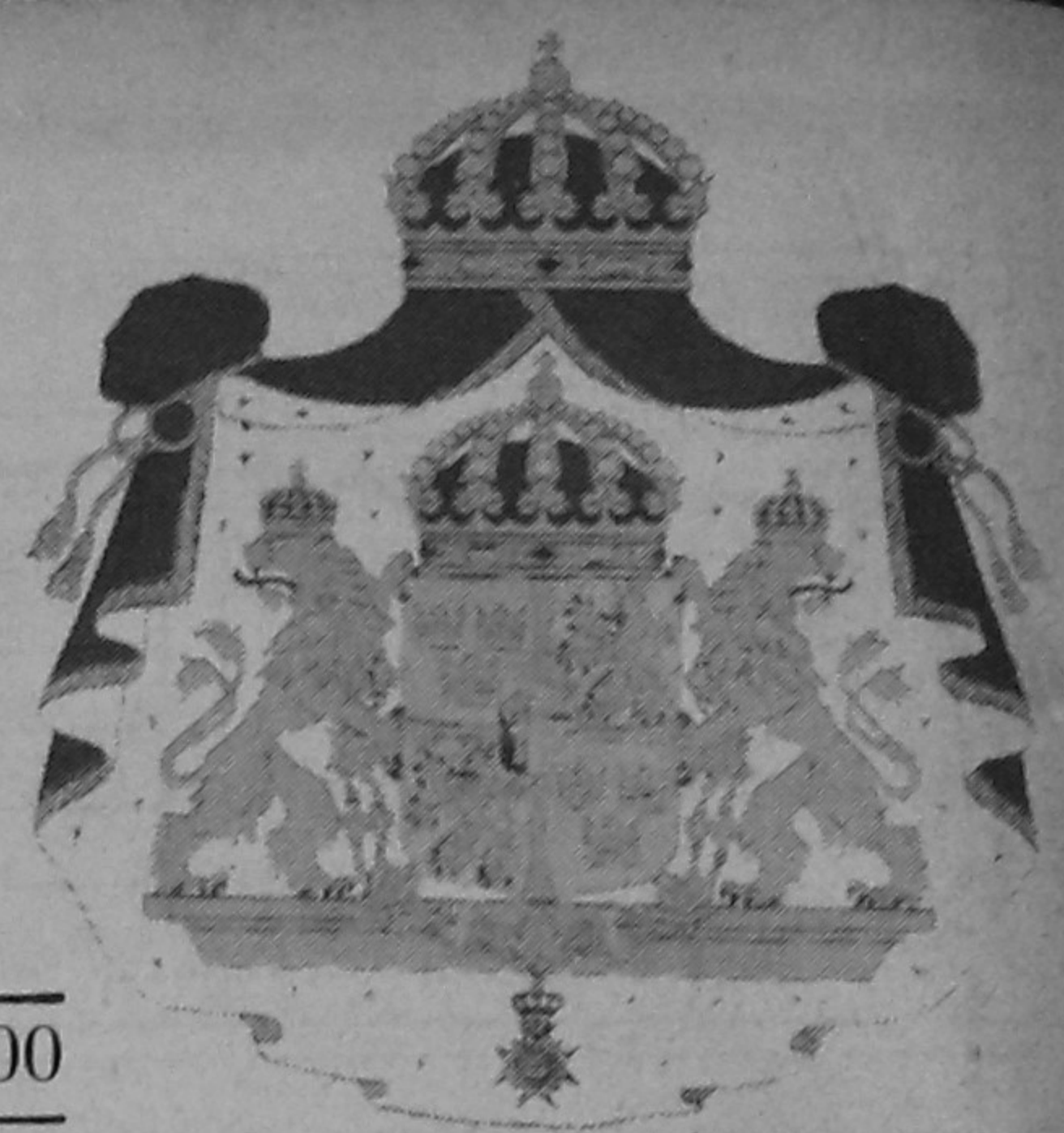


National Day of Sweden



The Daily Star

Special Supplement

June 6, 2000

6th June — from Flag Day to National Day

The Swedish flag — a yellow cross, on sky blue background.

