

FOREIGN OFFICE

BRIEFING NOTES

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VICE-PREMIER OF THE STATE COUNCIL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA VISITS BANGLADESH



At the invitation of the Government of Bangladesh, Vice-Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Liu Yangdong visited Bangladesh on 24-26 May 2015. The visit constituted a part of the events Bangladesh and China conjoined to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and China. The Vice Premier was accompanied by a high powered delegation including the Minister for Education, the Deputy Secretary-General of the State Council (Vice Minister), the Vice Minister of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Vice Minister of Ministry of Culture, the Vice Minister of the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT), senior government officials and the Presidents of two Chinese Universities. During the visit, the Chinese Vice Premier called on President Md. Abdul Hamid, held a courtesy meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and met the Speaker of the National Parliament Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury. She also attended some public programmes including opening of a photo exhibition themed "Chinese Muslims on the Silk Road" at the National Museum, delivered a speech at the Dhaka University and attended an event at the Confucius Institute at the North South University. Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina witnessed the signing of a number of MoUs both in the government and private sectors.

FOREIGN MINISTER MEETS OIC SECRETARY GENERAL IN KUWAIT



Foreign Minister, Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, MP, met the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Iyad

Ameen Madani in Kuwait on 26 May, 2015. Foreign Minister arrived Kuwait on 26 May, 2015 to lead the Bangladesh delegation at the 42nd Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) to be held on 27-28 May, 2015. During the meeting, the OIC Secretary General recalled with delight his maiden official visit to Bangladesh on 09-11 March 2014 and his interactions with the Foreign Minister. The OIC Secretary General paid tribute to Bangladesh for her constructive role in OIC endeavours for peace and development in the Muslim world and praised Bangladesh for its strength emanating from a neutral and impartial stand on many of the contentious issues. The issue of Rohingya Muslims and the plight of the "boat people" came up, among others, during their discussion. Bangladesh Foreign Minister and OIC Secretary General had also exchanged views on various developments in regional and international arena as well as concerning the role of OIC as an interlocutor to build peace and confidence in the conflict zone among parties involved. The Secretary General pledged all-out support for further enhancing the existing cooperation between Bangladesh and the OIC in various fields. The OIC Secretary General profusely appreciated the role of Foreign Minister for his active and constructive contribution during the last CFM held in Jeddah.

The meeting was attended by Ambassador of Bangladesh to the State of Kuwait Major General Mohammad Ashab Uddin, ndc, psc, (Rtd); Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Permanent Representative to the OIC Golam Moshir; Director General (International Organizations) of Foreign Ministry and other high officials from the Ministry and from the OIC Secretariat.

BANGLADESH ATTENDS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON "PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN THROUGH PEACEKEEPING"



The State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md. Shahriar Alam, MP visited Kigali, Rwanda to attend the International conference on "Protection of Civilian through Peacekeeping: From mandate design to implementation" during 28-29 May 2015. At the invitation of the Government of Rwanda, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md. Shahriar Alam MP attended the conference on behalf of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

FOREIGN SECRETARY PARTICIPATED IN "EXPERT MEETING ON A PROTECTION AGENDA FOR CROSS-BORDER DISPLACEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE"

Foreign Secretary participated at the 'Expert Meeting on a Protection Agenda for Cross-Border Displacement in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change' held on 21-22 May 2015 in London co-organized by Nansen Initiative Secretariat and

Chatham House. As part of the consultation process on the draft Protection Agenda, the Expert Meeting brought together a selected number of States and experts. The meeting reviewed and discussed the first draft of the Protection Agenda and explored options for future action on cross-border disaster at domestic, regional and international levels.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATION ON THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA HELD IN THE UN HEADQUARTERS

The Intergovernmental Negotiation on the Post-2015 Development Agenda was held on 18-22 May 2015 in the UN Headquarters in New York. This was the fifth meeting of the last phase of negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The issues discussed in the session were (i) Follow-up and Review, (ii) Goals, Targets and Indicators, (iii) Themes for Interactive Dialogues for the Summit on the Adoption of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and (v) the Way Forward. Economic Affairs Wing of the Ministry participated in the negotiation and reflected upon Bangladesh's Development interests.

