

Remarks of the High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh H.E. Mr. Harsh Vardhan Shringla
during function to commemorate Victory Day - 2016
organized by the Association of Bangladesh Students Studied in India (ABSSI)
Dhaka University, December 29, 2016

- H.E. Mr. **A.K.M. Mozammel Huq** MP, Hon'ble Minister for Liberation War Affairs, Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh,
 - Prof. Emeritus Dr. **Anisuzzaman**, Padma Bhushan,
 - Prof. Dr. **AAMS Arefin Siddique**, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Dhaka University;
 - Prof. Dr. **Md. Akhtaruzzaman**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Adm), Dhaka University;
 - Mr **Shameem al Mamun** General Secretary, ABSSI,
 - Distinguished guests, members of ABSSI, friends from the media, Ladies and Gentlemen.
- At the outset I would like to congratulate the Association of Bangladesh Students Studied in India (ABSSI) for their initiative to commemorate Bijoy Dibosh-2016 and thank them for inviting me to be a part of this wonderful event. The occasion is indeed significant as India and Bangladesh jointly celebrate the 45th anniversary of the Glorious Muktijudhho (Liberation War) every year. উনিশো একাত্তর সালে বঙ্গবন্ধুর উৎসাহে বাংলাদেশের মুক্তিযোদ্ধারা এবং ভারতীয় সৈন্যরা একসাথে যুদ্ধ করেছিল, বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতার জন্যে একসাথে রক্ত বিসর্জন দিয়েছিল। ঐটাই ছিল সব ভারতীয়দের কাছে মহান গর্বের মুহূর্ত।
- In India, the anniversary was commemorated at a grand event arranged by the India Foundation at which the Hon'ble Minister for Disaster Management and Relief, Janaab Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Bir Bikram, MP, and Lt Col. (Retd) Quazi Sajjad Ali Zahir, Bir Protik, Swadhinata Padak awardee participated. The Bangladesh High Commission in India also celebrated the occasion in a befitting manner with a 5-Day Bijoy Utsob in Kolkata.
 - Recently a delegation of 30 Muktijodhhas from Bangladesh visited India to participate in the festivities, and simultaneously, a contingent of 27 Indian War Veterans who participated in the 1971 Liberation War visited your beautiful country and was overwhelmed by the tradition of hospitality that Bangladesh is famous for.

- Indeed, the Muktiyodhhas continue to be a vital link between our two great nations, bound by our shared history and further cemented by the ties of blood, shed together as they fought shoulder to shoulder against the oppressors in 1971. Each year, we solemnly remember and pay homage to the sacrifices made by the freedom fighters in our own humble way by granting the 'Muktiyodhha Scholarships' to their progeny. Over 10,000 such scholarships have been granted so far, amounting to over BDT 15 crores.
- The seeds of this friendship were sown by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the then Prime Minister of India Shrimati Indira Gandhi. Over the years, our relationship has matured and progressed in each sector. বঙ্গবন্ধুর কণ্যা প্রধান মন্ত্রী শেখ হাসিনা এবং প্রধান মন্ত্রী নরেন্দ্র মোদীর নেতৃত্বে আজ, ভারত এবং বাংলাদেশের মধ্যে চমৎকার সম্পর্ক বিরাজ করছে।
- While our leadership shares an excellent rapport and understanding, it is the people of the two democracies and their mutual love, respect and admiration that drives us forward as partners in progress. India and Bangladesh are both 'young nations' as a considerable proportion of our population comprises of youth and it is they who will lead our countries in times to come. It is important this younger generation imbibe the Spirit of Liberation or 'Muktijuddher Chetona' and be exposed to our friendship based on our common history, culture, heritage and aspirations of progress.
- It is in this context that organizations like ABSSI assume great significance. You are our friends in Bangladesh and having spent time in India, I urge you to spread the message of friendship and affection that the people of India have for their brethren in Bangladesh.
- The Association of Bangladesh Students Studied in India (ABSSI), established in 1996 and ably headed by Prof. Dalem Chandra Barman (himself a Phd scholar at Rajasthan University, Jaipur from 1979 to 1983) has been active in strengthening India-Bangladesh relations. I can unhesitatingly say the same about Dhaka University as well, and can happily share that both the Hon'ble VC Professor Siddique and the pro-VC Prof Akhtaruzzaman are scholarship holders having completed their PhD from the Mysore University and Aligarh Muslim University, respectively.

- As you are aware, the Government of India grants scholarships for education in India from the undergraduate to post doctoral levels in all disciplines (except medicine) through the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). Over 3000 ICCR Scholarships have been granted to Bangladeshi students across premier educational institutions in India, including the IITs, NITs, Delhi University, Kolkata University, Bose Institute, Rabindra Bharati and Bishwa Bharati among others. The ICCR scholars from Bangladesh make friends in India which last for a lifetime and these ICCR Alumni serve as ambassadors of friendship for India once they return and establish themselves in all walks of life, not only in Bangladesh but across the world. The High Commission has an interactive form on its website in which ICCR scholars can register and also view the cumulative database so that they can stay in touch with each other.
- The ITEC (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation) programme is another flagship programme of the Government of India for young professionals from friendly countries like Bangladesh for around 300 specialized courses across elite institutions in India. In 2014, we celebrated ICCR day along with the Golden Jubilee of the ITEC Programme. The Honorable President of Bangladesh Janaab Abdul Hamid graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.
- Each year, the High Commission of India hosts a reception to mark a combined ICCR and ITEC day. We are planning to celebrate the next ICCR /ITEC Day in February 2017.
- India also offers scholarships in Traditional systems of Medicine, (Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) popularly called the AYUSH Scholarship scheme from the undergraduate to doctoral levels. The UGC's Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) and SAARC Fellowship/Scholarship scheme is also open to Bangladeshi students.
- The High Commission of India, Dhaka has been offering other education schemes like the Self-Financing Scheme (SFS) for medicine, engineering and pharmacy; DASA (Direct Admission of Students Abroad) for seats in NIT, IIIT and other premier Government-funded technical institutions for pursuing BE courses. The admission is based on SAT score.

- Recently, the Government of India, in recognition of our close friendship, decided to open the opportunity for bright Bangladeshi students to join the prestigious IITs and facilitate the process by conducting the entrance tests for undergraduate and post graduate level courses i.e. GATE and JEE (Advanced) in Dhaka as well. Similarly, the IIMs have also opened its doors for Bangladeshi aspirants who want to join these elite management institutes. IIM-Ahmedabad opened its flagship MBA course i.e. Post Graduate Program in Management for Bangladeshi students. An IIMA team visited Dhaka in December 2015 and interacted with Bangladeshi students to apprise them of the process.
- Moreover, several **MoUs** have also been signed between Indian and Bangladesh Universities to promote quality education between the two countries. I am happy to note a lot of exchange programmes between students and faculty of various institutions of India and Bangladesh, including the Dhaka University. We welcome this trend and seek to further this people to people contact among our respective youth.
- I must also place on record our appreciation of the role of the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs, Govt. of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh and especially the Hon’ble Minister, for spearheading our joint efforts to further the Spirit of Liberation among the peoples of our countries and assure him of our wholehearted support in this endeavor.
- I would also like to appreciate the pioneering efforts of ABSSI towards promoting India-Bangladesh friendship and urge it to further expand its membership and activities. Events like these are a testimony to our enduring friendship.
- In the end, I take this opportunity to wish you all and your families a very Happy and Prosperous New Year ahead.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bharat, Bharat – Bangladesh Moitri Chirojibi Hok.

Thank You.