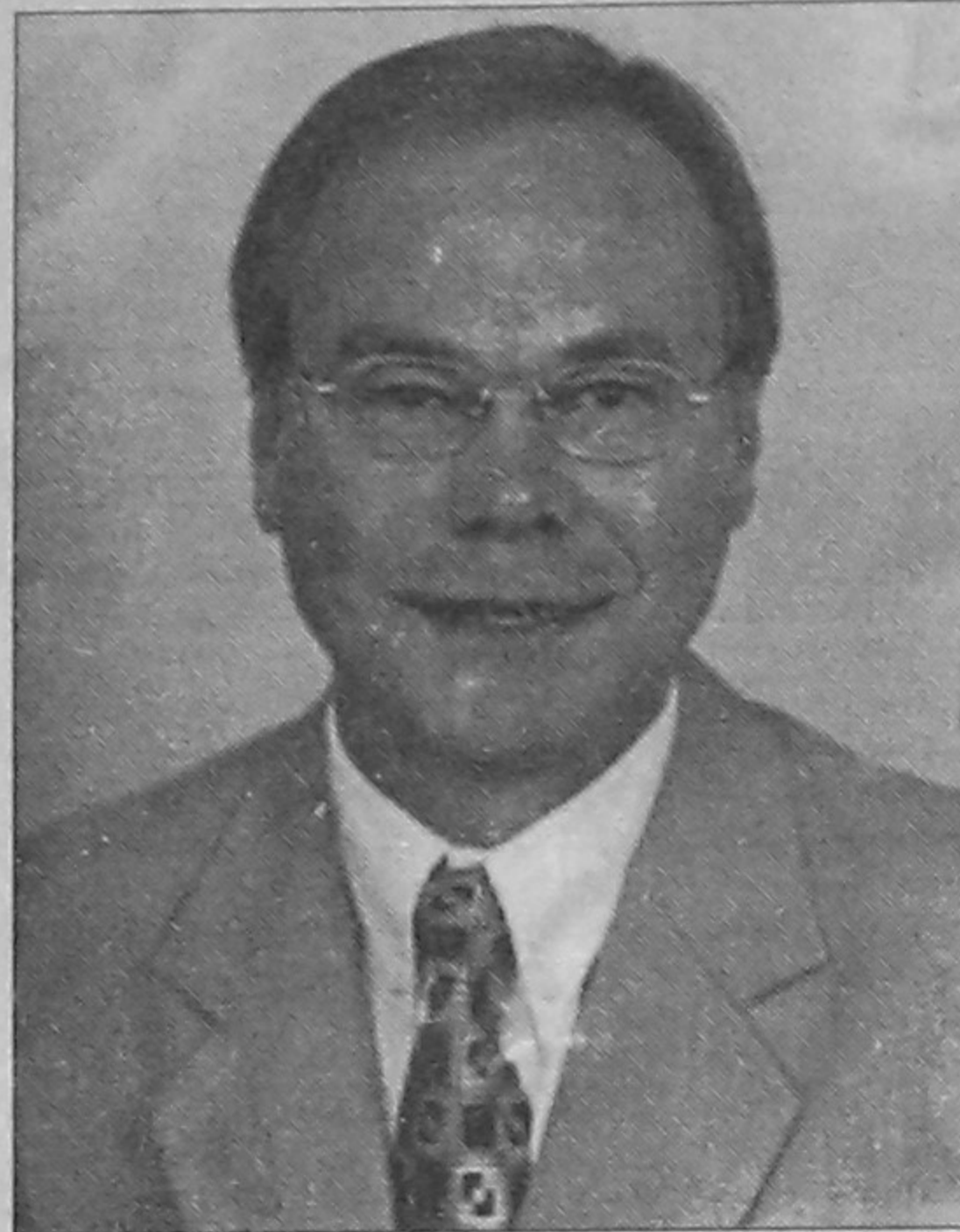
For a long time Sweden was perhaps the only country in the world with no official national day. On the "Swedish Flag Day", the 6th of June, the King used to present flags to representatives of various corporations in a festive parade at Stockholm Stadium and bring out the parade to Skansen.

It was as late as in 1983 that the National Day of Sweden in 6th June was put on the Swedish official agenda. It is celebrated in Sweden as a commemoration of the election and coronation

of Gustav Vasa as King of Sweden, which happened in 1523. The 6th of June also coincides with two other important occasions in Swedish history, namely the promulgation of the Constitution of 1806 and adaptation of the form of Government of 1974.

The celebration of the National Day is nowadays done as a part of a folk festival with the royal presentation of flags at Skansen as its highlight. Most of the Swedes will decorate their flag poles with the sky blue and yellow Swedish banner fluttering in the wind on June the 6th.

MESSAGE



ship of the European Union. Bangladesh is playing a constructive role internationally, in the United Nations, through the membership of the Security Council, provider of peace-keeping troops and other efforts. The signing of the CTBT is a further example.

