



Embassy Newsletter

April 2022



Embassy of Bangladesh
Tokyo



Foreign Minister Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, MP held a bilateral meeting with Mr. HAYASHI Yoshimasa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

Foreign Minister Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, MP held a bilateral meeting with Mr. HAYASHI Yoshimasa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan at the Japanese Foreign Ministry on 11 April 2022. The meeting, lasted for about an hour, was their first official meeting after Minister HAYASHI took office in November 2021.

The meeting was held at the backdrop of the two friendly countries celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations on 10 February 2022. Foreign Minister Momen expressed his satisfaction at the various events held for the celebration of the auspicious occasion. He stated to work closely with the Foreign Minister of Japan to take forward the excellent bilateral relations.

Mentioning Japan as a household name in Bangladesh and the largest bilateral development partner in Asia, Foreign Minister Momen invited more Japanese investments to Bangladesh, particularly in emerging sectors like Blue Economy, Automobiles, ICT, Pharmaceuticals, light engineering, electronics, etc. The Japanese Foreign Minister underscored that with the economic propensity of Bangladesh more Japanese companies will be attracted to invest in Bangladesh and agreed to cooperate more in Blue Economy, ICT and Pharmaceuticals to advance bilateral economic relations. In response to Foreign Minister Momen's request to provide more scholarships and skill development training to the young population of Bangladesh, who are quick learner and diligent, Foreign Minister Hayashi stated that Japan would continue to provide scholarships and skill development training to Bangladesh in human resource development. Foreign Minister Momen also acknowledged the vaccine provisions by Japan which has helped Bangladesh, which so far has efficiently managed the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, the two Foreign Ministers discussed important regional and international development. Bangladesh placed the issue of Rohingya problem and steps taken so far including relocation of 30,000 Rohingyas voluntarily to Bhashan Char. Bangladesh thanked Japan who has come forward to assist Bangladesh as well as for her persistent commitment. Bangladesh sought more involvement of Japan for an early solution to the problem. Foreign Minister Hayashi responded that Japan would continue to assist Bangladesh as repatriation is very important to resolve the issue. On his turn, Minister HAYASHI raised situations in Ukraine, North Korea and in the Indo-Pacific and sought Bangladesh's understanding and cooperation. Foreign Minister Momen said Bangladesh is a peace-loving country and against war. Where there is war be it in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria or Libya there is collateral damage of life and property which we are witnessing in Ukraine. Bangladesh, which sheltered Rohingyas on humanitarian ground has supported action for humanitarian assistance and access in Ukraine.

The Foreign Ministers discussed the climate change issue and its impact on vulnerable countries like Bangladesh. Foreign Minister Momen sought Japan's support for the Regional Climate Adaptation Center in Bangladesh. They agreed to work together on global issues. The two Foreign Ministers also discussed future candidacies at various multilateral forum and reiterated to extend support to each other's candidatures.

Foreign Minister Momen extended an invitation to Minister HAYASHI to visit Bangladesh at a mutually convenient time to specially to see the mega-projects with Japanese assistance under the Big-B initiative.

The frank and cordial meeting ended with exchange of gifts. Bangladesh Ambassador to Tokyo, H.E. Mr. Shahabuddin Ahmed; Deputy Chief of Mission, Shah Asif Rahman and Director (Foreign Minister's Office), Mr. Md. Emdadul Islam Chowdhury attended the meeting with the Foreign Minister.

It may be mentioned that Foreign Minister Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, MP made a transit stopover in Tokyo for several hours on 10-11 April 2022 on his way to Palau to participate in the Our Ocean Conference to be held on 11-15 April 2022.



Foreign Minister Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, MP held a bilateral meeting with Mr. HAYASHI Yoshimasa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan at the Japanese Foreign Ministry

Foreign Minister Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, MP visited Bangladesh Embassy, Tokyo

The Hon'ble Foreign Minister Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen, MP visited Bangladesh Embassy at the evening of 10 April 2022. He was accompanied by his spouse, Ms. Selina Momen and Director (FMO), Mr. Md. Emdadul Islam Chowdhury. H.E. Ambassador Shahabuddin Ahmed hosted an iftar-dinner in honor of the Hon'ble Foreign Minister and madame. All the Embassy officers and their spouses attended the event.



