



Norwegian National Day

17th May



The Norwegian Royal Family

Message from the Ambassador

It gives me great pleasure and honour to address the people of Bangladesh on the occasion of the Norwegian Constitution Day, 17th of May. Our Constitution was adopted the 17th of May 1814, and thus we can today celebrate the 190 years' anniversary for its existence. And not only is it one of the oldest Constitutions in the world, but also one of the most progressive at the time it was adopted.

How was this possible, and what made 1814 such a special year in Norwegian and European history?

Contemporary Norwegians described the year as Norway's "annus mirabilis" - the wonderful year, and a priest wrote in his diary on the very last day of 1814:

"This has actually been a single year. But centuries have run their course and been far less remarkable than this one year. I do not think any other country has seen its like."

It all started on January 14th, when the Napoleonic wars were drawing to a close and a peace treaty was signed in Kiel, in modern Germany. Under this treaty, dominion over Norway was transferred from the King of Denmark to the King of Sweden, ending 434 years of Danish rule. The Treaty of Kiel marked the birth of modern Norway. Under the leadership of the Danish Prince Christian Fredrik, who had become Governor of Norway, an assembly of 112 elected men gathered to draw up the Norwegian Constitution.

To understand the greatness of what happened, we need to look at what Norway was at the time when the constitution was written. A Norwegian historian has described Norway in 1814 like this:

"At the beginning of 1814, Norway was a backwater on the fringe of Europe, a poor and sparsely populated country, subject to Danish rule. Anything of consequence was determined in the Danish capital Copenhagen."

It was this "backwater on the fringe of Europe" that produced one of the most progressive constitutions of its time, inspired by the French Constitution of 1791. It is for example important to note that the Constitution of 1814 ensures the inhabitants of Norway the right to free exercise of their religion and the freedom of expression - among other things.

This brief tour of Norwegian history also gives us the impression of a young country. Measured in years of independence this is true - the union with Sweden was dissolved on 7th of June 1905 by a decision passed by the Norwegian Parliament (the Storting).

This peaceful ending of the union was also decisive for the very close and friendly relations that exist between Norway and Sweden.

Bangladeshi - Norwegian relations

The features of Bangladesh and Norway are different, but there are also similarities:

Both countries are young as independent nations, but both have long and rich history and traditions. Both countries see the importance of international co-operation through the United



Nations, seen in the fact that both Bangladesh and Norway are among the main contributors to the UN Peace keeping forces.

Norway was among the first to recognise Bangladesh, and after the independence our two countries have been co-operating as development partners. Our main areas of co-operation are good governance, human rights, education and private sector. These are vital areas for a sound and democratic development in any country, and we believe that through our co-operation we can make an impact in Bangladesh.

Children

The children represent hope and the future - in Norway and in Bangladesh. To secure the right and the access to education for all is therefore fundamental. Bangladesh has made a lot of progress in this area, and I am happy that Norway can contribute to the further improvements, both in quality and quantity, in the educational sector.

The important role of children is manifest in our celebration of the 17th of May. It is rightly called the Children's Day as it is the children's parade most Norwegians have come to associate with the Constitution Day. No matter how small a place is, the children will parade. And in the capital, Oslo, all schools will walk the main street of the city up to the Royal Palace where the Royal Family will greet them.

It was Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, the author of our national anthem and Nobel laureate in literature, who organised the first children's May 17 parade in Oslo in 1870. He was inspired by another of our great poets, Henrik Wergeland who had written an anthem to the children of Norway:

"We, too, are a nation - even we who are only two feet tall."

As Norwegians all over the world, also the Norwegians in Bangladesh will celebrate our Constitution Day, and the children's parade will play the leading part. I believe you will enjoy this together with us and see the parade as a symbol of the hope children represent for the future, for peace, for progress and development.