Our development co-operation has continued to grow with focus on education, health, infrastructure, employment creation and human rights. The most recent visit by our Minister for International Development and Migration, Maj-Inger Klingvall is a further confirmation of a solid partnership.

Like other relatively small industrialised countries, Sweden is very dependent on international trade to maintain its high productivity and living standards. Sweden invests more in IT and telecom as well as in "Knowledge" education, training, research and development in relation to its GDP than any other nation. Sweden has more multinational companies on relation to its population than any other nation. Quite a few of these are represented in Bangladesh to offer quality services. Over the last few years we have seen encouraging signs of increased trade in both directions. I hope this trend can continue. With accelerated reforms in key sectors I am confident that the interest for investments will increase. For further information about business contacts and opportunities you are welcome to visit the Embassy Website (www.citechco.net/suedhaka).

I sincerely wish that our friendship and partnership will continue to grow and strengthen in the years to come, of mutual gain for both countries.

Anders Johnson
Ambassador of Sweden to Bangladesh



King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia

Sweden: a wireless kingdom

SWEDEN is the recognized European center of information technology. In certain areas, particularly in wireless communications, Sweden is number one in the world. Foreign investments in Sweden's hi-tech industry continue to accelerate. Companies such as Nortel Networks, Intel, Microsoft, Nokia and Oracle, have all chosen Sweden for their R&D centres and the development of new wireless applications. Likewise, Swedish companies are expanding internationally. Examples include SEB, Framfab, Icon Medical, Spray and Boxman.

Sweden is characterized by a sophisticated infrastructure, high penetration of Internet and PCs, an extensive use of mobile phones and a highly IT literate population. Some of the world's largest Internet consultants and award-winning software companies are based in Sweden. Young high-tech entrepreneurs inspire others, resulting in an increasing number of new companies aiming at global expansion.

Investments in infrastructure such as new IT universities are matched by investments in research. Over six percent of Sweden's gross domestic product (GDP) is invested in information technology and telecommunications. At the same time, Sweden invests a larger part of its GDP in "knowledge" — education, training, R&D — than any other country in the world, according to the OECD. As a result, Sweden has become one of the most wired nations on earth.

Leading the world in IT penetration

Penetration of telecom applications and the use of PCs and the Internet are far higher in Sweden than in any other nation. It has long been the world leader in the number of telephone lines per capita. And now, at least one of every two Swedes has a mobile phone. According to MTB, the Swedish Mobile Telecommunications Association, Sweden reached 5 million cellular users by the end of 1999, equal to a penetra-

tion of 56 per cent of the Swedish population.

Internet penetration continues to grow at a rapid pace. In December 1999, more than 52 per cent of all Swedes in the ages between 12 and 79 used the Internet. More than 3.6 million Swedes were Internet users, up by more than 640,000 from the previous year. 76 per cent of the population aged 12-24 and 69 per cent of the population aged 25-34 were Internet users. However, the fastest growing age group is 50-79 years old, with a penetration of 38 per cent.

Almost 70 per cent of Swedish households have an advanced personal computer, with most of them purchased in the past two years.

Software — fast-room industry segment

The Swedish software industry is one of the nation's fastest-growing industry segments. There are approximately 600 software companies in Sweden and sales have more than doubled in two years. In 1998 alone, the software industry grew by 40 per cent. Expansion was primarily due to the success of increased international sales.

Since companies primarily focus on business software, they are not as well-known by the general public as developers of consumer software. However, in their respective specialties, Swedish software companies are recognized as world leaders.

Large number of demanding customers

In relation to its population, Sweden has more multinational companies than any other nation. They include such world-famous corporations as ABB, AstraZeneca, Atlas Copco, Electrolux, Ericsson, Gambio, H&M, Ikea, Pharmacia and Upjohn, Saab, Sandvik, Sania, SKF, Stora Enso, Tetra Pak, and Volvo — to name just a few.

These companies' close proximity, both physical and cultural, has stimulated suppliers in all areas of business software applications. Demands for IT to enhance capacity for product ef-

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Booming trade — Sweden- Bangladesh

AFTER long being overlooked the Bangladeshi market is increasingly getting the attention of Swedish business. Trade has expanded markedly during the last years and both imports and exports are presently at record-high levels.

Total value of exports from Bangladesh to Sweden rose to 65 million US dollars in 1999, while imports stood at 22 million USD after a jump of 64 per cent compared to 1998. Figures for the first months of this year indicates a continuous upward trend.