Foreign Minister visited the Bangabandhu Corner located on the 3rd floor of the Embassy



Foreign Minister praised the installation of the half bust of the Father of the Nation at the Bangabandhu Corner

The Foreign Minister visited the Bangabandhu Corner located on the 3rd floor and also praised the installation of the half bust of the Father of the Nation there. He was gifted with a set of commemorative stamps and the catalog of the Exhibition of diplomatic archive documents and photographs arranged on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the

establishment of the diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and Japan on 10 February 2022. The Hon'ble Foreign Minister gifted two of his books to H.E. Ambassador.



Foreign Minister was gifted with a set of commemorative stamps printed by Japan post on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and Japan.



Foreign Minister was gifted with the catalog of the Exhibition of diplomatic archive documents on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and Japan

Director General at South Asia Department of JICA Mr. Ito Teruyuki visited the Embassy of Bangladesh, Tokyo

Newly appointed Director General at South Asia Department of JICA Mr. Ito Teruyuki visited the Embassy on 5 April 2022 to meet H.E. Mr. Shahabuddin Ahmed, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Japan. On his first courtesy call, the Director General briefly described JICA's recent activities in Bangladesh.



Director General at South Asia Department of JICA Mr. Ito Teruyuki discussed with H.E. Mr. Shahabuddin Ahmed



Director General Mr. Ito Teruyuki visited Bangabandhu Corner of the Embassy and signed the Visitor's book there.

He expressed willingness to work for Bangladesh wholeheartedly. The Ambassador welcomed him and appreciated JICA's support for Bangladesh. He assured the Director General of all possible cooperation from the Embassy in discharging his duties. The Ambassador was accompanied by Economic Minister Syed Nasir Ershad and Counsellor & Head of Chancery Sheikh Farid while the Director General was accompanied by Sr. Deputy Director General Mr. Ichiguchi Tomohide, Director Mr. Nagai Shinsuke and Deputy Director Ms. Yamabe Seiko. After the meeting, the Director General visited Bangabandhu Corner of the Embassy and signed the Visitor's book there.

H.E Ambassador Mr. Shahabuddin Ahmed visited ongoing Fashion World Tokyo

H.E Ambassador Mr. Shahabuddin Ahmed visited ongoing Fashion World Tokyo, April, 2022 on 6th April, 2022 at Tokyo Big Sight, Japan. This is the largest trade show for the fashion industry in Japan gathering all kinds of fashion wear, apparel, bag, shoes, textile, leather, fashion accessory and fashion sourcing from all over the world, with participation of around 600 exhibitors. 02 (two) Bangladeshi companies participated through Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), Bangladesh and showcased their products in the fair. 02 (two) companies by Non-Resident Bangladeshi (NRB) in Japan participated independently and showcased made in Bangladesh products. Mr. Hajime Suzuki, Chief Director, International Sales, RX Japan welcomed the H.E Ambassador and briefed about the fair while Minister (Commerce) of the Embassy, Dr. Ariful Haque, accompanied him during the visit. Starting from today the fair will continue until 8th April 2022.

Later, they also visited ongoing Japan IT week Spring 2022 and explored appropriate space for Bangladesh's participation in 2023 edition of Japan IT week Spring. This is mentionable, despite preparation, unfortunately, Bangladesh could not participate this Spring edition due to travel related restrictions caused by Covid-19 pandemic.



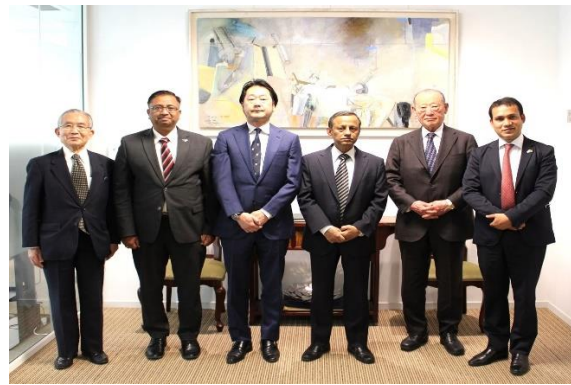
H.E Ambassador Mr. Shahabuddin Ahmed visited ongoing Fashion World Tokyo



The Bangladesh Embassy in Tokyo in collaboration with International Friendship Exchange Council (FEC) organized a Bangladesh-Japan Business Follow-up Session

