



# Queen's Day

## NATIONAL DAY OF THE NETHERLANDS

The Daily Star Special Supplement April 30, 1994

### Speech by the Ambassador of The Netherlands, H E Mr Henricus Gajentaan, on the occasion of the Queen's Day, April 30, 1994

Today, the people and the Government of the Netherlands celebrate the Official Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Beatrix.

On this national day, 'Koninginnedag' — 'Queen's Day' or in bangla: 'Ranir Debosh' — the Dutch express their adherence to the Royal House of Orange as the symbol of our freedom and independence.

In the Netherlands it is celebrated by attaching the orange-coloured banner to our national flag of red, white and blue, and people wear orange knots and buttons. Many festivities are held in every village and town. The Queen herself, her husband Prince Claus and their three sons participate in these festivities in a town chosen each year.

The celebration of the national day provides the opportunity to take stock of the development of the bilateral relations between our two countries. I am happy to note that over the last few years the existing excellent relations have grown and deepened further. There have been shifts in emphasis and new fields of cooperation are emerging. Regarding trade and investments the basis has been laid for expansion and growth.

Since Bangladesh's independence the relations with the Netherlands have placed special emphasis on support to the development efforts of Bangladesh. In recent years trade and commercial relations have substantially grown, while activities aimed at promoting cultural cooperation have been initiated.

Bangladesh-Dutch development co-operation touches many fields in many parts of Bangladesh. Water control and management have always figured prominently in our co-operation. The Dutch have shared their own experiences with land reclamation, flood defences and water control and management, desalination and upkeep of polders in many places in Bangladesh. In recent years special emphasis is laid on people's participation and environmental concerns in Dutch projects under the Flood Action Plan.

Dutch cooperation also extends to the agricultural sector for instance through crop diversification, support for the new seed policy and the maintenance of food godowns. Together with other countries the Netherlands supports the efforts of Bangladesh in health and population, as well as in the similarly important education sector and the water supply sector to provide the people with access to safe drinking water.

To encourage women's participation in national development and poverty alleviation is an important feature of Dutch development co-operation in Bangladesh. This is also prominent in Dutch support for industrial development projects through the promotion of self-employment and micro-enterprises such as those from the Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) and as far as rural development is concerned, the Grameen Bank.

This year special efforts are undertaken in the Netherlands to promote a better understanding of the people and the culture of Bangladesh. Among these activities are public campaigns by non-governmental organisations in the Netherlands who co-operate with their development counterparts such as BRAC and PROSHIKHA in Bangladesh to project a different and more positive image of the people of Bangladesh in their efforts to social and economic development. These activities have met with a very positive response from the public. The message is clear: There is progress and there is also good news coming from Bangladesh.

Recently I had the opportunity to participate in such activity organized by a secondary school in a small town called Oisterwijk in the southern part of the Netherlands. During a whole week six hundred students were active in

### Koninginnedag

Koninginnedag is a Dutch national holiday to celebrate the head of state's official birthday.

