



Embassy of Bangladesh and Mission to the European Union
Brussels

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Press Release

Bangladesh Foreign Minister leads Independence and National Day celebration in Brussels together with Bangladesh nationals and foreign friends

Brussels, 30 April 2024:

The Embassy of Bangladesh and Mission to the European Union in Brussels organized the 2024 Independence and National Day Reception of Bangladesh in the magnificent setting of the capital's Cercle Royal Gaulois on 29 April 2024. The event was graced by the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Dr. Hasan Mahmud, MP, as the Chief Guest while Ambassador Jeroen Cooreman, Director General for Bilateral Affairs, Belgian Foreign Ministry and Managing Director of Asia and the Pacific Niclas Kvarnström from the European External Action Service joined as Guests of Honour.

In his speech on the occasion, Director General Cooreman congratulated Bangladesh on the extraordinary development achievements that the country has experienced since its independence. He hoped that both the countries will continue to work closely for the betterment of the two peoples and the bilateral cooperation between both countries would be further strengthened in the coming days.

Terming Bangladesh as a 'strong regional leader' and a valued partner of Europe, Managing Director Niclas Kvarnström said the EU is proud to have been a part of Bangladesh's incredible development journey. He expressed hope that the forthcoming Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between EU and Bangladesh will provide the partnership with the legal basis that lives up to the ever-expanding and ambitious agenda, including trade, climate, migration, digitalisation, and security.

In his speech, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud underscored the sustained economic growth of Bangladesh over last one and a half decades which makes it one of the fastest growing economies in Asia and beyond. Under the dynamic and visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh is graduating from the category of

Least Developed Countries in 2026 and striving to be a higher middle-income country by 2031. He applauded the contribution of Belgium and the European Union towards the impressive development of Bangladesh. Terming Belgium as a true friend of Bangladesh, the Minister recalled important years of his youth which he spent in Belgium while pursuing his education and understanding the people, culture and society. The Minister reaffirmed Bangladesh's commitment to stand together with the EU to build a world where people do not have to endure the horrors of war, where peace and development for future generations can be ensured and the values of humanity can be upheld.

In his remarks, Bangladesh Ambassador to Belgium and Head of Mission to the EU, Ambassador Mahbub Hassan Saleh recalled with deep appreciation the role of all foreign governments and people, including those in Europe, who stood by Bangladesh and supported the just war of liberation in 1971. He termed the Bangladesh-EU partnership as a phenomenally transformational journey which has contributed to Bangladesh becoming the 33rd largest economy today and slated to be the 24th largest by 2033. He underscored that Bangladesh always follows a peace-centric and humane foreign policy guided by the famous dictum of the Founding Father of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman – “friendship to all and malice towards none”. Terming the meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and European Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen in October 2023 as the ‘historic peak’ of Bangladesh-EU relations, he looked forward to early start of negotiations on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) launched by both leaders during their meeting.

After their speeches, the Chief Guest along with the Guests of Honour and Ambassador Saleh cut a cake on the auspicious occasion of the 53rd anniversary of Bangladesh's Independence and National Day.

Guests enjoyed a wide range of traditional Bangladeshi dishes, delicacies and desserts that were served during the Reception. The neoclassical Salle des Caryatides with its impressive Brussels tapestry resonated with the vibrant presence of a rich selection of guests from the Belgian government and EU institutions, politicians, ambassadors and representatives from the diplomatic missions in Brussels, think tanks, members of the media, academia as well as members of the Bangladesh community from Belgium and Luxembourg.