

FOREIGN OFFICE

BRIEFING NOTES

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February 2020

NEWLY APPOINTED ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER AND STATE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS



Newly appointed Algerian Ambassador Rabah Larbi called on Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen, MP on 16 February 2020 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka

Newly appointed Ambassador of Algeria to Bangladesh Rabah Larbi called on Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen, MP on 16 February 2020 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, following his recent presentation of credentials to President Md. Abul Hamid at Bangabhaban on 03 February 2020.

Foreign Minister welcomed the new Ambassador and assured him of all-out cooperation in discharging his duties, particularly in facilitating the re-opening process of the new Algerian Mission in Dhaka. He appreciated the Algerian government's decision to re-open their resident diplomatic Mission in Dhaka in reciprocity of the re-opening of Bangladesh Mission in Algeria in 2016. They discussed the entire gamut of bilateral relations based on commonalities of history, tradition and religious faith.

Foreign Minister reminisced about the historic visit of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to Algeria to attend the Fourth NAM Summit in September 1973 as an example of the close friendship between Bangabandhu and the then Algerian President Huari Boumediene. He appreciated the Algerian government's gesture in preserving the memory of Bangabandhu's historic visit through dedicating a corner in the Palace of Nations in Algiers for displaying his pictures and sayings and expressed hope that the legacy will be followed to

revitalize the bilateral relations through increased interaction and engagement.

Foreign Minister further requested

the Algerian Ambassador to explore opportunities for cooperation in energy, air connectivity and skilled manpower, among other potential sectors and

emphasized on the importance of exchange of visits both at public & and private sector levels to reap the benefit of people-to-people contacts.



Algerian Ambassador Rabah Larbi called on the State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md. Shahriar Alam, MP on 16 February 2020 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka

He recalled with gratitude that Algeria was among the first Arab countries to accord political recognition to Bangladesh by sponsoring Bangladesh's admission into the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during the Fourth NAM Summit held in Algiers in 1973.

Ambassador Rabah Larbi called on the State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md. Shahriar Alam, MP on the same day at his office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

State Minister iterated Bangladesh's willingness to strengthen bilateral ties with Algeria for enhanced substantive cooperation in the fields of trade and commerce, socio-economic development and people-to-people contacts to the

mutual benefits of the two brotherly countries. They hoped that the re-opening of the Algerian Mission in Dhaka would usher in newer avenues of bilateral cooperation. He recalled with gratitude that Algeria was among the first Arab countries to accord political recognition to Bangladesh by sponsoring Bangladesh's admission into the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) during the Fourth

NAM Summit held in Algiers in 1973.

The new Ambassador emphasized on further consolidating bilateral relations especially though holding political consultations and boosting economic and trade linkages. He showed interest in importing quality products from Bangladesh including pharmaceuticals, jute and jute products, readymade garments and other consumer goods.

STATE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF QATAR ASSURES RECRUITMENT OF MORE WORKFORCES FROM BANGLADESH



First Foreign Office Consultations between Bangladesh and Qatar took place at the State Guest House Meghna on 17 February 2020

State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi visited Dhaka on 16-17 February 2020. He called on Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul

Momen, MP in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 17 February 2020.

During the meeting, Dr. Momen requested Qatar to recruit more manpower

from Bangladesh and mentioned that Bangladesh had a large pool of IT professionals as well as a good number of event management firms, whom the government of Qatar could employ in their workplaces as well as during the Football World Cup 2022 in Qatar. He also requested the continued support Qatar on Rohingya crisis.

State Minister of Qatar mentioned that FIFA World Cup 2022 would be a mega event for Qatar for which Qatar would require support from foreign countries.

He commended the contribution of Bangladesh workforces in Qatar and assured that Qatar would employ more skilled workforces from Bangladesh.

Earlier on the day, the State Minister of Qatar led a high level delegation to the first Foreign Office Consultations between Bangladesh and Qatar at the State Guest House Meghna. State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md. Shahriar Alam, MP led the

Bangladesh delegation comprised of Foreign Secretary Masud bin Momen, Bangladesh Ambassador to Qatar, high officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Ministries and Agencies of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh State Minister apprised his Qatari counterpart of the remarkable economic performance of Bangladesh for achieving Vision 2021 and Vision 2041

set out by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He highlighted different incentives and facilities extended to businessman and investors in the 100 Economic Zones and a dozens of Hi-tech Parks in Bangladesh. He urged to promote trade between the two countries and to recruit skilled workers and professionals like doctors, engineers and nurses from Bangladesh.

DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER OF POLAND VISITS DHAKA TO HOLD BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS



Deputy Foreign Minister of Poland Marcin Przydacz and Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen exchanged the signed copies of MoU at the State Guest House Meghna on 12 February 2020

Deputy Foreign Minister of Poland Marcin Przydacz paid a 2 days' official visit to Bangladesh on 11-12 February 2020. He called on Foreign Minister Dr. A K Abdul Momen, MP in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12 February 2020. Dr. Momen emphasized on the exchange of high-level visits between the two countries and urged the Polish Deputy Foreign Minister to encourage Polish investors and

Polish Deputy Foreign Minister also pointed out that both Bangladesh and Poland might realize the huge potentials of bilateral trade and commerce.

entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh. Polish Deputy Minister assured of the eagerness of his country to continue cooperation with Bangladesh and informed that Poland was considering to reopen its embassy in Dhaka.

Earlier on the day, the first ever Bilateral Consultations between Bangladesh and Poland took place at the State Guest House Meghna. The visiting Deputy Foreign Minister led the Polish delegation while

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen led the Bangladesh side.

Foreign Secretary expressed satisfaction at the growing rate of bilateral trade between the two countries which reached to the amount of USD 1.2 billion in FY2018-19. He urged the Polish Government to encourage their investors and entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh in Hi-Tech Parks (HTPs) and Specialized Economic Zones (SEZs). Mentioning the availability of a large pool of skilled and semi-skilled

professionals and workers in Bangladesh, he proposed the Polish side to import skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh to fulfill the labour shortage in Poland. He also requested to ease the visa issuance procedure for Bangladeshi students, businessmen and visitors.

Polish Deputy Foreign Minister also pointed out that both Bangladesh and Poland might realize the huge potentials of bilateral trade and commerce. Both sides agreed to increase trade and investment through

various mechanisms like setting up a joint committee, exchanging business delegation, and signing up instrument of cooperation, etc.

After the Consultations, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Bilateral Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland was signed to hold such Consultations on regular basis.

OIC SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING AGREED TO CONVENE A PLEDGING CONFERENCE TO MOBILIZE RESOURCES FOR THE ICJ CASE AGAINST MYANMAR

OIC Senior Officials agreed to convene a pledging conference, during the upcoming 47th Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting (CFM) to be held in Niamey, Niger on 3-4 April 2020, to mobilize resources for the ICJ case against Myanmar on accountability for human rights violations against the Rohingyas. The agreement was reached on 11 February 2020 during the OIC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) preparatory to the upcoming CFM. Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen led Bangladesh delegation at the OIC Senior Officials Meeting held at the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah on 9-11 February 2020.

The SOM welcomed the historic unanimous decision on 23 January 2020 of the International Court of Justice ordering Provisional Measures to prevent further acts of genocide against the Rohingyas in Myanmar, which sets a historical precedence in legal efforts in upholding the rights of persecuted minorities anywhere in the

world. The OIC delegates also agreed to Bangladesh proposals for continued support to The Gambia in the case at ICJ until a final verdict is issued, follow up on the ICJ's notification of its order of provisional measures to the UN Security Council pursuant to Article 41(2) of the Statute of ICJ and to contribute in the resources mobilization efforts to ensure safe, dignified and sustained return and resettlement of the Rohingyas to their legitimate homeland in the Rakhine State of Myanmar. Further, the OIC General Secretariat has set up a dedicated account to facilitate the resource mobilization efforts.

On the sidelines of the SOM, Bangladesh Foreign Secretary held a meeting with the members of the Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee on Accountability for Human Rights Violations Against the Rohingya. The 45th OIC CFM held in Dhaka established the Ad Hoc Committee, with The Gambia as the Chair, with

a view to mobilize and coordinate international political support, particularly through the 57-member OIC process. Foreign Secretary appreciated The Gambian Delegation and sought continued support from all members of the Committee for mobilizing resources, including political support, to ensure early repatriation and resettlement of the Rohingya in their homeland in Rakhine state of Myanmar.

The SOM discussed on draft resolutions on issues concerning the Middle East peace process in the wake of US 'Deal of the Century', status of Muslim communities and minorities in the non-OIC member states, combating international terrorism, Cairo Declaration of Human Rights, Makkah Document on 'The Values of Moderation and Middle Stance in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah', humanitarian, legal/statutory and administrative/financial affairs.

