

VIBRANT BANGLADESH



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Amar Ekushey

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We Mourn

We express our deepest condolences for all those heroes who lost their lives in BDR Headquarters on 25- 26 February 2009 and convey our deep sympathy for the bereaved family members. May Allah grant eternal peace to the departed souls.

Highlights of this issue

Political and Foreign Affairs

- Mr. Zillur Rahman sworn in as 19th President of Bangladesh
- Governor of the State of Oregon visits Embassy of Bangladesh
- “Dhaka should be Barack Obama’s first destination among Muslim countries”- Lisa Curtis

Embassy events

- Performers enthrall audience during celebration of International Mother Language Day in Bangladesh Embassy
- Bangladesh is a model of moderation- Ambassador Humayun Kabir
- Results for admission into MBBS/BDS courses in Bangladeshi Medical/Dental colleges for foreign citizens is out
- Celebration of International Mother Language Day drew attention of international Media

Trade and Business

- Garment exports to new destinations is on the rise
- EPB moves on duty-free garment export to India
- Bangladesh-US joint venture to set up garments plant at KEPZ
- Canadian trade delegation visited Bangladesh
- Local RMG accessories plant in Adamjee EPZ soon
- Bangladesh-Canada trade to reach a new high
- China invests \$29.21m in EPZs
- Bangladesh's software industry turns suitable harbour for outsourcing

His Excellency Mr. Md. Zillur Rahman sworn in as 19th President of Bangladesh



Veteran politician honourable Mr. Md. Zillur Rahman took oath as the 19th President of Bangladesh on 12 February 2009. Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin administered the oath of office at Bangabhaban (President House) in the evening of 12 February, 2009. After the swearing-in ceremony, the Honorable President Mr. Zillur Rahman signed the oath of office and oath of secrecy while the guests witnessing the ceremony gave him a standing ovation.

Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and outgoing President Professor Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed joined the ceremony along with several hundred distinguished guests. Speaker Mr. Abdul Hamid Advocate, former Presidents, former Chief Advisers of the caretaker government, Members of Parliament, Chief Election Commissioner, Justices of the Supreme Court, Chiefs of Army, Navy and Air Force, diplomats, political leaders, senior journalists including editors and senior civil and military officers, among others attended the ceremony.

Prior to his election to the presidency, H.E. Mr. Zillur Rahman was Deputy Leader of the House at the 9th Parliament. Mr. Rahman was elected Member of the Parliament in the ninth parliamentary elections held on 29 December 2008, and past the elections of 1973, 1986, 1996 and 2001. Honorable President Zillur Rahman was a close aide of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and is a lawyer by profession.

Earlier, Bangladesh Election Commission declared H.E. Mr. Md. Zillur Rahman as the uncontested elected President of Bangladesh.

Governor of the State of Oregon visits Embassy of Bangladesh



The State of Oregon is interested to explore areas of cooperation with Bangladesh, particularly in the areas such as education and disaster management. Governor of the State Mr. Theodore R. Kulongoski said this

when he came to meet Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA M. Humayun Kabir in the Embassy of Bangladesh in Washington DC.

Oregon Governor stated that he was deeply impressed by Bangladesh's experience in managing the challenges, including the disaster management, and would like to see his state benefit from such successful interventions. Referring to the disaster scenario including the potential threat of earthquake in his State, the Governor said that Oregon would like to work with Bangladesh to effectively mobilize the local community to minimize the effects of natural disasters. The Governor of Oregon also said that he was interested to promote the education exchange program between Bangladesh and his State. Sharing of knowledge could benefit both sides in this era of interconnectedness, he added. The Governor of Oregon showed keen interest in understanding the history and the process of glorious birth of Bangladesh as an independent nation.