The Bangladesh Embassy in Tokyo in collaboration with International Friendship Exchange Council (FEC) organized a Bangladesh-Japan Business Follow-up Session on 8th April 2022 with 4 (four) selected Japanese companies at the Embassy. Embassy Officials took part in discussions with CEOs/High Officials of the companies in designated slots, Economic Minister, Syed Nasir Ershad with Joblab Co., Ltd., Deputy Chief of Mission, Shah Asif Rahman with RIKEN Immune Regenerative Medicine Inc., First Secretary (Labour), Mr. Joynal Abedin with Metro Shoji Co., Ltd. and Counsellor & Head of Chancery Sheikh Farid with Global Trade Venture Co., Ltd. H.E Ambassador Mr. Shahabuddin Ahmed welcomed them while Mr. Ken Matsuzawa, President of FEC thanked Ambassador and Embassy officials during the individual sessions. This is a follow-up program of the business forum that was held on 16

November 2021 at the Embassy as part of the several activities for the celebration of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (2020-2021) and the 50th Anniversary (Golden Jubilee) of Independence of Bangladesh. The business follow-up session was coordinated by Minister (Commerce) of the Embassy Dr. Ariful Haque.



The Bangladesh Embassy in Tokyo in collaboration with International Friendship Exchange Council (FEC) organized a Bangladesh-Japan Business Follow-up Session

Growing Demand for Japanese-Language Human Resources in Bangladesh

In recent years, the number of Japanese language learners in Bangladesh has increased dramatically. According to a Japan Foundation survey, between 2015 and 2018, the number of learners increased to 4,801 (2.2 times more than in 2015). As of 2018, the number of Japanese language learning institutions and Japanese language teachers increased to 85 (2.3 times) and 220 (2.3 times), respectively. The Dhaka-Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry currently has 120 member companies, and the number is increasing every year. The Bangladesh SEZ, which is scheduled to begin operations by the end of 2022, is expected to encourage Japanese companies to enter the Bangladeshi market, and the demand for Japanese-language personnel is expected to increase accordingly (JETRO 04-04-2022).

IMF says yen's rapid slide may hamper Japan's post-pandemic recovery

The chief of the International Monetary Fund's Japan mission believes the yen's rapid recent slide could hamper the pandemic-stricken Japanese economy from returning to a steady growth pathway by raising import costs and hurting consumer spending. The yen's drop to a 20-year low against the dollar last week is a reflection of the Bank of Japan's decision to persist with its loose monetary easing settings when central banks in other major economies are tightening, Ranil Salgado said in a recent written interview with Kyodo News. Still, the IMF Japan mission chief said the Japanese central bank should stay the course until it attains its 2 percent inflation target as "inflation will fall back once higher prices (of imported commodities) diminish."

The Japanese currency has lost nearly 15 yen against the dollar since early March, briefly sinking to the mid-129 yen zone last Wednesday. A weaker yen typically serves as a boon to Japanese exporters, as profits earned overseas increase when repatriated and Japan-made products become more competitively priced abroad.

But the yen's recent depreciation is threatening resource-scarce Japan, raising prices of imported energy and other commodities that have already seen sharp price increases driven by the war in Ukraine. "Further rapid depreciation of the yen due to monetary policy divergence could dampen domestic demand and worsen the terms of trade," Salgado said. The BOJ is widely expected to leave its monetary policy unchanged when it holds its next policy meeting on Wednesday and Thursday this week. The consumer price index, excluding volatile fresh food items, rose 0.8 percent in March from a year earlier, the fastest pace of increase in over two years but far from the BOJ's 2 percent target.

The IMF last Tuesday cut its forecast for Japan's economic growth this year to 2.4 percent from the previous 3.3 percent, citing rising oil prices that are expected to weigh on private consumption and investment.

Salgado, also assistant director of the IMF's Asia and Pacific Department, said growth in Japan may be held back further if Russia's war in Ukraine escalates, China's growth slows or new and more dangerous coronavirus strains emerge which require renewed restrictions on economic activity. Finance chiefs of the Group of 20 major economies met last Wednesday on the sidelines of IMF spring meetings in Washington and World Bank gatherings through Sunday. The meeting of all 20 members, including the United States and Russia, exposed divisions over Moscow's aggression against Ukraine.

"Policymakers should not lose sight of longer-term goals, such as stable and inclusive growth," Salgado said.

