



Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

The United Kingdom and Bangladesh: New Heights

HIGH COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE:



Anwar Choudhury
British High Commissioner to Bangladesh

Building a special relationship is not easy. At times, it is like climbing a steep mountain: slowly, carefully picking the right course upwards over the rocks, hanging on through risks, pitfalls and exposed to the harsh elements. The challenge can be exhausting; slogging at the rock face, the temptations to slacken the pace, or even climb down, are ever-present.

Until you turn around and take in the view. Then you see the beauty, the achievement, the distance travelled.

Our Foreign Secretary David Miliband recognised this during his recent visit to Bangladesh - I believe he was right on target when he described the special relationship shared by the United Kingdom and Bangladesh as having reached 'new heights'. As I move on, after four years as the UK's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, we can feel proud to reflect on this achievement between our countries. Rich and enduring bonds have been strengthened and broadened by new areas of co-operation.

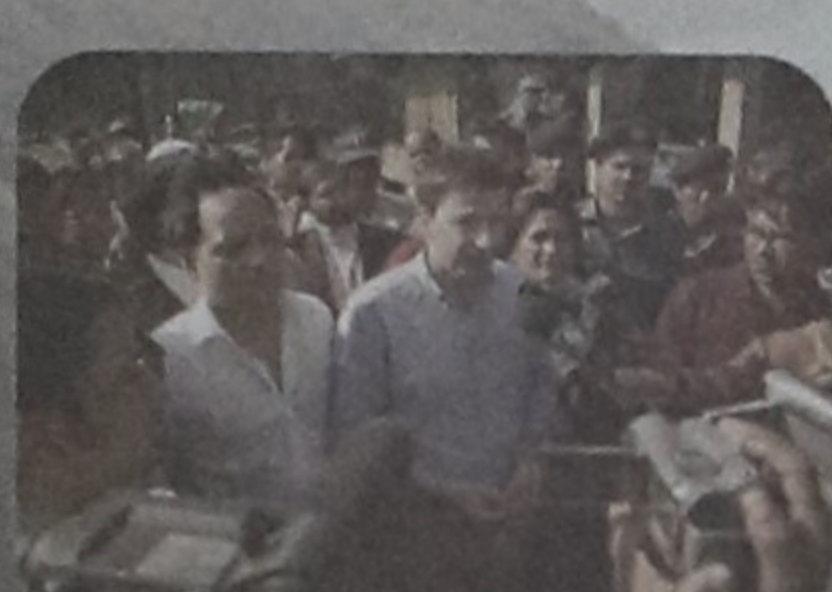
Engagement at the top

One clear sign of the new heights of our relationship is the flourishing degree of top-level engagement. In the last few months, three Cabinet-level UK Ministers have visited Bangladesh, with wide-ranging agendas that illustrate the huge sweep of our common interests.

In December, Douglas Alexander, Secretary of State



for International Development, highlighted the UK's major contribution to disaster relief after Cyclone Sidr and the 2007 floods, explained our commitment to long-term assistance for poverty reduction and announced substantial new UK funding to help Bangladesh adapt to the impacts of climate change. Foreign Secretary David Miliband, underlined the UK's



support for the process of preparing for elections and building the institutions that will help democracy endure thereafter, during his visit in February, as well as signalling the UK's commitment to furthering joint interests on a range of issues including countering climate change and extremism. Then in April, our Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, completed a successful

visit to develop further bilateral co-operation on counter-terrorism and migration. And when Prime Minister Gordon Brown met the Chief Adviser to Bangladesh's caretaker Government, Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed in London in March, he described a "thriving strategic partnership of equals".

Indeed, what I find particularly exciting as I move on after four years

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