The biggest export items from Sweden includes paper and pulp, plastics and chemicals together with a wide variety of machinery and electronics.

Imports are dominated by garments and shoes but also includes porcelain and chemicals together with a wide variety of machinery and electronics.

Imports are dominated by garments and shoes but also includes porcelain and toys. Almost 50 Swedish companies are represented in

Bangladesh today in different sectors.

From telecom to chocolate

In energy ABB is generating more than one third of the power in Bangladesh. The company is now focusing on projects to improve transmission and minimize system losses together with Power Development Board.

In telecom Ericsson is the market-leader in Bangladesh directing roughly 60 per cent of all mobile telephone calls made in the country. Having set up a branch-office in Dhaka as late as 1997, Ericsson is expanding rapidly and is now working with both fixed line networks as well as cellular communication. The company is co-operating with all three GSM-operators (Grameen Phone, Actel and Sheba) and is a partner to the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telecom Board.

In the paper and pulp sector Swedish trading House Elof Hansson has been highly active since 1952. The company has supplied raw material and machines, provided knowledge and expertise to many of the paper

mills in the country. Most notably to Kamaphuli Paper Mill in the Chittagong Hill Tracts which was modernized by Elof Hansson in the early 1980s with the support of Swedish aid.

In machinery Volvo Penta is selling pumps and generators. Meanwhile, Swedish cars from Volvo has been purchased by the government of Bangladesh, a tribute to the quality and high safety that has always been associated with the brand.

In the garment sector Swedish buying house H&M is purchasing more than 30 million items every year from local suppliers Bangladesh. With H&M shops all over the Europe and expansion taking place in the United States, the demand is likely to remain high. Lindex, another Swedish buying house has recently set up an office in Bangladesh.

Wide representation

Other well-known Swedish companies represented in Bangladesh includes Tetra Pak in packing, Alfa-Laval in the processed food industry and Getinge in medical equipments.

In fabrics, machines from Calator and Iro are sold for weaving and knitting.

IKEA, one of the largest sellers of interior furnishing in the world, has just recently started to buy textiles from Bangladesh. Svedala, a leading manufacturer of equipment for construction, is delivering machines to LGED for road works. In addition to the bigger names, numerous smaller Swedish companies are active in Bangladesh selling everything from chocolate and batteries to toilet accessories and iron hooks for hangers in the garment industry.

As a small and open economy Sweden has always been heavily dependent upon trade. As part of GDP exports of goods and services amount to approximately 45 per cent.

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Export companies in Sweden currently number almost 50000, but in fact a very small number of powerful groups ac-

count for the bulk of the trade. Some 95 per cent of all exports stem from less than a thousand companies.

Over the years Sweden's export has evolved from raw materials and fuels to more sophisticated and highly developed products.

Wood products, pulp and iron ore account for less than 10 per cent of total exports. The biggest sector is nowadays the engineering industry that accounts for 55 per cent of total exports. This includes the product group that is both the largest and fastest growing, namely mobile telephones where Ericsson has grown to become the largest export company.

The chemical industry has increased its share of exports under the lead of AstraZeneca and Pharmacia & Upjohn. Among semi-manufacturers, the paper industry and the steel industry are most widely represented.

Exports of foodstuff have traditionally been small but have increased rapidly in recent years. This is due partly to Sweden's entry into the EU

which has facilitated exports, in part to the success of a single product — Swedish vodka under the name of Absolut.