Welcoming the Governor to the Embassy, Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States M. Humayun Kabir said that the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attached great importance to Bangladesh's relations with the United States. He highlighted the strong commitment of the people of Bangladesh to democracy, pluralism and human rights, which undergirded her

growing bilateral relationship with the United States. Ambassador Kabir also briefed the Governor about the outcome of the last general election in Bangladesh. In this context, he underscored the positive impact that the women empowerment process has brought to bear on the outcome of last elections in a Muslim majority nation like Bangladesh. He also stressed that given the fact that both Bangladesh and the United States shared similar values, commitments and sometimes interests they could not only work to advance their bilateral interests, both Bangladesh and the United States could also work together to promote peace, empower human beings, fight poverty, rebuild broken societies and combat extremism and the effects of climate change, among other things. Ambassador Kabir also said that Bangladesh would indeed like to work together with the State of Oregon to tap the potential of cooperation in various areas, including education. He said that Bangladesh would welcome an opportunity to share its experience in disaster relief with Oregon. A multimedia presentation on investment potential in Bangladesh was made during the visit of the Governor of Oregon.

Governor Kulongoski said that his visit to Bangladesh Embassy is the first step towards a long journey of cooperation between the two sides. The Ambassador of Bangladesh extended an invitation to the Governor to visit Bangladesh. The Governor readily accepted the invitation and stated that he looked forward to visiting Bangladesh in the near future.

Major General Raymond Rees, Adjutant General of Oregon National Guard, Mr. Chip Terhune, Chief of Staff of the Governor, and other high officials accompanied the Governor during the visit to the Embassy.

“Dhaka should be Barack Obama’s first destination among Muslim countries”- Lisa Curtis



“Dhaka should be Barack Obama’s first destination among Muslim countries”. This was stated by Ms. Lisa Curtis, Senior Research Fellow at the Heritage Foundation. Ms. Curtis was speaking as a panelist in a briefing on “Implications of Recent Elections in Bangladesh for Business” at the US Chamber of Commerce, Washington DC on February 05, 2009. She put forward two main arguments in favor of her proposal. First, according to Ms. Curtis Bangladesh society is least susceptible to extremism as proved during the recently held elections. Secondly, she added that progress in women empowerment in Bangladesh has provided a solid check on the growing radicalization, which is taking place in some other Muslim countries. Ms. Curtis also commented that economic opportunities seemed brighter now than earlier, and hoped that there would be more tolerance among the political parties so that they could work together for the people of Bangladesh. She also urged the US government to consider lifting of all tariffs so as to allow duty free access of products from least developed countries like Bangladesh to the US market.

Bangladesh Ambassador to United States Mr. Humayun Kabir, who also spoke as a panelist, provided a run down on the outcome of recent parliamentary elections in Bangladesh and said that through the just concluded free, fair and credible elections it was eloquently proved that the people of Bangladesh were decisively in favor of democracy and ready to defend it at any cost. He said that with a new conciliatory political culture emerging, Bangladesh is likely to remain much stable and investor friendly than other countries in the region. He highlighted the government’s policy directions with regard to investment and the potential areas for foreign investment in Bangladesh.

He also outlined how such a process had improved the business opportunities in Bangladesh. As an example, he identified three main reasons, which contributed to improve the economic outlook. First, he said that all three main areas of economy, namely internal resource mobilization, agriculture and manufacturing sectors and export sector were demonstrating continuous growth; second, foreign remittance was also flowing strong and lastly, compared to other economies in Asia Bangladesh economy had shown better resilience, and so far the economy was well protected from external pressure, which has reinforced the confidence of investors and the business community. Mr. Kabir urged the US companies to come forward and take advantage of the improved investment opportunities in Bangladesh.

Terming present day Bangladesh as an exciting one, Mr. Donald Camp, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, US Department of State, another panelist, narrated on how warmly the government of the United States welcomed the outcome of the recent parliamentary elections in Bangladesh. He added that this outcome had upgraded Bangladesh to a new phase and hoped that the new government will assure international businesses and investors through continuity and follow up of earlier contracts and commitments. He hoped that the Opposition party in the Parliament will also fulfill their democratic obligations to advance the cause of Bangladesh.

The session was followed up by a lively Question & Answer session, where high officials of leading US companies like Chevron, Boeing, ConocoPhillips etc. took part and wanted to know more about investment opportunities in the present day Bangladesh. The briefing was attended by US government officials, business executives, congressional staffs, academicians, journalists and Bangladesh Embassy officials.

