

FOREIGN OFFICE BRIEFING NOTES

THE MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DHAKA, BANGLADESH

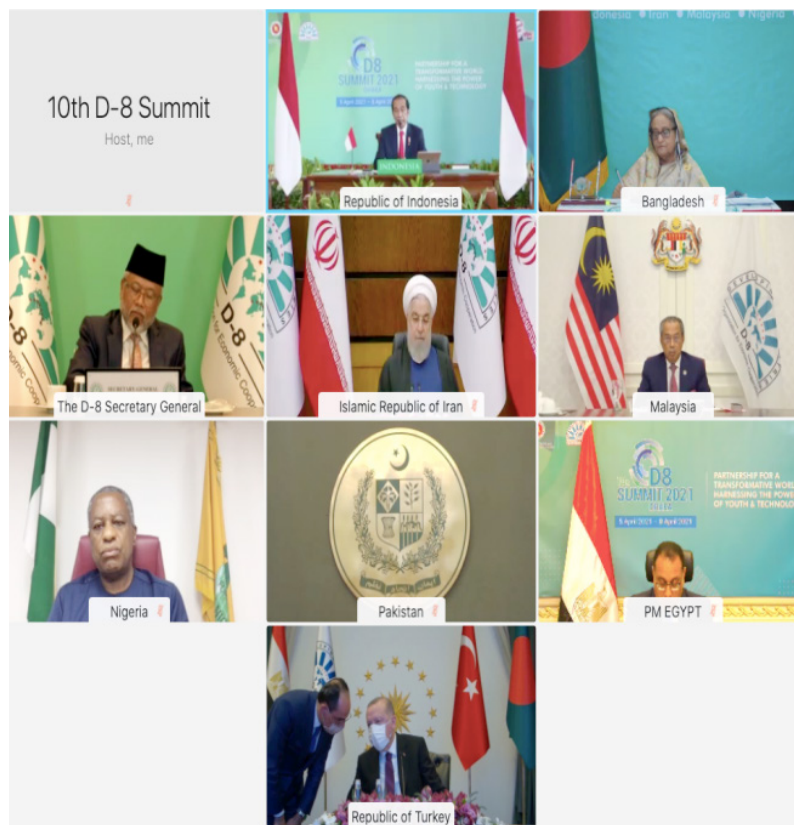
April 2021

Bangladesh assumed the Chair of D-8

The 10th D-8 Summit was held virtually on 8 April 2021 under the theme of “Partnership for a Transformative World: Harnessing the Power of Youth and Technology”, hosted by Bangladesh. H.E. Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh assumed the Chairmanship of D-8 at the Summit.

President of Turkey, Indonesia and Iran, Prime Minister of Malaysia, Pakistan, Egypt, and Foreign Minister of Nigeria participated at the 10th D-8 Summit. During the Summit, the D-8 Leaders reiterated their commitment to work together for enhanced D-8 cooperation and adopted two outcome documents, “Dhaka Declaration 2021”, and “D-8 Decennial Roadmap for 2020-2030” at the Summit.

Before the Summit, Foreign Minister Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP assumed the Chair of the D-8 Council of Ministers at the **19th Session of the D-8 Council of Ministers** held virtually on

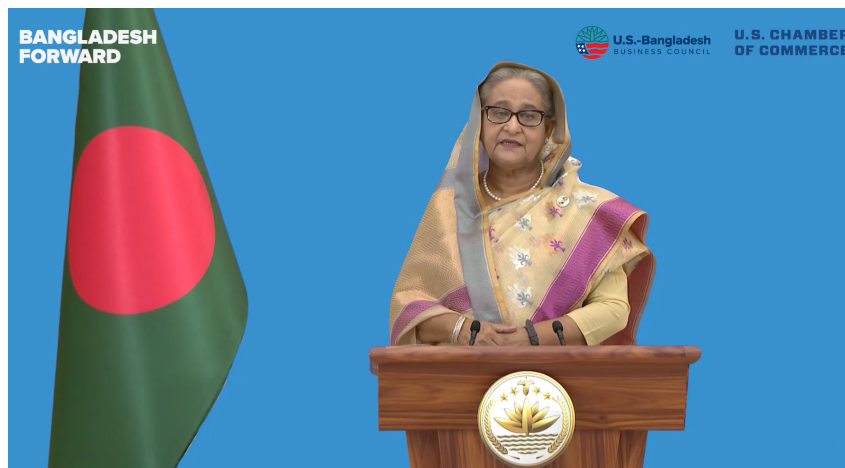


7 April 2021. Foreign Secretary (Senior Secretary) Masud Bin Momen chaired the **43rd Session of the D-8 Commission** held virtually on 5-6 April 2021.