Swedish International Development Co-operation

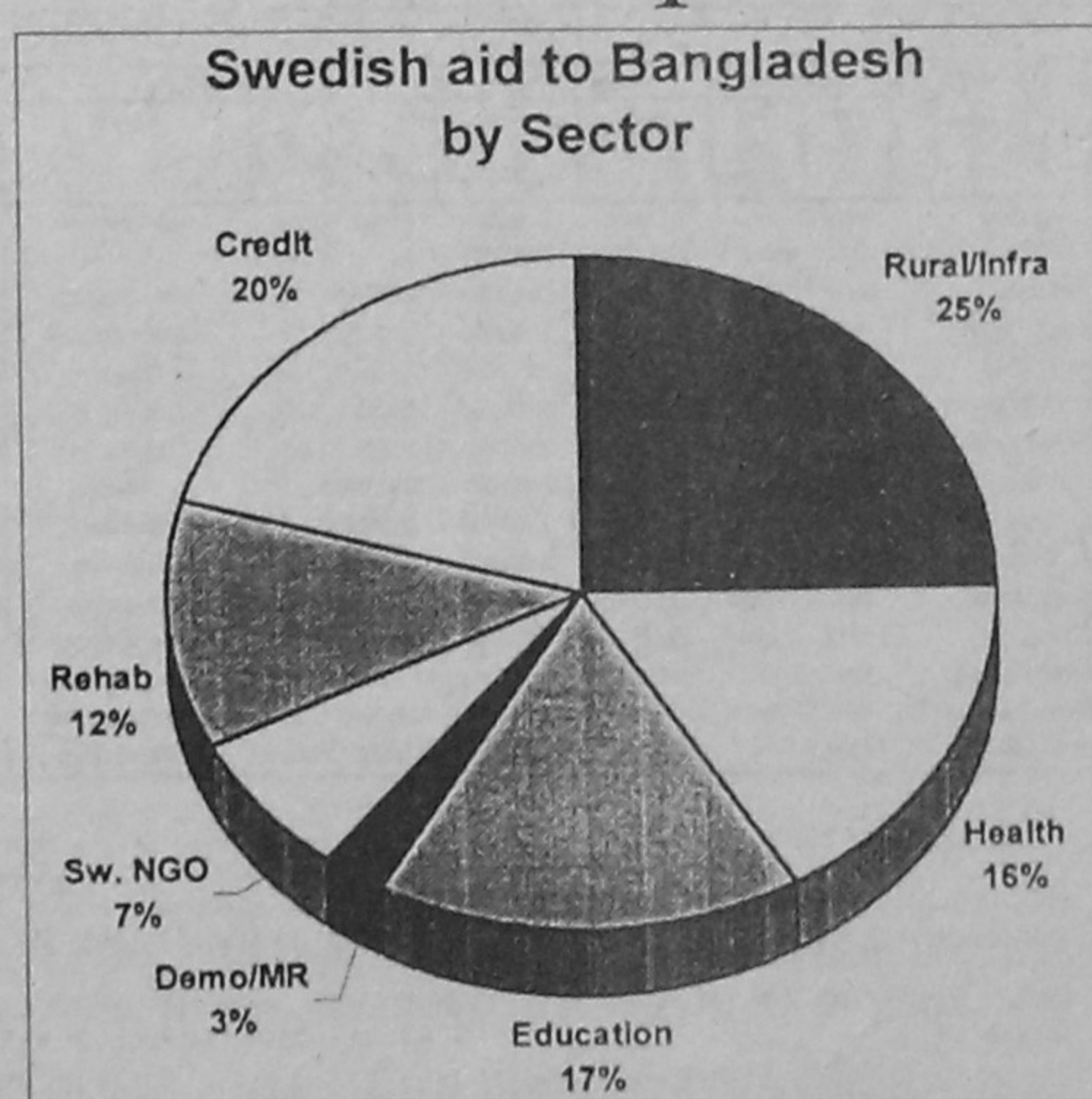
SWEDEN is one of the four countries-along with Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands that fulfill the UN recommendation that industrialized countries should contribute at least 0.7% of their GDP to development assistance. The average contribution of the countries within UN is as low as 0.3%.

In 1999 the total government appropriations for Swedish international development co-operation was SEK 14.5 billion. Of this sum about 25 per cent were channeled to multilateral development aid programmes such as those administered by the United Nations and the World Bank. Other development assistance programmes were related to refugees plus a number of EU programmes. About half was distributed on a bilateral basis

by the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida).

The strategy for Swedish development cooperation with Bangladesh: The strategy for Swedish development cooperation with Bangladesh aims mainly at poverty reduction, with a particular focus on women's rights and opportunities. Education, health and rural development are the most important areas. The Swedish assistance amounted in 1999 about 35 million USD as a grant. The Swedish Government is preparing a new Country Strategy for the development cooperation with Bangladesh to be operative from January 2001.

Education Sector: Within education, Sweden supports strategic and innovative educational interventions with the



objective of replicating successful models of quality education. One such effort is the piloting of post-literacy and continuing education in non-formal education with the aim to link literacy to skills development and income generation (NFE 2). Another non-formal education project (NFE 3-HTR) is working with hard to reach urban working children, with the aim of trying to create a better future for this very vulnerable group. Swedish support to education is made together with the government and other development partners.

Health and Population: The Swedish support to the Health sector is one of the most important areas for the Swedish development cooperation with Bangladesh. Sweden is part of a donor consortium to support the countrywide HPSP program in Bangladesh. The objective is a decentralised and improved

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Warmest Felicitations to the government and friendly people on the **National Day of Sweden**

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