

Bangladesh's Development Progress and Challenges Discussed at Brussels Press Club Conference

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, July 3, 2023

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, a conference was held at the Brussels Press Club, focusing on Bangladesh, a country that has made remarkable strides in various areas. The conference was skillfully moderated by Andy Vermaut, ensuring productive discussions and an exchange of ideas. Distinguished speakers graced the event, sharing their insights and perspectives on Bangladesh's journey of development. The conference commenced with a captivating video presentation illustrating Bangladesh's transformation and the challenges it has overcome. Bikash Chowdhury Barua, Chairman of 'Basug' and a respected journalist, provided valuable analysis on the current socio-political landscape in Bangladesh, shedding light on its evolving dynamics. The presence of Mr. Gary Cartwright, an esteemed guest, enriched the discussions with his experiences and observations on Bangladesh's progress, offering a unique perspective. Jahangir Chowdhury

Ratan, General Secretary of Belgium Awami League, highlighted the achievements of the Awami League government and its instrumental role in Bangladesh's socio-economic development. His remarks exemplified the leadership's vision and dedication in making Bangladesh a role model of progress. Shahidul Haque, President of Belgium Awami League and a prominent community leader, emphasized the importance of community engagement and its impact on Bangladesh's



advancement. Daud Khan Soheli, another influential community leader, underscored the vital role of grassroots initiatives in driving positive change within society. The conference also featured a video clip of the speech by Bangladesh's Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Momen, discussing the country's diplomatic engagements and the government's commitment to fostering international partnerships. The conference provided a platform for diverse voices and perspectives, offering a comprehensive understanding of Bangladesh's developmental journey. Participants engaged in thoughtful discussions, shared ideas, and expressed their visions for the future of Bangladesh. We express gratitude to all attendees and contributors for their valuable insights and active participation in this significant conference. Together, we reaffirmed our commitment to supporting Bangladesh's ongoing progress and fostering stronger international bonds.

Renowned journalist Gary Cartwright delivered a thought-provoking speech today at the Brussels Press Club, shedding light on Bangladesh's remarkable development progress and the challenges the country still faces. The conference, focused on Bangladesh's journey since the partition of India in 1947, emphasized the need for continued engagement and support from the European Union (EU). Mr. Cartwright highlighted the significant strides made by Bangladesh, once considered a least developed nation but now recognized as a middle-income country with a flourishing relationship with the EU. Despite its impressive economic growth, the country grapples with several challenges, including the denial of history, political violence, intolerance, religious fundamentalism, and extremism fueled by opposition political parties such as the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). The exceptional socio-economic development in Bangladesh, encompassing poverty alleviation, education, and women's empowerment, has been possible due to the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Bangladesh Awami League government. With a remarkable GDP growth rate of 7%, Bangladesh has emerged as a role model of development, outpacing the EU's growth rate of



5.39% in 2021. The burden on Bangladesh has been further amplified by its temporary sheltering of nearly 1.2 million Rohingya refugees, forcibly displaced from Myanmar since August 2017. Despite international support, this humanitarian crisis places significant strain on the country's resources. Acknowledging the European Union's steadfast support for Bangladesh's socio-economic development, particularly in women's empowerment and education, Mr. Cartwright emphasized the country's commitment to human rights, labor rights, and freedom of the press. Prime



Minister Sheikh Hasina has been recognized with prestigious UNESCO and UN awards for her contributions to education and sustainable development. Bangladesh also plays a crucial role in international peacekeeping efforts, with approximately 7,000 service personnel deployed across 12 countries. Notably, Bangladesh has contributed troops to UN Peacekeeping Operations, including a deployment in Cyprus since November 2022. Looking ahead, Mr. Cartwright mentioned the upcoming 12th Parliamentary Elections in Bangladesh, scheduled for either the end of this year or early next year. Assuring transparency and fairness, the independent Election Commission will conduct the elections in accordance with democratic principles and the country's constitution. Foreign election observers, including the EU Delegation in Bangladesh, have been invited to monitor the process.