CHINESE SPECIAL ENVOY VISITS BANGLADESH

Special Envoy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and former Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Chai Xi led a three member delegation to Bangladesh from 4-7 May 2015. During the visit, Chai Xi called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md. Shahriar Alam, MP and Foreign Secretary Md. Shahidul Haque and exchanged views on a number of issues of bilateral relations.

MEETINGS OF JOINT WORKING GROUP AND JOINT STEERING COMMITTEE WITH INDIA HELD

The 9th meetings of Joint Working Group (JWG) and Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on Power Sector Cooperation between Bangladesh and India were held on 14 May 2015 in Dhaka. In the meeting, the two sides reviewed the current status of cooperation in the power sector and discussed ways and means to further intensify it.

BANGLADESH-INDIA COMMERCE SECRETARY LEVEL TALKS HELD

Bangladesh-India Commerce Secretary Level Talks were held on 18 May 2015 in Dhaka where the two sides discussed, inter alia, bilateral trade facilitation, renewal of Trade Agreement between Bangladesh and India, extension/renewal of addendum to Mode of Operations for Border Haats and improvement of border infrastructure.

BANGLADESH-INDIA INTER-GOVERNMENTAL RAILWAY MEETING (IGRM) HELD

Bangladesh-India Inter-Governmental Railway Meeting (IGRM) took place in New Delhi from 25 to 27 May 2015 where issues pertaining to improvement of the services of Maitree Express, development of various rail links, improvement of Customs & Immigration formalities, upgradation of track infrastructure, introduction of container service, reopening of various rail links were discussed.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS VISITS BANGLADESH

Executive Vice President of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA) Lu Shumin led a seven member delegation to Bangladesh on 17-20 May 2015. During the visit, Lu Shumin called on Foreign Secretary Md. Shahidul Haque and exchanged views on bilateral and international issues of common concern. The possibility of concluding an MOU on cooperation between the CPIFA and BISS was also discussed.

BANGLADESH ATTENDS ANNUAL BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING OF ADB

A delegation led by Finance Minister of Bangladesh visited Baku, Azerbaijan, from 2 to 5 May 2015 to attend the 48th Annual Board of Governors' Meeting of Asian Development Bank. Bangladesh Embassy in Ankara, Turkey, coordinated with the host authorities for necessary arrangement of the visit.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS MINISTER OF BANGLADESH VISITS TEHRAN AND AZERBAIJAN

Minister for Cultural Affairs of Bangladesh visited Iran from 12-17 May 2015 to attend the 28th International Book fair held in Tehran. An MOU on Cultural, Scientific and Educational Exchange Programme for the period of 2015-2018 between Bangladesh and Iran was signed during the visit. She also visited Azerbaijan to attend the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 18-19 May 2015 at the invitation of Cultural Minister of Azerbaijan.

BANGLADESH POLICE ACADEMY DELEGATION VISITS TURKEY

A twelve-member delegation from Bangladesh Police Academy visited the National Police Academy of Turkey on 11-22 May 2015 to participate in the "Training of the Police Trainers Course".

OMAN FOREIGN MINISTRY DELEGATION VISITS BANGLADESH

A four-member delegation from Oman visited Bangladesh to attend the 1st round negotiation meeting concerning the draft of the Agreement on Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investment between Bangladesh and Oman on 18-20 May 2015 in Dhaka. Director (West & Central Asia) represented the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the meeting.

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS VISIT JORDAN AND LEBANON

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs had visited Jordan and Lebanon from 24-28 May and 28 May -02 June 2015 respectively to oversee the working condition, job environment of Bangladesh female workers and the MRP activities. They had meetings and discussions with the concerned authorities of Jordan and Lebanon on various issues of mutual interest.

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS VISITS PARIS

The Minister for Environment and Forests visited Paris on 20-21 May 2015 to attend Business & Climate Summit 2015. This visit is a part of the series of participatory meetings to the upcoming Cop-21 to be held in Paris in December 2015. Bangladesh, a significant member of the climate vulnerable countries, is expected to play a proactive role in the upcoming COP-21.