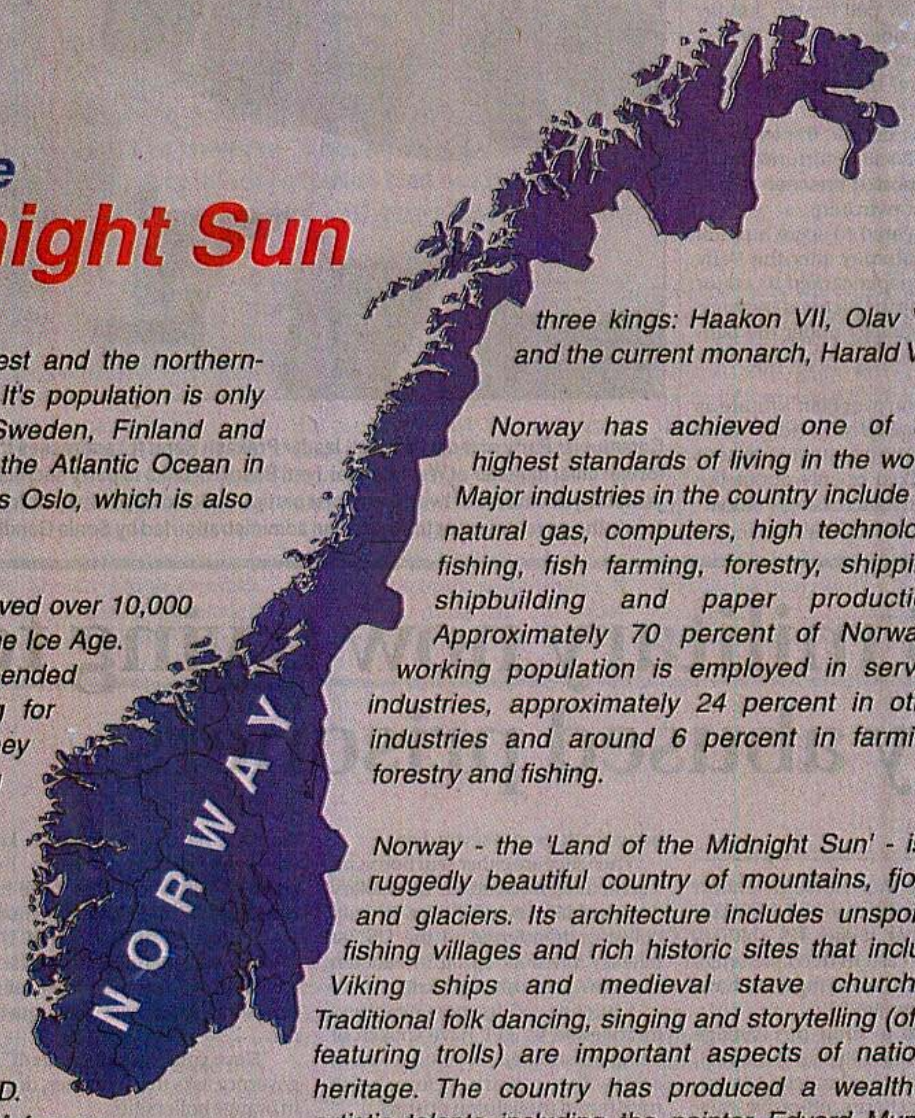
Aud Lise Norheim
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Royal Norwegian Embassy
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Land of the Midnight Sun

Norway is the sixth largest and the northernmost country in Europe. Its population is only 4.5 million. It borders Sweden, Finland and Russia in the east, and the Atlantic Ocean in the west. Its capital city is Oslo, which is also the largest town.

Norway's first settlers arrived over 10,000 years ago at the end of the Ice Age.

Initially, Norwegians depended on fishing and trapping for their livelihood. Later, they developed ocean-going vessels and became expert seafarers. An important part of Norwegian history is the Viking Age, thought to have begun with the plundering of England's Lindisfarne monastery by Nordic pirates in 793 AD. Viking leader Harald Hårfagre



three kings: Haakon VII, Olav V, and the current monarch, Harald V.

Norway has achieved one of the highest standards of living in the world. Major industries in the country include oil, natural gas, computers, high technology, fishing, fish farming, forestry, shipping, shipbuilding and paper production. Approximately 70 percent of Norway's working population is employed in service industries, approximately 24 percent in other industries and around 6 percent in farming, forestry and fishing.

Norway - the 'Land of the Midnight Sun' - is a ruggedly beautiful country of mountains, fjords and glaciers. Its architecture includes unspoiled fishing villages and rich historic sites that include Viking ships and medieval stave churches. Traditional folk dancing, singing and storytelling (often featuring trolls) are important aspects of national heritage. The country has produced a wealth of artistic talents including the painter Edvard Munch,



The Telenor group

Telenor is the largest telecommunications company of Norway, with substantial international operations. Close to 50 percent of the revenues come from international mobile operations. The activities are managed mainly through fully owned companies and within four business areas. Fixed line networks, broadcast, satellite and mobile operations are the main business areas with mobile communications being the largest area.