Propaganda campaign

However, Mr. Cartwright expressed concern about the propaganda campaign launched by the opposition BNP and Bangladesh Jamaat e Islami, fundamentalist forces with alleged links to the Taliban and operations in Afghanistan. He urged the EU Institutions to remain engaged with Bangladesh's government, diligently scrutinizing and refuting false information disseminated by these groups. Notably, BNP and Jamaat have a history of resorting to violence and terrorism, exemplified by their indiscriminate targeting of innocent people through petrol bomb attacks on public transportation in 2013, 2014, and 2015. The conference concluded with a call for continued cooperation between the EU and Bangladesh, recognizing the progress achieved while acknowledging the challenges that demand attention and support.

Bangladesh: A Role Model of Development and Democratic Process

In a recent press conference held at the Press Club, prominent figures Jahangir Chowdhury, General Secretary of Belgium Awami League, and Andy Vermaut, a renowned human rights defender, highlighted the remarkable achievements of Bangladesh in terms of economic development and democratic governance. They emphasized the challenges faced by the country,

such as the culture of denial of history, political violence, intolerance, religious fundamentalism, and extremism propagated by certain opposition parties, particularly the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

Bangladesh has undergone unprecedented economic growth, transitioning from a least developed country to a middle-income nation. Over the past 50 years, the country has maintained a strong and fruitful friendship with the European Union since gaining independence. The success achieved in poverty alleviation, education, women's empowerment, and the establishment of an export-oriented economy, particularly in the readymade garment sector, can be attributed to the effective governance and dynamic leadership of the Bangladesh Awami League government under the stewardship of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Bangladesh's development model has received recognition from the United Nations, the European Union, the United States, international organizations, and the global community at large.

Self-reliant nation

With an impressive 7% GDP growth rate and a per capita income of US\$2,824, Bangladesh has made significant strides in the past 14 years. The nation has undertaken ambitious projects, such as the construction of the nearly 4 billion-USD Padma Bridge, entirely funded through domestic resources. The government's visionary leadership, coupled with its commitment to building a developed country by 2041, has transformed Bangladesh into a role model of development. Following the tragic assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh, and his family, the country endured years of unconstitutional rule by military power grabbers. However, under the capable leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who herself is the daughter of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh has managed to regain its independence and become a self-reliant nation. This is a remarkable accomplishment for a country that was once labeled an international basket case.

Rohingya refugees

Bangladesh has demonstrated its commitment to humanitarian causes by providing temporary shelter to nearly 1.2 million Rohingya refugees, forcibly displaced from Myanmar since August 2017. Despite the support received from the international community, this massive influx has placed an enormous burden on Bangladesh. The European Union has been a consistent supporter of Bangladesh's socio-economic development, particularly in areas such as women's empowerment and education. The EU has also acknowledged the generosity of the Bangladesh government in providing temporary shelter to the Rohingya refugees. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been honored with UNESCO and UN awards for her contributions to education and sustainable development. Respect for human rights, labor rights, freedom of the press, and democratic principles are fundamental to the fabric of Bangladeshi society. Guided by the principle of "Friendship to all and Malice to none," Bangladesh has forged strong partnerships and friendships with countries worldwide, including the European Union.

Interests of Bangladesh

Bangladesh takes pride in its growing economy and sustainable peace and development. As a significant contributor to UN Peacekeeping Operations, the country plays a crucial role in maintaining international peace and security. The 12th Parliamentary Elections are scheduled to take place in Bangladesh by the end of this year or early next year. The independent Election Commission will oversee the elections in a free and fair manner, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution, as observed in democratic countries worldwide. The government is committed to providing the Election Commission with all necessary support, and all responsible political parties are expected to participate in the electoral process. However, it has come to our attention that the opposition parties, namely the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Bangladesh Jamaat e Islami, known for their anti-liberation and fundamentalist ideologies, have launched a propaganda campaign against the interests of Bangladesh. They have been consistently making false allegations against the government to foreign missions in Bangladesh, as well as foreign governments and lawmakers in North America and Europe. It is important to note that the government and the Election Commission have already announced their willingness to welcome foreign election observers to ensure transparency and fairness in the parliamentary elections. The EU Delegation in Bangladesh has already been invited to send election observers.

