

Message from the Message from the Ambassador



Dear Readers,

We come to the end of 2018, a year that has been crucial to the bilateral relations between Switzerland and Bangladesh, which have attained a new height during the official visit of the President of the Swiss Confederation, H.E. Mr. Alain Berset, to Bangladesh in February 2018, when the leaders of the two countries welcomed the positive development in our bilateral relations. Since the independence of Bangladesh, Switzerland has remained as a strong and committed development and economic partner of Bangladesh.


The Swiss Embassy in Dhaka has had the pleasure to organize the Swiss Night 2018 in November to celebrate the friendship between Switzerland and Bangladesh with partners working with us in the public and private sectors, in the areas of economy, development cooperation, civil society and culture. We also took the opportunity to recognize Dr. Pu Chaw Nu, for his outstanding role in providing humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya refugees and the host community during the ongoing crisis in Bangladesh.

The year 2018 is very important for the people of Bangladesh as the national election will take place at the end of this year.

It is our sincere hope that the election will be peaceful and held in a free, fair and participatory manner that will reflect the will of the people of Bangladesh and further strengthen the country's democratic journey.

I hope you will enjoy reading this last issue of Swiss Talk for this year. Season's greetings and best wishes from the Embassy of Switzerland. Wishing all our friends in Bangladesh a peaceful and prosperous 2019!

René Holenstein
Ambassador of Switzerland to Bangladesh

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh

Swiss Night 2018

The Embassy of Switzerland organized a special event "Swiss Night" on 15 November 2018 to celebrate the friendship between Switzerland and Bangladesh. The event was attended by a wide range of audience including members of senior officials, the civil society, business, cultural and international community, development partners as well as the Swiss citizens living in Bangladesh.

Dr. Gowher Rizvi, the International Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, attended the event as the Chief Guest, while the National Professor of Bangladesh, Professor Anisuzzaman joined the event as the Special Guest. Both Dr. Rizvi and Professor Anisuzzaman highlighted the strong and long standing bilateral relations that exist between the two countries.



Switzerland has always been beside Bangladesh for humanitarian affairs in times of need. With the ongoing Rohingya crisis, humanitarian cooperation has been scaled up to CHF 22 million.

In light with the humanitarian cooperation for the on-going crisis, a special arrangement was organized whereby the Embassy accorded "Swiss Embassy Award" to Dr. Pu Chaw Nu, the Superintendent of the 250 Bed District Sadar Hospital of Cox's Bazar.

The event offered the guests a Swiss culinary experience; a number of traditional and delectable Swiss delicacies such as polenta, Raclette cheese, apple pie and the popular chocolate fondue. The guests also enjoyed the live fusion-styled music performed by a popular Bangladeshi artist Armeen Musa. The event was organized with the support of KUEHNE + NAGEL Ltd, LafargeHolcim Bangladesh Ltd and Novartis (Bangladesh) Ltd.

Swiss Film Screenings

The Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh has arranged some successful film screenings which were enjoyed by large number of audiences across all strata of life. In collaboration with the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the Embassy celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by screening the Swiss Film “Sonita” in Rangpur, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Chattogram from August till October. The Embassy’s rights-based partners organized the screening along with panel discussions with human rights experts of the country. The participants of these cross-country screenings were mainly young and enthusiastic Bangladeshis who engaged in lively interaction with panelists and used the platform to express their views and experiences of exercising human rights in their everyday lives.



A Swiss Film Night 2018 was held on 23 October, where the Embassy screened “The Divine Order” at the Goethe-Institute. The movie enlightened the young audience about 1971 women’s suffrage movement in Switzerland, and also shows the history behind country’s heritage of strong and innovative political structure. The fight for women’s voting rights shown in the film was very inspirational as the audience not only learned about the struggle but could also relate to many aspects of reality highlighted in the movie.

Swiss Humanitarian Aid

From the beginning of the Rohingya crisis last year, Switzerland has remained firm in its commitment to the people and government of Bangladesh in addressing the influx of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Until December 2018, Switzerland has committed over 20 million CHF to numerous UN and other aid agencies who provide lifesaving services and support in the refugee camps. The majority of the support is geared to meet the needs of the refugees in



SWISS TALK 34

the area of food security, water sanitation and hygiene, and health care services. In addition to the financial support from the Swiss Government, multiple fund raising events have been carried out within Switzerland through social media and other mechanisms to support the Rohingya refugees as well as the host communities in Cox’s Bazar. The fund raising has been carried out by the non-profit organization Swiss Solidarity, who is now channeling these funds through INGOs in Bangladesh to further strengthen their existing interventions in the camps.

Swiss Business Talk 2018

The Swiss Embassy and the Switzerland Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SBCCI) jointly organized the discussion and networking event “Swiss Business Talk” on 06 December 2018 to have exchanges on the areas of trade and investment. Mr. Kazi M Aminul Islam, the Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority attended the event as a Distinguished Speaker and spoke about recent initiatives and plans of the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority in attracting Foreign Direct Investment as well as how the existing foreign



companies can avail the benefits of these initiatives and plans. Mr. Islam informed that BIDA and other relevant agencies are working on a detailed reform plan to give a further push to draw foreign investments. The Ambassador stated that Bangladesh has made impressive developments in many socio-economic sectors in the last decade, where the private sector actors, including the multinational companies, have also played a commendable role.

ch.ch

Elections 2019

Swiss Federal Elections
2019

Parliamentary elections will be held in Switzerland on 20 October 2019. Swiss nationals living in Bangladesh, who are included in the Register of the Swiss Abroad, will be allowed to vote in elections as well to stand as a candidate for election to Parliament. All the relevant information on the 2019 elections, voting and standing for election is available on the Swiss Federal Chancellery website:

<https://www.ch.ch/de/wahlen2019/auslandschweizerinnen-und-auslandschweizer-und-die-parlament/>

Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh
Contact/ feedback:

Shafina Alam, email: shafina.alam@eda.admin.ch