BANGLADESH ASSUMES THE PRESIDENCY OF UNICEF'S EXECUTIVE BOARD FOR 2020



Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Rabab Fatima presided over the First Regular Session of the UNICEF's Executive Board in New York on 11 February 2020

On 11 February 2020, Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Rabab Fatima assumed the Presidency of the UNICEF's Executive Board for 2020 and presided over the First Regular Session of the Board. In her statement she stated that early childhood development, girl empowerment and education of girl child are among the priorities of UNICEF for the current year.

BANGLADESH PARTICIPATES IN THE DEBATE ON ROHINGYA ISSUE IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

On 13 February 2020, Bangladesh Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Rabab Fatima addressed in the UN Security Council open debate on "Peace building and sustaining

peace: transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict situation." She said, "Ensuring justice and accountability for the Rohingya population is an important precondition for their safe, dignified

and voluntary return to Rakhine State and eventual societal reconciliation". She exemplified the ICJ's order of 23 January 2020 as a momentous development in this regard.

BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSION, LONDON ORGANIZED A SEMINAR TITLED "INVESTING IN DIGITAL BANGLADESH: FINTECH TO HITECH"

State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak invited the entrepreneurs of the UK to take advantage of Bangladesh's thriving IT sector, which has become the most attractive destination for investment. He was speaking at a high-profile investment seminar titled "Investing in Digital Bangladesh: Fintech to Hitech" organized by Bangladesh High Commission,

London at the British Parliament on 5 February 2020. "Bangladesh has transformed to a middle-income country through leveraging the power of ICT. This shift has been made possible because of a clear vision of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her ICT Affairs Adviser, the tech-savvy young talented architect of Digital Bangladesh, Sajeeb Wazed," the

State Minister added.

UK Minister for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Matt Warman attended the seminar. Academics and eminent personalities from Bangladeshi-British Diaspora along with British and Bangladeshi-British entrepreneurs around 150 in numbers participated in the seminar while many



In her welcome speech, High Commissioner Saida Muna Tasneem said, “We want to double our market share in the UK, which will transform Bangladesh-UK bilateral relations to a knowledge-based partnership”.

► State Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak was speaking at a high-profile investment seminar at the British Parliament in London on 5 February 2020

of them expressed their keen interest in investing in ICT sector of Bangladesh.

In her welcome speech, High Commissioner Saida Muna Tasneem said, “We want to double our market share in

the UK, which will transform Bangladesh-UK bilateral relations to a knowledge-based partnership”. She encouraged Bangladeshi-British young entrepreneurs to submit innovation startup proposals for the Bangabandhu Startup Innovation

Grant. “Bangladesh mission in London has taken initiatives to increase export of IT and IT-enabled services (ITs) to the United Kingdom which is now only 16 per cent,” the High Commissioner added.

BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSION HONOURED ABDUL GAFFAR CHOWDHURY IN THE UK

Right before the first hours of 21 February 2020, Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK Saida Muna Tasneem accorded a special honour to Abdul Gaffar

Chowdhury, the author of the immortal song of the great language movement “Amar Bhaiyer Rokte Rangano Ekushey February, Ami Ki Bhulite Pari.” She

handed over an honor-crest to Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury at a solemn ceremony at the High Commission.

‘MUJIB SHOTOBORSHO CHILDREN’S ART FESTIVAL & COMPETITION’ HELD IN LONDON

Bangladesh High Commission, London organized “Mujib Shotoborsho Children’s Art Festival & Competition” on 23 February 2020 at the Brady Arts and Community Centre in East London where children from different parts of London gathered and painted on “Bangabandhu

and Bangladesh” (age group 5-8), “Bangabandhu’s Golden Bengal” (age group 9-12) and “Bangabandhu and Britain” (age group 13-19).

High Commissioner Saida Muna Tasneem inaugurated the event and encouraged the Bangladeshi-British children to know the

life of our great leader, the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. She thanked all participating children, parents, organizers, judges, press, cultural organizations and community members for their cooperation in this regard.

BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSION IN ABUJA PARTICIPATES IN THE “UNIVERSITIES SUMMIT AND EXHIBITION FAIR”

Bangladesh High Commission in Abuja, Nigeria participated in the “Universities Summit and Exhibition Fair” held at the Exhibition Pavilion of the International Conference Centre, Abuja from 24-25 February 2020. Bangladesh pavilion showcased the growing education

opportunities in the private medical and engineering universities and colleges in Bangladesh. High Commissioner Md. Shameem Ahsan addressed the Nigerian students who joined in big numbers at the auditorium of the Exhibition Hall. He spoke on the education opportunities

for foreigners in Bangladesh. The Mission officials distributed brochures/publications containing relevant information to the potential/inquisitive foreign/Nigerian students.

AMBASSADOR OF BANGLADESH VISITS CHABAHAR PORT OF IRAN



The Ambassador observed that the use of Chabahar Port could play an important role in establishing and enhancing trade and investment between Bangladesh, Iran, Afghanistan and the central Asia. He found the port to be an excellent opportunity for the Bangladesh private sector.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Iran Gousal Azam Sarker visited Chabahar port of Iran to see the prospects and opportunities for Bangladesh’s trade and investment connectivity with Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries through it. He participated in a joint meeting with the Ports and Maritime Organization of Sistan-Baluchistan Province of South-eastern Iran and also had discussions with the Chabahar Free Zone (CFZ) authorities

and the business people of Zahedan, the Capital of Iran’s Sistan-Baluchistan province.

The Ambassador observed that the use of Chabahar Port could play an important role in establishing and enhancing trade and investment between Bangladesh, Iran, Afghanistan and the central Asia. He found the port to be an excellent opportunity for the Bangladesh private sector.

The Head of the Ports and Maritime Organizations Behrouz Aqae and the CEO of the CFZ explained that there had been an agreement between Iran, India and Afghanistan about Chabahar. They invited Bangladesh business community to take the trade and investment opportunity there. They added that some of the CIS countries also requested to be part of the arrangement for using Chabahar.

BANGABANDHU AND BANGLADESH HIGHLIGHTED AT THE NATIONAL MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL 2020 IN CANBERRA



This was the second participation of the High Commission at the prestigious Festival. The High Commission's vibrant and substantive participation in the festival ushered the auspicious celebration of birth centenary of the Father of the Nation planned through a series of events in Australia throughout "Mujib Borsho".

Life and ideals of Bangabandhu was celebrated at the National Multicultural Festival in Canberra on 22 February 2020 at the initiative of Bangladesh High Commission. A stall on Bangabandhu and Bangladesh and a dance performance on the Father of the Nation were in highlights. Ahead of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation, the High Commission embraced the theme Bangabandhu and Bangladesh for its stall and cultural performance in this largest festival to celebrate cultural diversity in Australia. The annual festival attracts over 200,000 local and international visitors.

The High Commission arranged participation of a renowned dance group from Dhaka "Dhriti Nartanalaya" to perform on Bangabandhu and Bangladesh at the cultural segment of the festival. Warda Rihab and her team enthralled the audience as they depicted the struggle of Bengalis under the leadership of Bangabandhu consolidating respect for Bangla, on shaping a national identity and on movement for self-determination. They also portrayed how the great Leader inspired the Bangalee nation to wage a liberation war that led to an independent Bangladesh.

High Commission's stall offered a glimpse of the life and works of Bangabandhu to

the visitors through banners, documents, posters, books, photographs, and video content. Visitors paused and reflected on the life of this great leader. Viewers also had a glimpse of an emerging Bangladesh, its rich cultural heritage, export items, tourist attractions etc.

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BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSIONER TO MAURITIUS PRESENTS CREDENTIALS

Bangladesh High Commissioner to Mauritius Rezina Ahmed presented her Letter of Credence to the President of the Union of Comoros Azali Assoumani on 27 February 2020 as a non-resident Ambassador of Bangladesh to Comoros.

During the ceremony, they discussed on several bilateral issues. Comorian President appreciated the commendable contributions of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in relation to the economic development of Bangladesh. After

presentation of the Credentials, the Ambassador called on the Foreign Minister, Minister of Agriculture and the Telecommunications Minister together with the Dean of Diplomatic Corps.

BANGLADESH EMBASSY ORGANIZES ‘PITHA O KOBITA PATHER ASOR’ AND CELEBRATES ‘BASANTA UTSAB’ IN SEOUL



The Embassy of Bangladesh in Seoul organized a ‘Pitha o kobita pather asor’ (exhibition of Bangladeshi rice cakes and Recitation of Poems) at the Embassy premises on 02 February 2020.