On the sidelines of the Summit, Bangladesh hosted first ever **D-8 Youth Summit**, and **D-8 Business Forum** virtually on 5 April 2021.

Launch of US–Bangladesh Business Council

Bangladesh Embassy in Washington DC, in tandem with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, organized the launching of the US–Bangladesh Business Council, which will focus on advocacy and engagement to strengthen the bilateral commercial partnership between the two countries. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally announced the launching of the Council and delivered her keynote remarks in a virtual event on 6 April 2021. She stressed on the adequate policy support to further expand the bilateral trade between the U.S. and Bangladesh. She also expressed hope that the US–Bangladesh Business Council will help expand the economic partnership between the two countries. ICT advisor to the Prime Minister Mr.



Sajeeb Ahmed Wazed, in his remarks, highlighted how Bangladesh became an ICT hub following the vision of ‘Digital Bangladesh’. The inauguration of the Business Council is a milestone event

in Bangladesh–US economic ties and a significant achievement on the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh and the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hon’ble Foreign Minister urges members to expedite BIMSTEC process

Hon’ble Foreign Minister Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen urged Members to expedite BIMSTEC process in the 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting virtually held on 1st April 2021 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Foreign Minister said that BIMSTEC is a member driven organization. Members organize the meetings and events to build consensus on cooperation and undertake programme of action in various sectors. We need to work simultaneously on a faster pace in all priority sectors to bring synergy in our cooperation to make BIMSTEC a result oriented regional forum.

Dr. Momen said, in early 1972, Bangabandhu thought of working



together with the neighbours in the region for collective progress and prosperity of our peoples and the Father of the Nation’s able daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s decision to join BIMSTEC as its founding member in 1997 bears the testimony of our

commitment to regional cooperation. The said meeting endorsed several BIMSTEC Agreements, Conventions, MoUs and other important documents/ instruments envisaged to be signed/ adopted at the Fifth BIMSTEC Summit.

A Group of 10 Heads of Missions visited Bhasan Char



► The envoys visited several infrastructure development projects at Bhasan Char



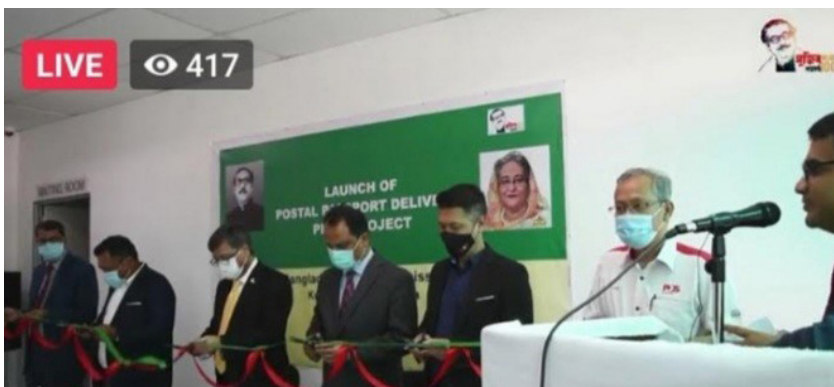
► The envoys visited skill development programmes arranged for Rohingya people at Bhasan Char

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a day-long trip on 3 April 2021 to Bhasan Char for the ten Heads of Missions in Dhaka which included Ambassadors/High Commissioners/CDAs from the USA, the UK, EU, France, Germany, Japan, Australia, Canada, Turkey, and the Netherlands. The visit was organized as part of the Government's engagement with the International Community including

the United Nations on the relocation of Rohingyas from Cox's Bazar to Bhasan Char. During the tour, the group had the chance to visit different infrastructures including embankments, buildings, shelters, other facilities and amenities available on the island. During the interactions, the Rohingyas profusely thanked the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the Government of Bangladesh

for the exemplary humanitarian support that have been extended to the Rohingyas since the mass exodus. At the same time, they expressed their willingness to return to their homeland in Myanmar. The Rohingyas conveyed their high satisfaction over the existing facilities in Bhasan Char, which they considered safe, secured crime-free compared to the congested camps in Cox's Bazar.

Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia launched a pilot project to provide passport services by post to the Bangladeshi expatriates



Bangladesh High Commission launched a pilot project on 1 April 2021 to ensure passport delivery and passport application

collection service via postal service and Pos Malaysia as part of its plan to reach the door steps of the Bangladeshi expatriates.

High Commissioner Mr. Md. Golam Sarwar mentioned that the mission has been working to provide better passport service to the Bangladeshi expatriates to relieve their suffering caused by the movement restriction of Malaysian government due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of continuous efforts and persuasion, the High Commission has digitalized the public service from the analogue system, he added. This will help the Bangladeshi expatriates to get the passport service without hassle of travelling as well as ensuring compliance of SOP of Malaysian government.

“5th Bangabandhu Lecture Series” held on 7th April 2021

As part of celebrating the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and commemorating his life and legacy Bangabandhu Birth Centenary Celebration Cell organized the 5th lecture of Bangabandhu Lecture series on 7th April 2021 at Foreign Service Academy titling “The Birth

of Bangladesh and its Inspirational Legacy in Global Diplomacy”. This lecture is a continuation of the series of lectures which are being organized every month since December 2020.

H.E. Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, Former Under Secretary General and High Representative of

the UN honoured the occasion with his virtual presence as the keynote speaker.

Hon’ble Foreign Minister, Hon’ble State Minister, Foreign Secretary (Senior Secretary) graced the occasion with their presence.

Bangladesh High Commissioner calls on the Foreign Minister of Nigeria

Bangladesh High Commissioner to Nigeria Mr. Masudur Rahman met H.E. Mr. Geoffrey Onyeama, Foreign Minister of Nigeria on 8 April 2021. During the meeting, they discussed the areas of cooperation between the two countries to deepen the collaborative relations. While conveying greetings from Hon’ble President and Hon’ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh to the leadership of Nigeria, High Commissioner briefed the Foreign Minister about the development journey of Bangladesh under the dynamic leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. On his part, Nigerian Foreign Minister congratulated Bangladesh for her graduation from LDC status while lauding Bangladesh’s recent economic progress. He also congratulated Bangladesh for taking over the charge of chairmanship of D-8.



The High Commissioner participated in the Ambassador Global Lecture Programme of the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia



At the invitation of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Datuk Ts. Dr. Ahmad Fauzi bin Ismail, High Commissioner Mr. Md. Golam Sarwar attended Ambassador Global Lecture Programme of the renowned Universiti Teknologi Malaysia virtually on 12 April 2021. During the program H.E. the High Commissioner spoke on the theme “50 years of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and Malaysia and the way forward”. H.E. High Commissioner has focused on the Glorious history of Bangladesh, various aspects of Bangladesh–Malaysia relations and prospective of the relations between the two friendly countries.

Meeting between Ambassador of Bangladesh to Russia and Governor of the Leningrad Region and Chairman of the Government of Leningrad



► Ambassador of Bangladesh to Russia Kamrul Ahsan with Governor of the Leningrad Region and Chairman of the Government of Leningrad Drozdenko Alexander Yurievich, St. Petersburg, 13 April 2021

Ambassador of Bangladesh to Russia Kamrul Ahsan met Governor of the Leningrad Region and Chairman of the

Government of Leningrad Drozdenko Alexander Yurievich, at St. Petersburg on 13 April 2021. During the meeting, Ambassador proposed to establish Sister City Alliance between Chattogram and St. Petersburg to expand business relations between the two commercial cities. The Governor responded positively to the proposal of Ambassador Ahsan to exchange high level business delegations to explore Russian investment in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) of Bangladesh. Ambassador Ahsan also met Yuriy Burchakov, President of St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry. As a follow up of this meeting, an agreement of Cooperation between Saint-Petersburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) has been signed on 27 May 2021.