Telenor's International Mobile Business

The story begins in 1981 with the launch of the mobile communication network in Norway. During the 20-year period thereafter, the company's operations have grown to ownership in 14 mobile operations world wide, primarily in the Nordic region, Europe and Southeast Asia.

In addition to the investments, Telenor has provided the companies with extensive transfer of managerial expertise and technological know-how. GrameenPhone of Bangladesh, started its operations on March 26, 1997, the country's Independence Day. It was the first investment of Telenor in Asia. With a 51 percent ownership and a contribution of a large number of expatriates, GrameenPhone has become one of the most valuable companies in the Telenor family.

The success story of Telenor Mobile's international operations has given the company a position among the 12 largest mobile operators world wide, with more than 35 million subscribers. The mobile family of Telenor is represented in countries geographically far apart and on different levels of technological and market development. This creates the opportunity of technology transfer and market experience across the borders and companies.

Telenor Mobile business area currently consists of GrameenPhone (mobile operator in Bangladesh), DiGi (Malaysia), Kyivstar GSM (Ukraine), Pannon GSM (Hungary),

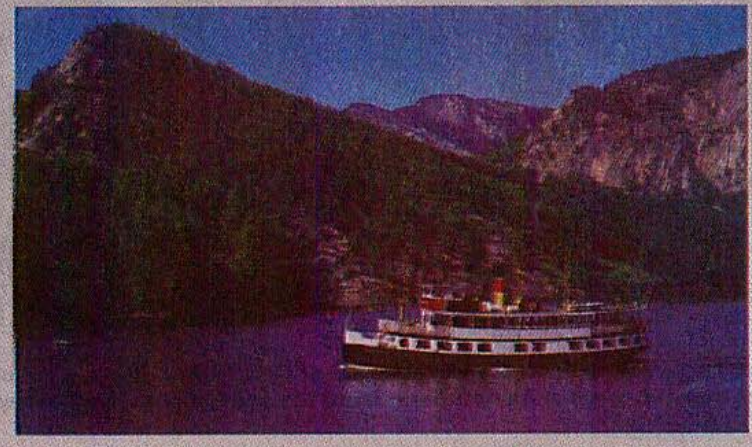
Sonofon (Denmark), DTAC (Thailand), VimpelCom (Russia), One (Austria) and Telenor Mobil (Norway).

In April 2004, Telenor received a nationwide GSM license in Pakistan. Telenor is working under the ambition of opening the network within one year, and through an investment of one and a half billion US dollars over a period of ten years, to make the Pakistan story as successful as GrameenPhone. The experience from the Greenfield operations in Bangladesh and the cultural and business understanding around the region were important elements in the decision of taking this step. Telenor is also prepared to transfer competence to provide the operations in Pakistan the support needed for success.

Another lesson to learn from the international operations is to understand the markets, trends of development and the acceptance of new technology. Mobile telephony is of high interest to both genders and all generations because it is bringing people together and makes communication much easier. Experiences from more developed countries can be of great benefit to countries like Bangladesh, where the usage of electronic communications still is for those who can afford it. There are only 2.3 telephones per one hundred people in the country, which is one of the lowest telephone penetration rates in the world. If the phones are easy to operate and prices are reduced, the market is expected to develop further, as has happened in many other similar countries.

In this respect, Telenor through its engagement in GrameenPhone, is contributing to the establishment and further development of the communications infrastructure of Bangladesh. We support the vision of the company saying Good Business leads to Good Development and we are proud to see that GP is fulfilling this vision.

unified Norway around 900, and the Viking king Olav, adopting the religion of the conquered lands, converted the people to Christianity a century later. The Vikings were great sailors and became the first to cross the Atlantic. In 1397 Norway was absorbed into a union with Denmark which lasted over 400 years. Then Norway was ceded to Sweden in 1814. Growing nationalism eventually led to Norway's peaceful secession from Sweden in 1905.



Today, Norway is a constitutional monarchy, with a well-developed democracy and comprehensive welfare systems. The country is governed according to parliamentary principles where the Norwegian Storting (parliament) has legislative power and the government has executive power. The King is the head of state, but has no real political power. Among the people of Norway, however, the royal family has always had a special role as a symbol of the country's independence. Since 1905, the country has had

composer Edvard Grieg, sculptor Gustav Vigeland and playwright Henrik Ibsen. Norway has also produced three winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature: Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Sigrid Undset and Knut Hamsun.

The Constitution Day (17 May) is Norway's most colorful and joyful holiday. It is first and foremost the children's day with children's parades, games, festivities and fun. The colorful national costumes are popular to wear on this day.



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