

## **Bangladesh Embassy & Permanent Mission**

### **Vienna**

01 July 2022

#### **Central Europe Finds Bangladesh as a Prospective ICT Offshore Destination**

The Embassy and Permanent Mission of Bangladesh in Vienna organized 'Economic Diplomacy Week' on 30 June-01 July 2022 by holding Business Meeting Series in Austria, Slovakia and Hungary under the theme 'Thriving IT Industry of Bangladesh and its Prospects'.

On 30 June in the morning a 'Business Roundtable' took place at the premise of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO) in Vienna. At the event, from Bangladesh side H.E. Muhammad Abdul Muhith, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Mr. Russell T. Ahmed, President, Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS), Mr. Mashrur Arefin, Managing Director & CEO, The City Bank Limited and other Embassy Officials were present. From the Austrian side, Mr. Johannes Brunner, Regional Manager, Asia Region, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, Mr. Clemens Wasner, Board Member of AI Austria (Artificial Intelligence Austria), Mr. Thomas Spazier, Director, Advantage Austria and Mr. David Winkler, eee Austria attended the event.

In his welcome speech, Ambassador Muhith, highlighting Bangladesh Government's incentives and initiatives for foreign investors and the phenomenal infrastructure development in the last decade under the able leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, stated that 'Bangladesh is enjoying 'Demographic Dividend' as it is one of the few countries in Asia that has a huge youth population. Now, it's time to share this 'dividend' with our friendly nations like Austria. And to this end, IT sectors of the two countries can play the pivotal role'.

In his welcome speech Mr. Brunner appreciated the rapid growth of Bangladesh particularly in the Information Technology sector and mentioned that Austria will be happy to become a partner of this journey. Mr. Mashrur Arefin in his remarks stated how the rapid growth of IT Sector has revolutionized the Banking Industry in Bangladesh. Mr. Russell T. Ahmed delivered the keynote presentation titled 'Bangladesh: Next ICT Powerhouse'. He outlined entire gamut of Bangladesh's thriving IT Industry and highlighted the possible areas of cooperation and B-2-B opportunities with Austria. BASIS President's presentation was followed by an open discussion session.

A follow-up meeting with AI Austria was held at 2.30 PM at the Office of Mr. Wasner. In the meeting both sides discussed elaborately to chalk out the future course of actions for cooperation.

In the afternoon, second session of Business Meeting took place at Bratislava of Slovakia at the Office of the IT Association of Slovakia (ITAS). Mr. Russell T. Ahmed, President of BASIS, Mr. Rahat Bin Zaman, Minister & Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) and Mr.

Tanvir Ahmad Torophder, Counsellor of the Embassy and Permanent Mission in Vienna attended the meeting from Bangladesh side. Vice President of ITAS Mr. Pavlo Fric, and the Secretary General of ITAS Mr. Gabriel Fedorko were present from the Slovakian side. During the meeting, ITAS expressed keen interest for further cooperation with Bangladesh as they have shortage of about 20,000 people in their IT Sector. Based on the discussion in the meeting ITAS stated that they are positively looking for enhanced cooperation with Bangladesh in IT sector by making official engagements including signing of MOU.

On 01 July 2022, the 3rd and Final session of Business Meeting was held in Budapest, Hungary with the presence of Dr. Gergely Pataki, Honourary Consul of Bangladesh to Hungary, Mr. Bence Vinkó, Managing Director of Epam Systems Hungary, Mr. Jenő Töröcsik, Managing Director of Telemedia Holding, Mr. Gyozo Vincze, CEO, IBF Hungary, Mr. Eric Molnar Jr., Editor-in-chief, European Diplomacy and Economy, Mr. Erik Molnar, Honourary Consul of Namibia to Hungary from Hungarian side and Mr. Russell T. Ahmed, President of BASIS, Mr. Rahat Bin Zaman, Minister & DCM and Mr. Tanvir Ahmad Torophder, Counsellor of the Embassy and Permanent Mission in Vienna from Bangladesh side.

In his welcome speech Dr. Gergely Pataki briefed the audience about the recent development and economic growth of Bangladesh particularly the journey towards digitalization. In his opening remarks Mr. Rahat Bin Zaman mentioned that Bangladesh and Hungary enjoy excellent political relations which need to be translated into tangible economic collaborations including in the IT Sector, while both the countries saw remarkable economic growth in the last decade backed by political stability and continuation of industry-friendly policies. Mr. Russell T. Ahmed made a presentation in the meeting. In his presentation Mr. Ahmed narrated Bangladesh's emergence as a lucrative destination for IT investment as well as a significant source of IT/ITES solutions and services. He said that Bangladesh is ready to cater the need of the developed world, especially the Central Europe. The Hungarian side expressed their interest for further cooperation with Bangladesh in IT sector. They assured continued and enhanced cooperation in the coming days.

In all the meetings the BASIS President invited the Hungarian side to participate in the upcoming Software Exposition (SoftExpo 2022) arranged by BASIS in Dhaka on 15-19 November 2022.