Performers enthrall audience during celebration of International Mother Language Day in Bangladesh Embassy



International Mother Language Day and Language Martyrs' Day was celebrated at the Embassy of Bangladesh on 21 February 2009.

Performers from several countries participated in the celebration. The cultural segment of the colorful program included a Paraguayan bottle dance, Afro-Peruvian music, Malay jazz, Russian folk dance, Nigerian ballad, a Bangladeshi performance and much more. "The opportunity to sing in my mother language in front of a packed audience was a truly moving experience. It was a wonderful way to celebrate cultural and linguistic diversity," said a performer. The event, held at the Bangabandhu Auditorium of the Embassy, was co-sponsored by the Embassy of Bangladesh, Drishtipat DC, UN Association of the National Capitol Area and the World Bank's Youth2Youth Group. It may be recalled that the day was initially observed as Language Martyrs' Day in honor of the sacrifices made by the people of Bangladesh on 21 February 1952 to defend their right to their mother tongue- Bangla. In November 1999, the UNESCO declared 21 February as the International Mother Language Day with a view to celebrating the ethno-linguistic rights of people around the globe.



In his welcome address, Bangladesh Ambassador M. Humayun Kabir paid profound respect to the memories of language martyrs', who had sacrificed their lives on this day in 1952 to protect their right to their mother

tongue, which is Bangla. Noting the declaration of our Language Martyrs' Day as International Mother Language Day by UNESCO as a success of our collective effort, he mentioned that it was indeed a testimony to the creative leadership that Bangladesh had provided to ensure the most basic of all human rights- the right to mother languages. "It also demonstrated Bangladesh's faith and enduring commitment to promote human creativity that gets its easiest and best manifestation through the mother languages for all people," he added. Mr. Kabir called upon the D.C. administration to build a Martyrs monument in Washington DC area in honour of the Language Day Martyrs, and promised that Bangladesh Embassy would be happy to be a partner in this historic process. Drawing the attention to endangered status of more than 50 percent of some 6,700 spoken languages in the world, he urged the international community to take collective measures to save those languages from going into oblivion.

Among others, noted linguists from the region Dr. David Zorc, Michel Chayet, Thomas Adams and Anis Ahmed also spoke on the occasion. The speakers highlighted the importance of minority languages and the urgent need to save them in the interest of maintaining human diversity. They also spoke on the evolution of Bangladesh's Language Martyrs' Day into the UNESCO-recognized International Mother Language Day.



The highlight of the evening was colorful music and dance performances by participants from different countries

representing various languages including Russian, Ukrainian, Yoruba, Peruvian, Paraguayan, Malay, Hindi, Nepali, and Native American. The Bangla language was represented through songs, dances and poems by the Bangladesh Embassy family and Drishtipat DC. A large number of foreign guests

as well as expatriate Bangladesh community members attended the event.



Earlier, the day's program began with the hoisting of the national flag at half mast by Ambassador Humayun Kabir in the Embassy premises. Messages sent on this occasion by the Honorable President, Honorable Prime Minister, Honorable Foreign Minister and the Honorable Minister of State for Foreign Affairs were read out. A special prayer was also offered seeking salvation of the souls of the language martyrs, and for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is a model of moderation- Ambassador Humayun Kabir



Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States M. Humayun Kabir spoke at the Ambassador's Forum in the University of Virginia at Charlottesville on 16 February 2009.