EUROPEAN UNION AMBASSADOR CALLS ON FOREIGN SECRETARY

The Ambassador of the Delegation of European Union to Bangladesh along with other Heads of Mission of European countries had a joint meeting with the Foreign Secretary on 23 May 2015 and discussed migration/Rohingya issues with him.

WATER RESOURCES MINISTER VISITS NETHERLANDS

The Minister for Water Resources had a meeting with Melanie Schultz van Haegen-Maas Geesteranus, the Dutch Minister for Infrastructure and Environment. During this visit, the two Ministers had elaborate discussion on the Delta Plan 2100 and other relevant issues.

GERMAN AMBASSADOR CALLS ON THE SPEAKER

The German Ambassador, Dr. Thomas Prinz called on the Speaker of Bangladesh National Parliament Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury

on 17 May 2015. Earlier he had called on the Foreign Secretary on 05 May 2015 during which they discussed different issues related to Bangladesh-Germany bilateral relations.

HONOURARY CONSULATE OF LITHUANIA INAUGURATED ON 18 MAY 2015

During the visit of the Ambassador of Lithuania with residence in New Delhi, the Honorary Consulate of Lithuania was inaugurated on 18 May 2015.

MEETING BETWEEN BSTI AND BIS HELD

A meeting for finalization of the text of the Bilateral Cooperation Agreement (BCA) between Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI) and Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) was held in New Delhi on 15 May 2015. The final draft of the agreement was agreed upon and initialled by leaders of both the sides.

LITHUANIAN AMBASSADOR CALLED ON THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE SPEAKER

The Ambassador of Lithuania to Bangladesh with residence in New Delhi called on the Prime Minister on 17 May 2015. He also met the Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism on 18 May 2015 and the Speaker on 19 May 2015. He had a meeting with the President of Metropolitan Chambers of Commerce and Industries (MCCCI). He visited the International Mother Language Institute (IMLI) on 19 May 2015 and interacted with Director General (IMLI) and expressed interest on collaboration on linguistic history and heritage.

BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSIONER TO SRILANKA MEETS SRILANKAN FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT MINISTER



Bangladesh High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Tarik Ahsan paid a courtesy call on the Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic

Resources Development Mahinda Amraweera at the New Secretariat in Colombo on 20 May 2015. The Secretary of the Ministry Nimal Hettiarachchi was also present during the meeting. The High Commissioner was accompanied by a two-member business delegation from Bangladesh. During the meeting, the Bangladesh High Commissioner sought the support of the Minister in advancing the cooperation between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in the fishing sector. The High Commissioner also highlighted the policy of Bangladesh government that encourages the involvement of private sector in tapping opportunities that have been created for Bangladesh in the Bay of Bengal following the amicable settlement of maritime boundary with Bangladesh's neighbouring countries.

BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSIONER MEETS AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR FOR PEOPLE SMUGGLING ISSUES

Bangladesh High Commissioner to Australia Kazi Intiaz Hossain met the Australian Ambassador for People Smuggling Issues Ambassador Andrew Golezdzinski at the latter's office in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on 22 May 2015. The High Commissioner briefed the Ambassador on the measures taken by the Government of Bangladesh to combat human trafficking. They also exchanged views on the current human trafficking crisis in Indian Ocean, particularly in the context of the Special Meeting on Irregular Migration convened by Thailand on 29 May 2015 in Bangkok. The Ambassador applauded Bangladesh's efforts to combat human trafficking and assured Australia's

continued support to Bangladesh bilaterally as well as under the aegis of the Bali Process. Australia is the co-chair of the Bali Process along with Indonesia.

BANGLADESH SIGNED "ENERGY CHARTER" IN THE HAGUE



Bangladesh Ambassador to the Netherlands signing the International Energy Charter during the Ministerial Conference on the International Energy Charter in The Hague, Netherlands

Bangladesh joined 74 countries in signing the Energy Charter in The Hague on 20 May 2015. The Charter is expected to help attaining sustainable energy development, improving energy security and maximizing the efficiency of production, conversion, transport, distribution. Bangladesh Ambassador to the Netherlands, Sheikh Mohammed Belal, signed the charter on behalf of the Government of Bangladesh during the Ministerial Conference on the International Energy. The Charter emphasizes working towards access to energy for citizens in emerging and developing economies.