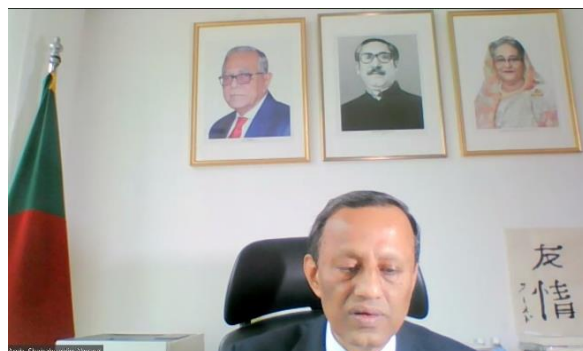
He called Japan a "global leader in support of multilateralism and international cooperation," for promoting more open, stable and transparent trade policies and said Tokyo can "build a more cooperative global economic system and help the most vulnerable around the globe." (Kyodo 04-25-2022)

H.E Ambassador Mr. Shahabuddin Ahmed spoke at a program on 20th April 2022 organized by Shizuoka Bangladesh Friendship Association

H.E Ambassador Mr. Shahabuddin Ahmed spoke at a program on 20th April 2022 organized by Shizuoka Bangladesh Friendship Association in commemoration of the Centenary birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman; 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's Independence and 50th anniversary of Japan-Bangladesh Diplomatic Relations.



Mr. AKM Enamul Hoque Shameem, MP, Honorable Deputy Minister, Ministry of Water Resources, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh graced the program as the Chief Guest



H.E Ambassador Mr. Shahabuddin Ahmed spoke at a program

Mr. AKM Enamul Hoque Shameem, MP, Honorable Deputy Minister, Ministry of Water Resources, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh graced the program as the Chief Guest. Mr. Nobuhiro Tanabe, Honorable Mayor of Shizuoka City, Mr. Hajime Anamo, Shizuoka Prefectural Assembly Member & President of Shizuoka Bangladesh Friendship Association (SBFA), other members and Shizuoka City Councillors and Officials were present.

Japan's economy has picked up as a trend recently

Japan's economy has picked up as a trend, although some weakness has been seen in part, mainly due to the impact of COVID-19 and the rise in commodity prices. Overseas economies have recovered on the whole, albeit with variation across countries and regions. In this situation, exports and industrial production have continued to increase as a trend, despite the remaining effects of supply-side constraints. Corporate profits have improved on the whole, but business sentiment has seen a pause in its improvement recently, mainly due to the impact of COVID-19 and the rise in commodity prices. Business fixed investment has picked up, although weakness has been seen in some industries. The employment and income situation has remained relatively weak overall, although improvement has been seen in some parts. Private consumption has started picking up again, with downward pressure stemming from COVID-19, particularly on services consumption, waning. Housing investment has been more or less flat. Public investment has been relatively weak, albeit at a high level. Financial conditions have been accommodative on the whole, although weakness in firms' financial positions has remained in some segments. On the price front, the year-on-year rate of change in the CPI (all items less fresh food), despite being affected by the reduction in mobile phone charges, has been in the range of 0.5-1.0 percent, reflecting price rises in energy and other items. Meanwhile, inflation expectations, particularly short-term ones, have risen (Bank of Japan, April 28, 2022).

Japan consumer confidence edged up in April for first rise in six months

Japan's consumer confidence index nudged up in April to mark its first increase in six months, following the end of COVID-19 curbs in late March, but inflation expectations hit a record for the third month in a row. A Cabinet Office survey showed the sentiment index for general households, which includes views on incomes and jobs, was at 33.0 in April, up slightly from 32.8 in March. "Consumer sentiment turned positive as COVID-19 cases fell further and as the lifting of curbs paved the way for a reopening of the economy," a government official told a media briefing. The survey, conducted from April 7 to 20, also found 93.7% of consumers expect prices of goods to rise in the next 12 months — the third straight month of record highs under comparable data dating back to April 2013.

The proportion of consumers who believe prices will increase 5% or more was 55.7%, also the highest on record. The government kept its assessment of consumer confidence unchanged, as the improvement in April was relatively small, saying it appears weak. The rising cost of living has fanned fears of a potential slowdown in consumer spending later this year. The Bank of Japan said Monday that consumers will continue to face more inflationary pressure as electricity bills and food prices rise in the wake of the recent surge in global commodity prices. Analysts expect the world's third-largest economy to grow an annualized 5.1% in the current quarter, but for the fiscal year that began last month, they only expect growth of 2.5%, according to a Reuters poll (The Japan Times 02 May 2022).