In his presentation Ambassador Kabir covered the recent developments in Bangladesh with particular focus on its politics, economy, environment and civil rights, as well as its relations with the United States. Ambassador Kabir particularly highlighted the outcome of recent democratic elections held on 29 December 2008 in Bangladesh. While narrating the outcome of the election and the eventual formation of government under the leadership of Honorable

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, he particularly pointed out a few significant elements, which influenced the outcome of elections. Among them, Ambassador Kabir said that remarkable voter turn out of 87% was an important factor. "Voters really responded so enthusiastically that it had refined the agenda of what is known as democracy building in Bangladesh," he added. The enthusiastic participation of women and first time young voters was yet another positive factor to influence the outcome of last elections. Consequently, Ambassador Kabir asserted that the newly elected Parliament also reflected similar demographic make up; as many as 146 out of the 300 members of the parliament are first time legislators, he said. Ambassador also highlighted the fact that compared to earlier parliaments, there are more women legislators in the current parliament. Ambassador Kabir also identified the vibrant role of civil society and media in Bangladesh as a positive factor in ensuring transparency and accountability of the electoral process in Bangladesh. Touching on the changing nature of political process in Bangladesh, Ambassador Kabir said that during the last parliamentary elections political parties had brought out detailed manifestoes, which in a significant degree influenced the preference of voters.

Turning to bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the United States Ambassador Kabir said with new governments in both the countries, the relationship had entered into a transformational phase. In this context, he asserted that the bilateral relationship was changing fast and efforts should be made to capitalize on such opportunities for mutual benefits. Touching on the changing nature of the bilateral relationship, Ambassador Humayun Kabir said that foreign aid was no longer the predominant feature in Bangladesh-US relations. Instead, trade had become the principal element of economic relationship between Bangladesh and the United States, he said. In this context, he underscored the need for granting duty free access for the products from the least developed countries, including Bangladesh to the US market. He assured that while this will make huge difference for

Bangladesh's economy, it will practically not affect the job market in United States.

Bangladesh Ambassador also highlighted the challenges emanating from the effects of climate change and underscored the need for taking concerted urgent efforts to cope with it. He said that with its long experience in disaster management Bangladesh could emerge as an excellent model for implementing the adaptation strategy to meet the effects of climate change.

Faculty members of the University, members of the local media and a good number of students including few Bangladeshi students were present at the event.

Results for admission into MBBS/BDS courses in Bangladeshi Medical/Dental colleges for foreign citizens is out



The following students (from USA) have been selected for admission into the 1st year MBBS/BDS Courses (Session 2008-2009) in different Medical

Colleges of Bangladesh, under self-finance education scheme.

They are requested to get themselves admitted into the Medical College mentioned against their names by 5 March 2009. All the original certificates and mark sheets are to be submitted to the Principal of respective institutions during admission.

Selected foreign students will have to pay US \$3000.00 (Three Thousand US Dollar) only to the Principal of the respective Medical College as tuition fee for each academic year starting from 2008-2009. Tuition fee is to be deposited during their admission. The other fees for them will be the same as for local Bangladeshi Students.

Sl. No.	Name of the applicant	Allotted Medical College
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1	Tahmina Jahir	Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka
2	Mohammed Sakib Saeed	Begum Khaleda Zia Medical College, Dhaka
3	Nasrin Khandaker	Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka
4	Farhana Chowdhury	Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka
5	Abujafar Mamun Choudhury	Begum Khaleda Zia Medical College, Dhaka
6	Ibreez Ajaz	Mymensingh

		Medical College, Mymensingh
7	Tazkia Najneen	Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka
8	Ashwak Jahan	Dhaka Medical College, Dhaka
9	Jafrin Rashid	Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College, Sylhet



Culture

Heritage

Tourism



Celebration of International Mother Language Day drew attention of international Media

This year the commemoration of International Mother Language Day held at the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, DC on 21 February 2009 drew attention of the foreign diplomats, international audience and local Bangladeshis living in the area. It was covered widely in various Washington based and international media. The following is a reproduction of an article written by Yulia Melnik for the Kyiv Post, an internet based widely circulated newspaper, immediately after the event.

Exotic and cheerful community gathered at the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington, D.C. for the 10th annual celebration of the International Mother Language Day on Feb. 21. Bangladeshi saris, Ukrainian embroidered clothing, African

golden dresses, and Russian red sarafans represented the diversity.

