</td>
<td>Anika Hossain C/o Mohammad Abul Hossain 25-15 30th Ave# 2R L.I.C NY -11102, USA.</td>
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ROYAL BENGAL TIGER OF BANGLADESH
Celebration of 38th National and Independence Day at the Embassy
Meeting of Bangladesh Embassy officials with Congressional Bangladesh Caucus
Visit by students from University of North Carolina and University of Pennsylvania

Meeting of Commonwealth Women Association at the Bangladesh House

If you need any further information or have any suggestions or if you do not wish to receive this web journal, please email:
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