BANGLADESH BROUGHT ANOTHER CULTURAL SHOW TO THE NETHERLANDS

Within a month of a mega cultural event to celebrate Bengali New Year, Embassy of Bangladesh organised another cultural event to celebrate birth anniversaries of two literary giants of Bengali literature. Rabindranath Tagore and Bangladesh National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's birth anniversaries were celebrated with music, dance, recitation and speeches in the Bangladesh House in Wassenaar on 23 May 2015. About a hundred Bangladesh nationals and other local audience gathered in the lush green lawn of Bangladesh House where Deputy Mayor of The Hague Rabin Baldewsingh was present as the Chief Guest. Baldewsingh, who himself wrote extensively on Tagore, informed the audience about Tagore's visit to The Hague in the 1920's and narrated how Tagore brought East near the West. Another Dutch citizen, Dr. Peter Custer presented the keynote paper on Kazi Nazrul Islam titled "Nazrul Islam's Universal Significance Today". In his welcome speech, Ambassador Sheikh Mohammed Belal introduced snapshots of Rabindranth Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam's literary works. Children, men and women, dressed in traditional Bangladeshi attire performed music, recitations and dance during this two hour long cultural extravaganza.

BANGLADESH PARTICIPATES IN THE SAARC FILM FESTIVAL IN COLOMBO

Bangladesh participated in the SAARC Film Festival held in Colombo during 26-31 May 2015. Mrittika Maya, a Bangladeshi film directed by Gazi Rakayet, was screened in the festival. Bangladesh High Commission and members of expatriate Bangladesh community in Colombo witnessed the film. The film, Mrittika Maya, won the silver medal.

BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSIONER MEETS MINISTER OF FISHERIES AND AGRICULTURE OF MALDIVES

The High Commissioner of Bangladesh called on Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture, Republic of Maldives, on 12 May 2015

where various important issues regarding Management of Marine Fisheries management in Indian Ocean were discussed. During the discussion, the Minister of Fisheries stated that Bay of Bengal Programme-Inter Governmental Organization (BOBP-IGO) is a regional body which is mandated to enhance cooperation between the member countries for sustainable marine fisheries development and management in the Bay of Bengal. He further mentioned that recently BOBP-IGO has been provided with a large sum of budget from the World Bank. Bangladesh High Commissioner to Maldives Rear Admiral Kazi Sarwar Hossain also called on Abdulla Jihad, Minister of Finance and Treasury, Republic of Maldives, on 07 May 2015 at the latter's office. The Minister stated that joint Commission between Bangladesh and Maldives may be formed immediately to pursue common issues related to trade and Finance. He requested to take necessary steps to establish Joint Commissions on Trade, Finance and Fisheries.

BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT STANDS BY NEPAL DURING THE RECENT EARTHQUAKE



In the month of May 2015, Nepal experienced a major earthquake of 7.3 Richter scale. This earthquake occurred on 12 May at 12:56 pm NST at a depth of

approximately 10 km, with its epicentre at Dolakha about 80 km northeast of Kathmandu, lasting around seventeen seconds. The earthquake resulted in death of more than 500 people, leaving more than 1,000 people injured and thousands homeless in addition to the dead and injured in the earlier Great Gorkha Earthquake of 25 April 2015. Fortunately there have been no reports of any Bangladesh national having lost their lives or even seriously injured in these earthquakes.