The holiday declared by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is designed to celebrate the ethno-linguistic rights of people around the globe. But its start was tragic, not euphoric. On this day in 1952, several students of Dhaka University were killed by Pakistani police during the procession demanding that Bengali (Bangla) must be recognized as one of the state languages of Pakistan. The government's bloody actions to establish Urdu as the sole national language for all Pakistan triggered the creation of the language movement, which ushered in the struggle for independence. In 1971, East Pakistan became the independent nation of Bangladesh.

The Ukrainian community actively participated in the event. The multicultural audience

applauded Solomia Dutkewych, singing the songs *Rodymyi Krayu (My Beloved Homeland)* and *U Sadu Vyshnevomu (In the Cherry Orchard)*.

The audience also enjoyed a Nigerian song about mothers performed by Abiodun Koya, Russian songs and dances shown by the students of the local Russian school “Metaphor,” the song of the World War II *Katyusha* performed by Larissa Trelina, patriotic songs in Hindi and other performances. The traditional Paraguayan “dance with a bottle” was executed by Elena Cuizoni. In this dance, five bottles are put on the head of a dancer one on the top of the other and the dancer continues to move with other dancers on the stage.

Before the performances the audience was greeted by the representatives of the diverse diplomatic community of Washington and reputable linguists. The presenters spoke about endangered languages and the multilingual education. The example of Yiddish, the language of Eastern European Jews which disappeared in Eastern Europe as a result of Holocaust, will always remind mankind how rich and developed cultures can be destroyed.

Michael Chyet, a U.S. linguist who specialized in the Kurdish language and was born in a Jewish-American family, reminded the audience about the importance of teaching children their heritage languages. “My father answered in English to his grandmother, who was speaking Yiddish, he could understand but the spoken skills were lost,” the speaker described his family’s experience. According to UNESCO, about half of 7,000 languages which exist in the world are in danger of extinction.

Because of the global economic crisis, many countries are now trying to tighten and regulate their job markets. While different governments are speaking less about the value of globalization and are expressing more concerns about migrants, the diplomatic community in

Washington, DC understands that crises come and go; it is necessary to build relationships, find mutual understanding and respect differences.

The International Mother Language Day is one of the initiatives to remind that diversity is an important source of strength - economic, cultural and spiritual. “We should honor all languages,” Anis Ahmed concluded the event in his presentation about Bengali (Bangla) Language Movement under loud applause of the attendees.

Ekushey in picture





BUSINESS

TRADE

DEVELOPMENT



Garment exports to new destinations is on the rise



The volume of ready made garment export to new destinations is on the rise, as manufacturers go for market diversification

with a view to bypassing the global financial recession. Exporters have been sending garment products to Brazil and Mexico, the two new export destinations for Bangladesh since mid-2008.

Dekko group has recently shipped trousers, shirts and some other woven garments, worth \$500,000.00 to Mexico. They have also started exporting the products to Brazil, another new destination. They are looking to some other new destinations such as Japan, Russia and South Africa as part of their plans to diversify markets, Chairman of the company told recently.

Industry sources said Japan, a RMG market worth \$20 billion, is a new market for Bangladesh. Mr. Fazlul Hoque, President of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) said they are going to Japan in April 2009 to hold a single country fair in that country.

Meanwhile, the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) has started peddling different products of the country, especially RMG products, to

discover new export destinations in the wake of the recession, said Mr. Shahab Ullah, Vice Chairman of EPB.

According to EPB statistics, Bangladesh exported woven garments worth \$5.350 million and knitwear items worth \$7.374 million to Russia in the 2007-08 fiscal year. At the same time, the country exported woven products worth \$32.873 million and knitwear products worth \$27.662 million to Mexico. In Brazil, another emerging export destination for Bangladesh, woven items worth \$3.090 million and knitwear items worth \$13.281 million were exported in 2007-08.

Bangladesh is also demonstrating export vigour in South Africa. In the same fiscal year, the country exported woven products worth \$16.977 million and knitwear products worth \$12.211 million to South Africa.

EPB moves on duty-free garment export to India

Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) is taking some initiatives to encourage apparel manufacturers to fully utilise the opportunity of exporting eight million pieces of readymade garment (RMG) products to India a year under a South Asian Free Trade Area Agreement (SAFTA).