The High Commissioner Paid a Courtesy Call on the Prosecutor General of Maldives

High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Maldives Mohammad Nazmul Hassan paid a courtesy call on Mr. Hussain Shameem, Prosecutor General of Maldives on 14 April 2021. During the call on, the High Commissioner mentioned that ‘alleged’ Bangladeshi migrant workers cannot afford to have a lawyer at the court in favour of their defence in trial. He requested for the support of Maldives Government in providing defence lawyer to the said Bangladeshi nationals during trial at the court considering the rule of fairness. The High Commissioner requested for speedy disposal of ongoing cases of Bangladeshi nationals and remission of sentences of convicted prisoners.



Embassy signs an MOU on educational cooperation with Seoul Business School at aSSIST University



Ambassador Abida Islam and the President of the aSSIST University Dr. TaeHyun Kim signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Embassy of Bangladesh in Seoul and the Seoul Business School at aSSIST University of the Republic of Korea on 19 April 2021 at the aSSIST University, Korea for a period of three years. Under this MOU, talented students from Bangladesh will have the opportunity to avail scholarship to study in Korea.

Bangladesh Embassy, Manila handed over commemorative artwork on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Filipino National Hero—Dr. Jose Rizal to Jose Rizal Museum

As a part of the birth centenary celebration of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh Embassy handed over a commemorative artwork on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Filipino National Hero, Dr. Jose Rizal as a permanent showpiece to the Jose Rizal Museum in the district of Calamba on 21 April 2021. The woodcarving was done by Filipino artist Mr. Nicolas P. Aca Jr. which reflects engraved portraits of the two leaders. The Artwork is currently displayed in the museum for a two-month long exhibition along with other exhibits on life and work



of the Father of the Nation including his memoir, life sketch, historical photos, and books on him. Thereafter, the work would go to the museum's permanent collection as a gift from the Embassy.

Bangabandhu Lecture Series in Brunei



Bangabandhu Lecture Series–2021 was organized by Bangladesh High Commission in Brunei Darussalam at Universiti Teknologi Brunei on 21 April 2021. In this special episode of Bangabandhu Lecture Series, Indian High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam, Mr. Ajaneesh Kumar graced the occasion as keynote

speaker and to deliver a lecture on '50 years of India–Bangladesh relations'. Distinguished academics of India and Bangladesh in Brunei Darussalam, members of Bangladeshi and Indian community, members of diplomatic core, Bangladeshi and Bruneian students turned up to listen to the lecture delivered by Indian

High Commissioner who masterfully enthralled the audience with his in-depth knowledge on historical perspective of India–Bangladesh relations, current dynamics, and other potent factors that have been shaping the bilateral relations.

Mrs. Nahida Rahman Shumona, High Commissioner of Bangladesh, in her lecture wholeheartedly acknowledged the presence and significance of an incredible amount of cheerful bonhomie amongst the peoples of Bangladesh and India. She categorically mentioned that Bangladesh will always remember the contribution and role that India played during our liberation war. She was also thankful that the Indian Prime Minister recently visited Bangladesh to become part of the celebration of the Birth Centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Bangladesh High Commissioner meets Nigerian Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment



Bangladesh High Commissioner to Nigeria Masudur Rahman had a meeting with H.E. Mr. Otunba Richard Adeniyi Adebayo, Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment of Nigeria on 22 April 2021. During the meeting, both discussed ways of expanding the bilateral relations in the fields of trade, commerce and investment for mutual interest. While highlighting exportable items of Bangladesh, High Commissioner invited Nigerian businessmen and traders to visit Bangladesh and import pharmaceuticals, garments and textiles, software, jute and jute products, IT products, leather products, light engineering and electronics products etc. from Bangladesh. On his part, the Minister stressed that both the countries should work together with a view to deepening the bilateral trade for mutual benefit.