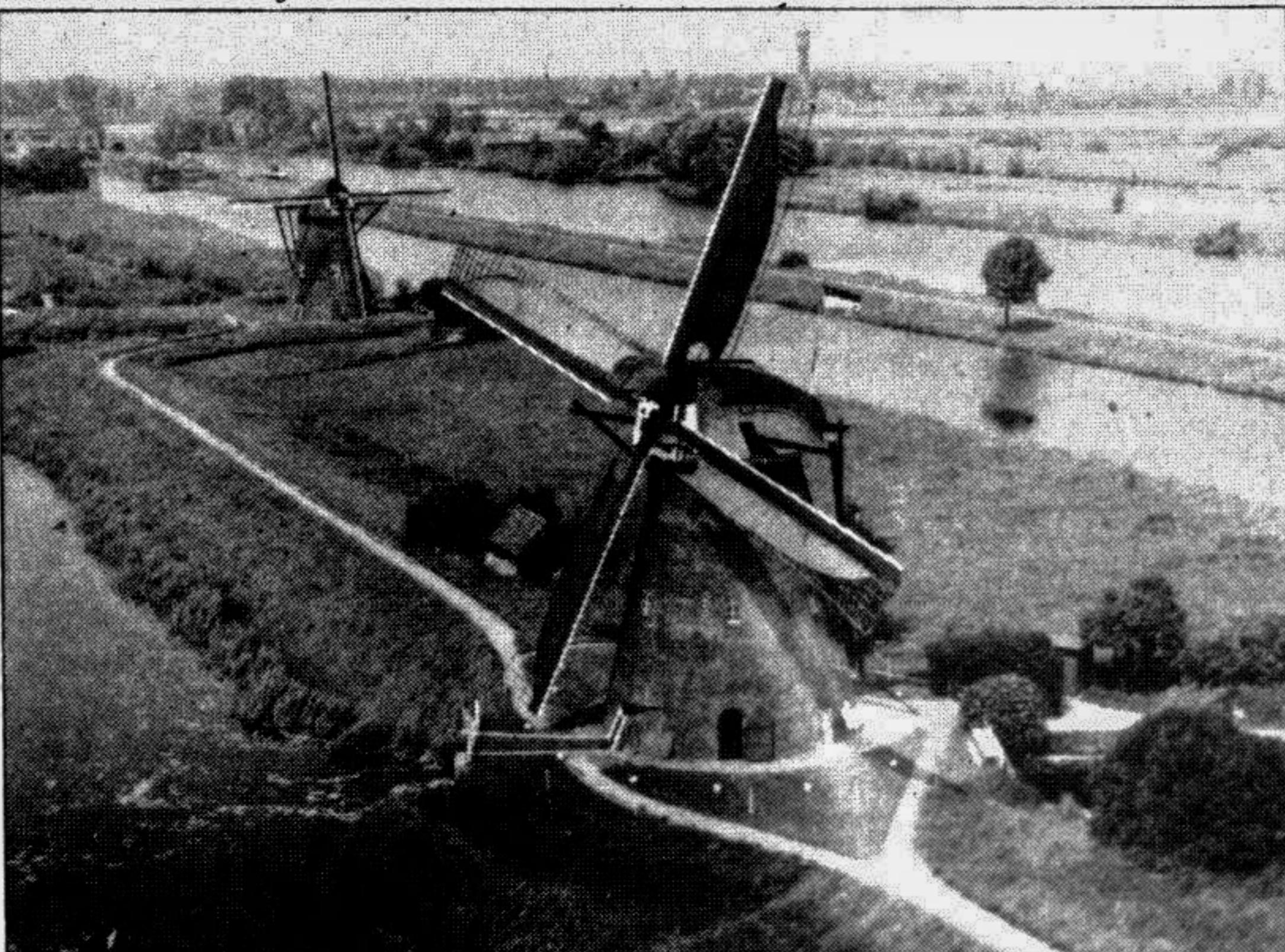
Koninginnedag has been celebrated in the Netherlands since 31 August 1891, when Queen Wilhelmina (1880-1962) celebrated her first birthday as Queen. Since this day also fell at the end of the school holidays, 31 August soon became a holiday for all Dutch schoolchildren. However, it was not yet a national holiday. The Royal Family did not usually attend any of the festivities held throughout the country on that day, although exceptions were sometimes made, as on Queen Wilhelmina's 50th birthday in 1930.

The Queen Mother, Emma (1858-1934), would spend the summer at Soestdijk Palace in Baarn, and every year the inhabitants of Baarn would bring her a floral tribute on her birthday (2 August). After 1937, Princess Juliana (b. 1909) took over this tradition on her birthday, 30 April. When she came to the throne in 1948, 30 April became Koninginnedag. Over the years the floral tribute grew from a parade into a national celebration. The coverage of the festivities on Dutch television from the mid-1950s did much to increase the popularity of Koninginnedag. During the reign of Queen Juliana (1948-1980) it gradually became a tradition for everyone to be given a day off work, eventually making 30 April a real public holiday. On 24 April 1980 a Royal Decree was issued stating that this day would henceforth be officially known as Koninginnedag, as had long been the custom. It was also decided that, if 30 April were to fall on a Sunday, the Queen's birthday would be celebrated on an earlier day.

When Queen Beatrix (b. 1938) succeeded to the throne on 30 April 1980, it was decided that 30 April would be kept as Koninginnedag. In her coronation address, the Queen announced that this should be regarded as a mark of respect for her mother. Her own birthday, 31 January, would be celebrated privately. Queen Beatrix attends the festivities each year in one or two places (which vary from year to year). She is generally accompanied by her husband, HRH Prince Claus, and other members of the Royal Family. Various events, such as fairs, sports days, children's parties and flea markets are held throughout the country, many of them organised by the local Oranjeverenigingen (associations of supporters of the Royal Family).