The EPB will send letters to Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) soon so the apparel manufacturers make the best use of the opportunity.

It is reported that of the last year's eight million quota, Bangladesh so far exported three million pieces of RMG and the rest remained unutilized. India may also import the rest five million pieces allocated for 2008, as the EPB earlier sent letter to the Indian side in this connection. Bangladesh may therefore have the opportunity to export a total of 13 million pieces this year.

As the exporters refrained from grabbing such an opportunity blaming some non-tariff barriers (NTBs) from Indian side, the BGMEA has relaxed some of its rules earlier to encourage them to take the advantage and meet the deadline.

After finalisation of the agreement, BGMEA and BKMEA were instructed to issue certificates only on the basis of letters of credit, but the trade bodies started issuing certificates in line with the contracts signed between the Bangladeshi exporters and Indian importers, EPB officials said. Under the SAFTA deal signed in September 2007, India will import eight million RMG pieces per annum allowing a zero tariff facility for Bangladesh. Of the total quota, affiliated BGMEA members will get a 70 percent share, while BKMEA members will have the rest.

According to guidelines, all applications of intending RMG exporters must be forwarded to the EPB through BGMEA and BKMEA. An apparel unit owner will get allocation for supplying as high as two hundred thousand RMG pieces a year after submission of required documents, including confirmed irrevocable letter of credit. According to EPB data, Bangladesh exported knitwear products worth US\$8.99 million and woven products worth \$4.094 million to India in fiscal year 2007-08.

Bangladesh-US joint venture to set up garments plant at KEPZ



S and S Clothing Limited, a USA-Bangladesh company, will set up a garments manufacturing plant in the Karnaphuli

Export Processing Zone (KEPZ).

The joint venture company will invest US\$ 2.666 million aimed at producing garments accessories in the plant a press release of the company said it recently. It will also create employment opportunities for 2,028 Bangladeshis and foreigners, the release added.

An agreement to this effect was signed between the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority and the M/s S and S Clothing Limited in BEPZA Complex recently.

Canadian trade delegation visited Bangladesh

A Canadian trade delegation visited Bangladesh from February 14 to 18 2009 to promote export of Canadian agricultural products to Bangladesh, according to a press release.

The delegation comprised members of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Government of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP), the Canadian International Grains Institute (CIGI) and Pulse Canada.

The delegation met senior government officials and members of the Bangladesh community here. It also attended seminars on Canadian agricultural products in Dhaka and Chittagong.

Canada is known as a global leader in producing and exporting many agricultural products including wheat, peas, lentils, chickpeas, mustard seeds and canola.

The Canadian pulse industry grew dramatically to 4-5 million tonnes in recent years from less than one million tonnes production in early 1990s. Canada exported as much as Tk 1,000 crore worth foods and other agricultural products to Bangladesh in the first eleven months of 2008.

The purpose of the trade mission was to allow local buyers and importers to tie up with Canadian industry players who offer high

quality agricultural products and also provide insight into Canada's advances in research and development in this sector.

Local RMG accessories plant in Adamjee EPZ soon

A local company will set up a garment accessories manufacturing factory in the Adamjee Export Processing Zone.

The company Osman Interlinings Limited will invest US\$ 2.2 million for setting up their plant and will produce interlining items, according to a press release.

It will also create employment opportunity for 173 Bangladeshi nationals, including six foreign nationals.

An agreement to this effect was signed recently between the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) and the company in BEPZA complex.

Bangladesh-Canada trade to reach a new high



Trade between Bangladesh and Canada is expected to cross the billion-dollar mark this year, said

Robert McDougall,

Canadian High Commissioner in Bangladesh. Currently, trade between the countries stands at nearly \$900 million.

The projection was made in a paper read out by the High Commissioner at a monthly luncheon meeting of the Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) at Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka on 08 February 2009.

Speaking as chief guest, the High Commissioner said that Canada and Bangladesh shared bright

prospects for cooperation in technology and energy security issues.