Jahangir Chowdhury says: "We would like to emphasize that the Awami League government, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, asserts its commitment to democracy, human rights, the rule of law, openness, and transparency. Over the past fourteen and a half years, the government has demonstrated its vision and capability to enhance the quality of life for the people of Bangladesh. Bangladesh values its longstanding partnership with the European Union, spanning fifty years, and is determined to strengthen this relationship further with renewed vigor and dynamism. We encourage all EU institutions to maintain their engagement with Bangladesh and its government while carefully verifying any false and fabricated information propagated by the BNP and its associates such as Jamaat. These parties have a history of resorting to violence and terrorism, exemplified by indiscriminate killings of innocent people through the use of petrol bombs on public transportation in the past. Instead of making baseless and untrue complaints to foreign missions, we encourage the BNP and Jamaat to engage with the people and voters of Bangladesh, as it is the sovereign right of the Bangladeshi people to determine their future administration for development and growth. Dialogue among political parties, the government, and all concerned parties should be the means to resolve differences and ensure a free and fair election. Furthermore, we appeal to the EU, the US, and other friendly countries to strengthen their relationship with Bangladesh, with a focus on promoting democratic processes, good governance, and overall development. The principle of "People first" should serve as the foundation for the democratic process, national elections, and the country's development. Despite geopolitical challenges and conflicts, Bangladesh's economy, growth, sustainable development, and democracy should continue to progress unhindered. We urge all concerned parties to stand in solidarity with Bangladesh's remarkable economic development and its unwavering commitment to maintaining a democratic process and sustainable development, always upholding the principles of fundamental human rights, human dignity, and respect," says Jahangir Chowdhury.

Free, fair and participatory electoral process

In his powerful speech at the conference, Andy Vermaut commended the resilience, strength, and immense potential of the people of Bangladesh. He recognized the remarkable transformation the country has undergone over the past five decades, transitioning from a least developed nation to a middle-income country. Vermaut praised the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and highlighted her unwavering resolve in guiding Bangladesh towards socio-economic development. He acknowledged the historical legacy of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation, whose vision and inspiration continue to shape Bangladesh's journey. Vermaut applauded Bangladesh's humanitarian efforts in providing shelter to Rohingya refugees despite economic constraints, emphasizing the country's courage and compassion. Regarding the upcoming parliamentary elections, Vermaut urged all political parties to ensure a free, fair, and participatory electoral process under the Independent Election Commission. He encouraged the opposition parties, particularly the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat, to engage with the people and respect the democratic principles that form the foundation of Bangladesh's progress.

Support for Bangladesh

Vermaut assured the European Union, the United States, and other friendly countries' support for Bangladesh in conducting peaceful elections and continuing its path of sustainable development. He emphasized that the sovereign people of Bangladesh will shape their own future, and international support should align with their decisions. Highlighting the challenges faced by Bangladesh, including political unrest, religious fundamentalism, and extremism, Vermaut commended the country's resilience and determination in pursuing socio-economic development. He called for unity, dialogue, and a focus on putting the needs of the people first to ensure a brighter future for Bangladesh. Vermaut concluded by stressing the importance of solidarity with Bangladesh, upholding democratic values, and respecting human rights and dignity. He expressed confidence that with strong leadership, the partnership between Bangladesh, the European Union, and the United States, the country will continue to prosper, foster democracy, and maintain peace amidst geopolitical and internal challenges.

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