Henricus Gajentaan

Windmills at Kinderdijk



### Queen Beatrix

**W**HEN Queen Juliana abdicated at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam on 30 April 1980, her eldest daughter Beatrix became head of state and was inaugurated as queen the same day at a joint session of both Houses of Parliament in the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam. 30 April is also celebrated as Queen Beatrix's Official birthday. She was born on 31 January 1938 and spent most of the Second World War in Canada (May 1940-summer 1945) in order to ensure her safety. After secondary school she studied law at Leiden University, graduating in 1961. Even as a student, she followed the operation of the Dutch parliamentary system closely, and she has been a member of the Council of State (which advises the Crown) since her eighteenth birthday. Since her accession she has been its president as provided for by the Constitution, although the vice-president directs the Council's everyday work. Queen Beatrix has always shown great interest in social and cultural matters, both at home and abroad. In 1956 for example she became patron of the National Poliomyelitis Fund, which was later renamed the Princess Beatrix fund and has widened its sphere of activities over the years. She is also very interested in sculpture, painting, dramatic art and ballet, regularly attends exhibitions and performances and enjoys talking to artists and performers.

As Crown Princess she paid visits to many countries and international organizations and accompanied her parents on a number of state visits.

On 10 March 1966 she married Claus von Amsberg, a German diplomat born in



H M Queen Beatrix and H R H Prince Claus

photo Vincent Menthel

1926, on whom the titles Prince of the Netherlands and Jonkheer van Amsberg were conferred by Royal Decree.

The royal couple have three sons: Prince Willem-Alexander, born 1967; Prince Johan Friso, born 1968 and Prince Constantijn born 1969.

After her accession, Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus visited the Netherlands Antilles (in late 1980), and in spring 1981 the new Queen made her first state visits, to Belgium and Luxembourg, also in the company of Prince Claus. In August 1981 the Royal Family moved from their home in Drakesey Castle near Baarn to Huis ten Bosch in the

Hague, which has long been a royal palace.

As Head of State, Queen Beatrix closely follows the affairs of government. She is in regular and direct contact with her ministers and state secretaries, the Vice-President of the Council of State, the Queen's Commissioners in the provinces, the burgomasters of major towns and Dutch ambassadors abroad. The Queen's duties are both legislative and executive. However, no statutory provision can enter into force unless one or more ministers are answerable to Parliament and Royal Decrees are countersigned by them, and neither the Queen nor

ministers nor Parliament can amend legislation on their own. The Queen's Secretariat acts as a link between the Monarch and the various government departments. Much of the Queen's time is taken up with reading and signing state documents. She is also very much involved in the formation of new governments, when she holds consultations with the "formateurs" and "informateurs" whom she appoints to form the new Cabinet, and with the Vice-President of the Council of State, the speakers of both Houses of Parliament, the leaders of the parliamentary parties, Ministers of State and

other leading political figures.

In addition the Queen has many public duties as head of state, one of her principal tasks being the annual opening of Parliament on the third Tuesday in September. She also regularly receives in audience the heads of diplomatic missions to the Netherlands when they present their letters of credence or take their leave.

### Prince Claus

**P**RINCE Claus has been a member of the Council of State since 1967. He decided to concern himself with town and country planning in the broadest sense and to concentrate on problems of environmental protection. In 1967 he was appointed a member of the standing committee of the Town and Country Planning Advisory Council.

He is also interested in development aid and he was appointed a member of the National Advisory Council on Development Cooperation on account of his knowledge and experience in this field. In December 1972 Prince Claus launched a national campaign called "Kom over de brug" ("Come across the bridge") to raise funds for more than 700 projects in 80 countries. The aim of the campaign he said, "is to bridge the gulf between peoples who have more than enough and those who lack even the bare necessities." The Prince was installed as Chairman of the Organization of Netherlands Volunteers (SNV) in March 1974.

In October 1978 he was made special adviser for development cooperation at international and bilateral levels under the Ministers for Development Cooperation.

Minded Group (Canada, Denmark, The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden), into poverty and trends and the factors which determine poverty will continue.