The Embassy of Bangladesh in Seoul organized a ‘Pitha o kobita pather asor’ (exhibition of Bangladeshi rice cakes and Recitation of Poems) at the Embassy premises on 02 February 2020. The expatriate Bangladeshis as well as the Korean nationals including the family members of the officials of the Embassy

took part in the event and spontaneously recited poems and rendered Bengali songs. Different publications on the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and on the Liberation War of Bangladesh including novels of Bengali literature were exhibited during the event.

The Embassy also celebrated ‘Basanta Utsab’ (spring festival) on 17 February 2020 at the Embassy premises with great fervour and festivity. The officials of the Embassy and their family members were present at the event and welcomed Basanta through recitations of poems and singing songs.

BANGLADESHI SPECIALIST DOCTORS RECRUITED IN BHUTAN

To ease the acute shortage of specialists in the country, the Royal Government of Bhutan has recruited 19 specialist doctors from Bangladesh with effect from 15 February 2019. The doctors have come about 10 months after Prime Minister Dr. Lotay Tshering’s state visit to Bangladesh when he requested the Government of Bangladesh to send specialists to Bhutan.

The team includes anesthesiologists; general and orthopedic surgeons; paediatricians; gynaecologist; nephrologist and medical specialist. The specialists are placed at the referral hospitals, and other dzongkhag hospitals in Wangdue, Phuentsholing, Trashigang and Samtse considering the need and recommendations of the respective Heads of the Departments.



Bhutanese Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Health Minister are seen with Bangladesh Ambassador and specialist doctors in Thimphu

CHARGÉ D AFFAIRES OF BANGLADESH TO MALDIVES VISITS MAAFUSHI ISLAND



The President of the Secretariat of Maafushi Council Usman Ali Rasheed was present during the meeting.

► *Chargé d affaires of Bangladesh Md. Sohel Parvez meets with the Officials of Maafushi Council Secretariat Office in Maldives on 28 February 2020*

Chargé d affaires of Bangladesh to Maldives Md. Sohel Parvez visited Maafushi Island, Maldives on 28 February 2020 to meet a large number of Bangladeshi expatriates living in the Island and officials of Maafushi Council Secretariat

Office. The President of the Secretariat of Maafushi Council Usman Ali Rasheed was present during the meeting. The legalization process and various welfare issues of Bangladeshi workers living in the island were discussed. In addition, the

role of the Council, receipt mode of lost passport police reports, job opportunities, housing and workplace environment of Bangladeshi living in the island were also discussed elaborately.

‘SHAHEED DIBOSH’ AND INTERNATIONAL MOTHER LANGUAGE DAY 2019 IS OBSERVED ON 21 FEBRUARY

All Bangladesh Missions abroad observed ‘Shaheed Dibosh’ and ‘International Mother Language Day 2020’ on 21 February 2020 with due solemnity and fervor. The events included Probhat Fery, hoisting of the national flag at half-mast at the Missions’

premises, observance of one minute silence in honour of the language martyrs, special prayer for all the martyrs, placing of floral wreath at the Shaheed Minar, seminar, discussion, screening of documentary film and cultural segment. The messages of the

President, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the State Minister for Foreign Affairs were read out at the beginning of the discussion. A photo gallery of the event organized by some of the Bangladesh Missions abroad is as follows:



Bangladesh Embassy in Brasilia organized a three-hour-long cultural soiree in collaboration with UNESCO and the Brazilian government



Foreigners joined Bangladeshis at a ‘Probhat Fery’ to pay tribute to language martyrs in Canberra



Bangladesh High Commissioner pays tribute to the language martyrs in Islamabad



Bangladesh Consulate General in Istanbul organized a panel discussion titled "Importance of Mother Tongue from Socio-cultural and Business Perspectives"



Bangladesh High Commissioner pays tribute to the language martyrs in London



Participants of an "Art and Poetry Recitation Competition" organized by Bangladesh Embassy in Male'



Bangladesh High Commissioner pays tribute to the language martyrs in Nairobi



Bangladesh Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN pays tribute to the language martyrs in New York



Bangladesh High Commissioner pays tribute to the language martyrs in Ottawa



Bangladesh High Commission organized a cultural programme in Port Louis



Bangladesh Ambassador pays tribute to the language martyrs in Seoul



Bangladesh Consulate General organized a dance programme in Sydney



Children Participating in a cultural programme organized by Bangladesh Embassy in Tehran



Bangladesh Embassy organized a cultural programme in The Hague



Bangladesh Embassy organized a cultural programme in Thimphu

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