Presentation of Letters of Credence to His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain



Bangladesh Ambassador to Spain Mohammad Sarwar Mahmood presented his Letters of Credential to His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain at the Royal Palace, Madrid on 26 April 2021. After handing over the credentials, a bilateral meeting was held between the

King of Spain and the newly appointed Ambassador. King Felipe VI of Spain expressed hope that Spain-Bangladesh bilateral relations would be further accelerated during the tenure of newly appointed Ambassador Mr. Mohammad Sarwar Mahmood. The King praised

the Government of Bangladesh for providing shelter to the Rohingyas and assured further cooperation. The Ambassador conveyed the greetings of the Hon'ble President and Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh to His Majesty the King.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Indonesia had a meeting with Minister for Trade of Indonesia

Ambassador Air Vice Marshal Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman had a meeting with the Minister for Trade of Indonesia, Muhammad Lutfi on 26 April 2021. Besides discussion on various trade related issues, the Minister agreed to visit Bangladesh in 2022 along with a business delegation.



Bangladesh Ambassador calls on the Minister of Culture of Jordan

Bangladesh Ambassador to Jordan Ms. Nahida Sobhan met H.E. Mr. Ali Al-Ayed, the Minister of Culture of Jordan at his office. After exchange of pleasantries, H.E. the Ambassador concluded the Agreement in the field of Cultural Cooperation between Bangladesh and Jordan.



Repatriation of stranded Bangladeshi nationals from India amid the current COVID-19 situation

Through the meetings (a total of 6) chaired by Foreign Secretary, it was decided to close the land ports to stop cross-border movement of passengers between Bangladesh and India with a view to countering rapid transmission of the new variant of coronavirus in Bangladesh. Only six land ports have been kept open for

the return of Bangladeshi medical patients, minor students and other Bangladeshi nationals in a planned manner based on the urgency of their situation and subsequently, NOCs were issued by Bangladesh Missions in Kolkata and Agartala upon assessment of the eligibility criteria set by the Government of Bangladesh. As a result,

around 7,000 Bangladesh nationals were able to return to Bangladesh through six land ports with strict maintenance of COVID-19 protocol. Through the coordination meetings, quarantine of the said Bangladesh nationals returning from India was ensured under the arrangement of the concerned district administrations.

Bangladesh Missions abroad celebrated Bengali New Year-1428

Few Bangladesh Missions abroad could celebrate Bangla New Year-1428 with due festivity amid the restrictions imposed by ongoing corona pandemic.

The celebrations included *alpona*, lights, festoons, 'Mangal Shobhajatra', traditional Bangladeshi cuisines, cultural programme etc. to portray our

culture and heritage. A photo gallery of the event organized by some of the Bangladesh Missions abroad is as follows:



► 'Bangladesh: A Land of Cultural Diversity and Beauty' with Turkish Travellers' Club on the occasion of Bengali New Year-1428



► Participants of the march organized by the Embassy of Bangladesh in Amman on the occasion of the Bengali New Year



► Bangladesh Mission, Abuja, Nigeria celebrates Bengali New Year-1428



► The Embassy of Bangladesh in Brussels celebrated the Bengali New Year-1428 virtually on 12 April 2021



► The Embassy of Bangladesh in Seoul celebrated Bengali New Year-1428 both online and offline in a colourful and jubilant manner

Bangladesh Missions abroad observed the historic Mujibnagar Day

All Bangladesh Missions abroad observed the historic 'Mujibnagar Day' in presence of expatriate Bangladeshis, leaders of social and cultural organizations, journalists and local dignitaries along with the mission

officials on 17th April 2021. Special prayer, reading out of the messages of Hon'ble President and Hon'ble Prime Minister, discussion programs and screening of documentaries mostly took place to

observe the day. Due to the pandemic and local health regulations, some missions observed the occasion virtually. A gallery of photographs of different missions celebrating the event is as follows:



► Bangladesh Embassy in Hanoi observed the historic 'Mujibnagar Day' with due solemnity at the Embassy



► Consulate General of Bangladesh in Istanbul virtually celebrated the historic 'Mujibnagar Day'



► High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Maldives is delivering his speech on historic 'Mujibnagar Day'