Every project and programme will take account of the interests of women. Perceived divergence with the interests of men should be mapped out at the beginning of the project cycle in sectors which are deemed to be directly or indirectly relevant to women, so that they can be taken into account in the later stages. The instruments used for this purpose will range from a checklist to a Women in Development Impact Study. Nearly every sector in the country programme is relevant to women, and every new project identified in these sectors should meet the so-called DAC/WID criteria. This requirement will mean that by 1995 no less than 50% of expenditure on bilateral programmes in sectors which are directly relevant to women will satisfy the DAC/WID criteria. In addition, efforts will likewise be directed towards increasing women's autonomy in Bangladesh, the main stress will be on economic autonomy-equal access to and control over the means of production.

The policy on the alleviation of urban poverty will distinguish between the district towns, with a population of no more than 200,000 and the major cities such as Dhaka and Chittagong. Drinking water and sanitation projects in the district towns will be continued, while in the major cities the main emphasis will be on the problems of unemployment and on improving health care and education provision.

Research will complement and support the development efforts in the target sectors. Socio-economic research, conducted in collaboration with what is known as the Like-

## The Netherlands and Bangladesh Development Cooperation

of grants.

Programmes of financial and technical assistance have been developed in accordance with priorities of the Government of Bangladesh. As laid down in the Policy Plan for The Netherlands development cooperation with Bangladesh for the period 1992-95, the main priority areas for this cooperation are:

\* rural development, including activities aimed at the poorest sectors of the population, agricultural activities and water management projects;

\* environment;

\* women in development;

\* reducing urban poverty;

\* social infrastructure, including population, health, education, drinking water and sanitation;

\* physical infrastructure, including industrial development and water transport.

### Overall Policy Intentions

According to the Policy Plan for the period 1992-1995, the principal objective of development cooperation will be the structural alleviation of poverty.

As a result, the emphasis of the Bangladesh country programme will be on activities aimed at bringing about sustainable improvements in the living standards of the people, particularly in the rural dis-

tricts. Sustainable economic development is essential for the structural alleviation of poverty. If the poorest sections of the population are to benefit, growth will have to take place in labour-intensive sectors.

The Bangladesh country programme will therefore stress job creation and incentives to small businesses, in both rural and urban areas.

The aim of this shift of emphasis in the industrial sector towards small enterprises is to strengthen and broaden the country's manufacturing base, by making better use of the abundant labour available. This is also the objective of credit programmes and skills training courses.

The aim of integrated water resources management projects is to protect property and to render land suitable for agriculture and other productive activities. Dutch assistance to irrigation and crop diversification helps to bring in several harvests per year, to the benefit of production as well as employment.

Investment in people, with a view to both greater productive capacity and human development, will largely be achieved through continuing support to national programmes on primary education, health care and family planning. Drinking water and sanitation projects also contribute to these goals. Since official credit institutions have no facilities for small loans geared to the needs of the poorest sections of the population, credit will have to be made available mainly through NGOs, which also afford more scope for expanding participation in the political decision-making process.

Aid designed to meet the basic needs of rural people will be channelled mainly through NGOs, because for the Government institutions it proves difficult to reach the poorest sections of the population. However, effective government programmes in this sphere will receive support where possible. The growing focus on credit activities, small-scale businesses and job creation will help to push up expenditure on rural development (including the social sectors) from 30% to 45% of the cash ceiling by 1995.

Dutch efforts will aim at sustainable development, in which primary consideration is

### BANGLADESH AND THE NETHERLANDS EXPORTS AND IMPORTS 1992-93

#### MAIN FEATURES

- \* BANGLADESH EXPORTS TO THE NETHERLANDS ARE 3.6% OF TOTAL BANGLADESH EXPORTS
- \* VALUE OF BANGLADESH EXPORTS TO THE NETHERLANDS US \$ 85.8 MILLION
- \* BANGLADESH EXPORTS TO THE NETHERLANDS ARE 9.7% OF BANGLADESH EXPORTS TO EUROPEAN UNION COUNTRIES
- \* THE NETHERLANDS IS THE SIXTH LARGEST IMPORTER OF BANGLADESH PRODUCTS
- \* THE NETHERLANDS IS THE TWELFTH LARGEST EXPORTER TO BANGLADESH
- \* VALUE OF THE NETHERLANDS EXPORTS TO BANGLADESH US \$ 94 MILLION INCLUDING LOANS, AND GRANTS AND US \$ 51 MILLION WITHOUT LOANS AND GRANTS
- \* THE NETHERLANDS IS THE THIRD LARGEST EXPORTER AMONG EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO BANGLADESH