The High Commissioner said Canada's thrust areas for investment in Bangladesh would be IT for a digital Bangladesh, CNG distribution, communications system development and power generation.

"We are also looking to enhance commercial opportunities for trade and project financing," he said. The two-way trade between the two commonwealth countries was \$897 million in 2007, of which Bangladesh's exports were \$542 million and Canada's exports were \$355 million. Two-way trade figures for 2005 were \$600 million and \$400 million in 2003. The Canadian government's decision to allow Bangladesh duty-free access in 2003 has driven phenomenal growth in businesses between the two countries.

McDougall asked Bangladesh to diversify its products and markets to stay competitive in the intensely globalised world. Current trade patterns show heavy dependence on readymade garments (almost 95 percent) among Bangladeshi exports, with smaller quantities of seafood and handicrafts. On the other hand, Canadian exports shows 65 percent dependence on bulk foodstuffs, especially wheat, canola and pulses. The high commissioner claimed that Canada's assistance programme to Bangladesh is the highest in the world, amounting to more than \$80 million a year.

In response to a query, McDougall said Canada is the prime destination for immigration from Bangladesh and interest in travelling and migrating to Canada is fast expanding. Last year, over 3,000 visas for various purposes were approved, he added. FICCI Vice President Steven Wilson chaired the meeting.

China invests \$29.21m in EPZs

Zhong Bu Centresin (Bangladesh) Company Limited, a Chinese company, will set up a Shoe Accessories Manufacturing Industry in the extension area of Karnaphuli Export Processing Zone, Chittagong. Another Chinese company

Messrs LianXin Footwear Company will set up a shoe manufacturing factory in the Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ).

These 100 percent foreign-owned company will invest US\$ 24.217 and \$ 5 million respectively in setting up the units to produce shoe accessories and shoes. They will also create employment opportunity for over 2000 Bangladeshi nationals, including 56 foreign citizens.

An agreement to this effect was signed between the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (BEPZA) and Chinese companies in BEPZA Complex, Dhaka, recently.

Bangladesh's software industry turns suitable harbour for outsourcing



Global market recession makes Bangladesh's software industry a very suitable harbour for outsourcing as many western and European

companies shifted their focus on the country for low-cost IT services.

Well informed sources in the industry said that Bangladesh's software export has achieved hefty growth in recent months, as more than 400 software and IT companies are exporting their services to around 30 countries in the world.

President of Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) Habibullah N Karim told, "Global economic downturn hastened export growth of our software industry."

"Bangladesh's software industry will become a \$500 million export earning sector by 2013-2014 fiscal year (July 2013-June 2014) if the current trend of robust growth continues," he said.

With nearly 100 percent growth, Karim said Bangladesh fetched over \$14 million from export of software in the first five months of the

current 2008-09 fiscal year. The country set \$30 million of software export target for the current fiscal year after the sector earned \$24 million in 2007-08 fiscal year, which was only \$2.24 million in 2000-01 fiscal year, he said. Bangladesh has already become a large destination of potential human resources with bright aptitude, quality and natural ability in software development during the last few years. Bangladesh's approximately Taka 20 billion (about \$285.71 million) software industry currently employs nearly 20,000 skilled and semi-skilled professionals. Leading software exporters said although a majority of the companies are exporting software services to North America, recently there has been encouraging performance by a good number of firms in European and East Asian markets, mainly Japan.

Among the hundreds of export-focused companies, according to BASIS, at least 30 companies have been set up either as joint venture or as ODC (Offshore Development Centre) with hundred percent foreign investment in the country in the recent past.

The BASIS, national trade association of software & IT services companies of Bangladesh, also said the European Union has already ranked Bangladesh as one of the top 20 outsourcing destinations in the world.

Bangladesh, which is now connected to Submarine Cable Network South East Asia-Middle East-West Europe-4 (SEA-ME-WE-4), has already brought all of its major cities and towns under high-speed and low-priced fiber optic backbone ushering a new era of cyber development in Bangladesh.



P H O T O

G A L L E R Y

International Mother Language Day



Oregon Governor at the Embassy



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