The Bangladesh Embassy in Kathmandu, Nepal, continued to run the emergency camp established in the Chancery premises in order to provide safe shelter for Bangladesh nationals who became stranded when the hotels they were lodging in shut down due to earthquake damage or because the hotels were unable to run for lack of personnel and amenities like electricity and water. The Mission provided shelter to around 70 people in the Chancery premises for around week. The Mission also coordinated with Biman Bangladesh Airlines for evacuation of Bangladeshi nationals who wished to return to Bangladesh following the earthquake. More than 560 Bangladesh nationals, mainly tourists and those who had come to Kathmandu to attend meetings or conferences, were evacuated to Bangladesh by Biman flight and Bangladesh Air Force aircraft C130B which operated special flights to bring in relief materials from Bangladesh for the victims of the earthquake. The Mission has also been coordinating with the local authorities for speedy release and handing over of the relief materials generously sent by the government of Bangladesh and various organizations almost immediately after the disaster. Bangladesh Air Force operated six special flights carrying medicines, tents, tarpaulin, quilts, dry food and water sent by the government of Bangladesh. The special flights also carried readymade garments, plastic sheets, disinfectants, etc. sent by various organizations, NGOs and individuals from Bangladesh. The Mission has also coordinated the release and handing over of the relief materials

sent by trucks using the Banglabandha/ Fulbari-Panirtanki/ Kakorvitta route. It may be noted that the government of Bangladesh donated 10,000 MT of rice which was transported by 521 Bangladeshi trucks. This was the first time that Bangladeshi trucks have transported goods from Bangladesh into Nepal traversing Indian territory.

BANGLADESH FOR WIDER COLLABORATION WITH NETHERLANDS IN WATER SECTOR

Bangladesh and the Netherlands are working towards a broad range of water related Cooperation in the future. Water Resources Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud met his Dutch counterpart Melanie Schultz at the latter's office in The Hague on 18 May 2015. Water Resources Minister was on a 5-day visit to the Netherlands, the partner of Bangladesh in Delta Plan 2100. The Bangladesh Minister highlighted the possibility of land reclamation from the Bay of Bengal in the context of enormous amount of silt the river systems in Bangladesh carry. Dutch Minister also shared their experience in the area of land reclamation and noted Bangladesh proposal to commercially develop reclaimed lands as self sustained areas. The Ministers also discussed the possibility of collaboration in establishing a knowledge hub in Bangladesh with Dutch expertise for research on water sector. Bangladesh Minister also requested his Dutch counterpart for more scholarships for Bangladesh students in the future. Secretary, Ministry of Water resources Dr. Zafar Ahmed Khan and Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Netherlands Sheikh Mohammed Belal accompanied the Minister while from Netherlands side concerned Director General J.H. Dronkers and Director Elaine Always were present.

BANGLADESH EMBASSY, MYANNAR, ORGANIZES FOOD FESTIVAL

The Embassy has organized the first-ever Bangladesh Food Festival on 15-19 May 2015 to introduce culinary heritage of Bangladesh as part of the initiative to connect Myanmar people through cultural diplomacy. The event is organized in association with the prestigious Sedona Hotel, Yangon and Hotel Pan Pacific Sonargaon, Dhaka. The Festival continued for 5 days from 15 to 19 May 2015 at the main Restaurant (Brasserie) of Sedona Hotel. A team of hospitality expert and chefs from Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka, was brought in to present an array of genuine Bangladeshi foods and desserts. The Union Deputy Minister, Ministry of Culture U Than Swe formally inaugurated the festival on 15 May 2015. A host of dignitaries participated in the inauguration including several regional Ministers, diplomatic communities, local elites, media and Bangladesh community representatives.

BANGLADESH HIGH COMMISSION VISITS HULHUMALE CORRECTION CENTRE

High Commissioner of Bangladesh Rear Admiral Kazi Sarwar Hossain with his delegation visited Hulu Male Correction Centre, Male', Maldives on 07 May 2015 to meet Bangladesh nationals. During the visit, many important issues were discussed with the Director (Prison). The Correction Centre provided the attendance sheet and it was found that 116 (One hundred and Sixteen) Bangladesh detainees were kept in the Detention Centre. The main reason for the detention is the Illegal Stay. The Correction Centre made an arrangement to bring out all the detainees of the cell and two groups of detainees appeared before the delegates of the High Commission in sequence. The High Commissioner talked with around 35- 40 detainees. Most of the detainees are the victims of the local Bangladeshi and Maldivian brokers. The brokers hold their passport after their arrival in Maldives and they do not get their Work Visa Card on time and after a few days, they become illegal.