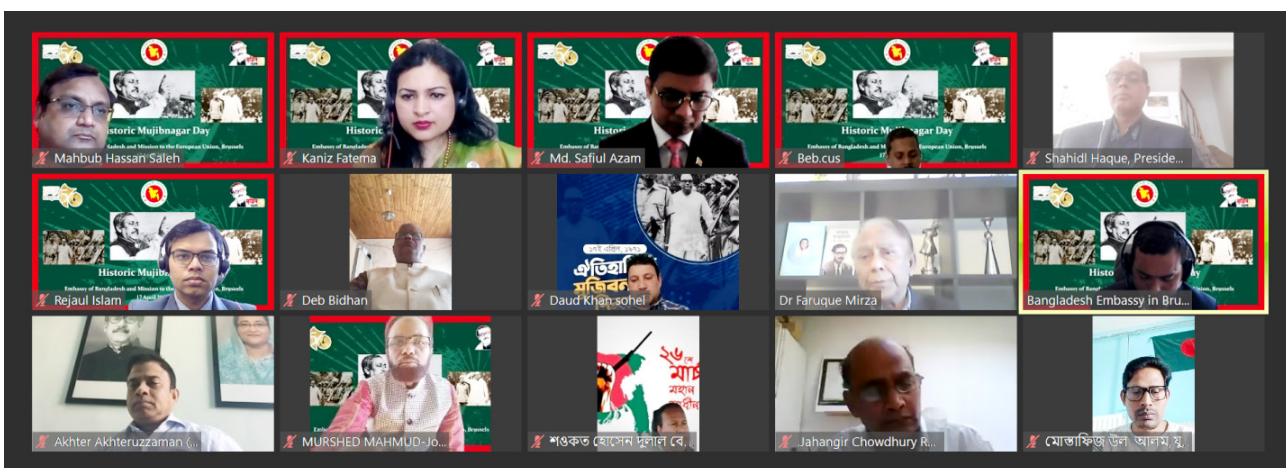
► Bangladesh High Commission, Mauritius observed the historic 'Mujibnagar Day'



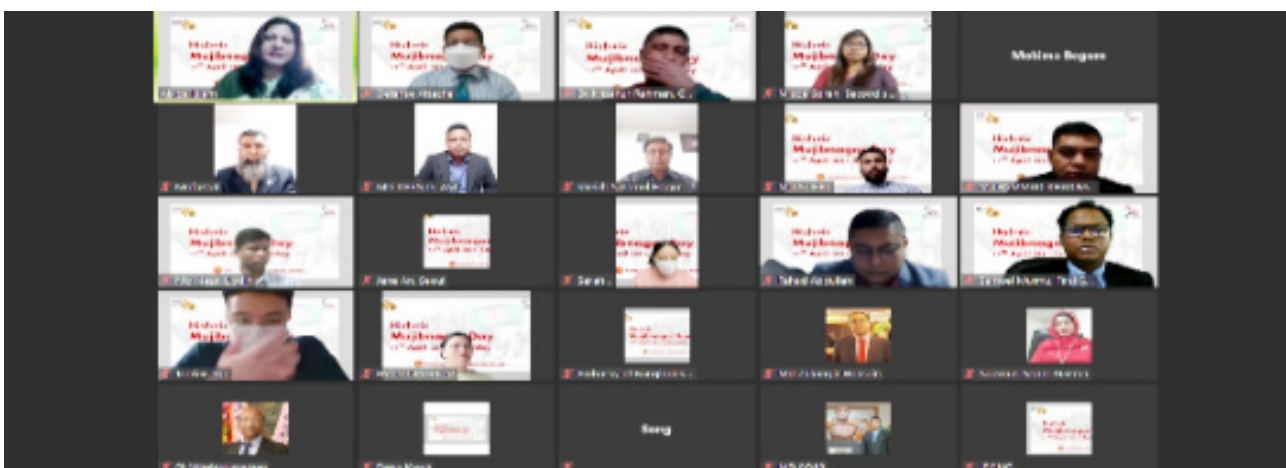
► High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Sri Lanka, Tareq Md. Ariful Islam is delivering speech on historic 'Mujibnagar Day'



► Manama Mission observed the historic 'Mujibnagar Day' in a befitting manner



► Bangladesh Embassy in Brussels arranged two-part programmes virtually to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the historic 'Mujibnagar Day'



► The Embassy of Bangladesh in Seoul observed the Historic Mujibnagar Day on 17 April 2021

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