



## Migration and border control

Throughout the year, officials at the British High Commission have been working closely with the Government of Bangladesh in the challenging fields of migration management and border security. In consultation with Special Branch Immigration in Dhaka, the High Commission's Migration Delivery Officer has arranged the supply of state-of-the-art document examination equipment, and also funded training sessions for the use of the equipment at the various land, sea and airports of Bangladesh.

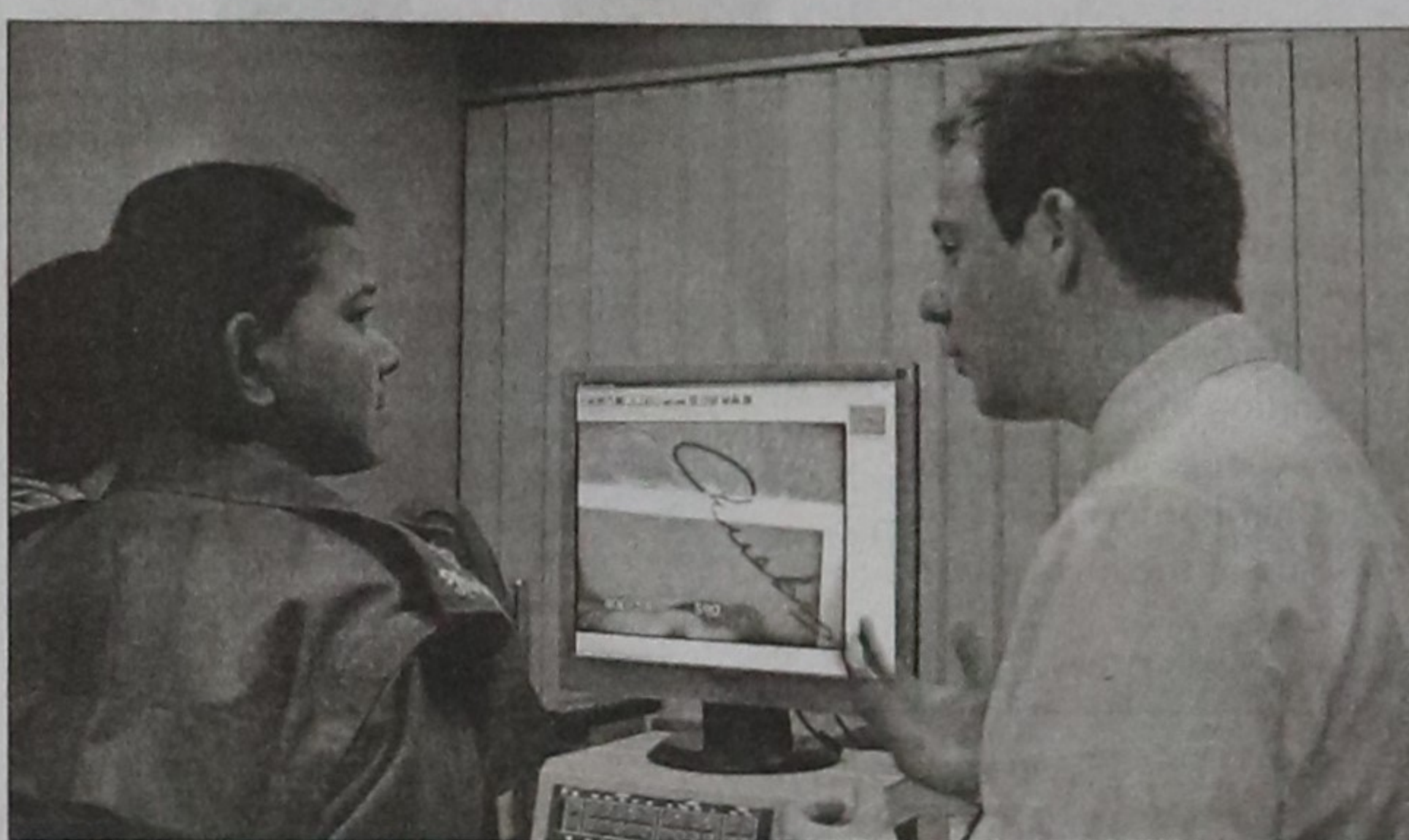
This co-operation is already proving an invaluable resource in local immigration's difficult fight against the use of false documents to enter and leave

Bangladesh and is of particular relevance to those in Bangladesh who are at the forefront of Bangladesh's efforts to prevent the trafficking of women and children. The equipment and the training provided will assist Special Branch in securing convictions against traffickers and enable them to protect the most vulnerable Bangladeshi citizens on whom traffickers prey.

The Migration Delivery Officer is from the Migration Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which draws both funding and personnel from across government. The combined ethos of departments including the Department for International Development, the Ministry of Justice and the UK Border

Agency allows the High Commission to take forward a range of projects that support social development programmes. For example, a joint project with a local NGO is examining the best options for child-care in Bangladesh. In this way, a child that was abandoned or trafficked and then returned to their homeland can be ensured careful treatment and a safe future.

In 2008, there were 43,200 UK visa applications submitted in Bangladesh and demand is highest for visits (about 48% of applications, most of which are family visits, studies (26%) and settlement (13%). The number of students aspiring for a UK education degree has seen a sharp rise in recent years and today, the UK is



one of the leading preferred countries for overseas education.

To facilitate thousands of Bangladeshi students in

2009, UK Border Agency launched Points based system (Tier 4) making education in the UK easy, fun and exciting. Guaranteeing

transparency and easy processing of the visa application by prospective students, the new system is based on 40 points: 30 points

for showing evidence that a student has been accepted at a recognised institution along with a visa letter and 10 points for providing proof of financial support.

The new system allows students to work part-time during course times and full-time during holidays, keeping also the provision of a full-time work for up to two years after the completion of a full time academic course. At the same time, to help students unfamiliar with UK institutes enrol at the best

possible academic establishments, the UK government has enlisted registered institutions at the [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk).

The UK wants more students from Bangladesh to come and study at its colleges and universities, as this will not only bring the new generations of the two countries together but will also strengthen an intellectual level link that has profoundly deep roots.

**The other Tiers are:**  
Tier 1: Highly skilled migrants in June 2008  
Tier 2: Skilled workers with an offer of a job in November 2008  
Tier 5: Temporary workers and youth mobility in November 2008

## For food security

### Safety nets, best use of water and land, and foresight required

Despite making noteworthy strides in food security, a large section of Bangladesh still remains undernourished, and unpredictable food prices just after a massive flood and the devastating cyclone in 2007 only jeopardised the delicate status of food security. At a recently held conference, suggestions and promises of help were offered on how Bangladesh can ensure food at all times and at an affordable price.

Food security, in short, means enough food for everyone all the year round

and the ability of the masses to buy food in times of need. But, since independence, Bangladesh has had to face severe bouts of insecurity in this sector, often due to relentless natural calamities and at times, due to global economic upheavals. Of course, in between, there have been many other causes, some political and some related to lack of foresight by the authority, that resulted in food shortage, malnutrition and eventually, deaths among children and women.

Several famines post



Food security conference.

DFID, acknowledged the big challenge Bangladesh faces in ensuring food security for all; stating that 69 million people in the country go hungry, more than the entire population of the UK, and 29 million men, women and children don't know where their next meal is coming from. He welcomed the government's move to update its policy and take careful political choices to tackle the situation.

'Food security, like economic and financial, climate and physical security is a global issue and requires

global action,' said Chris Austin and added that the UK government is glad to support Bangladesh in her quest for food security.

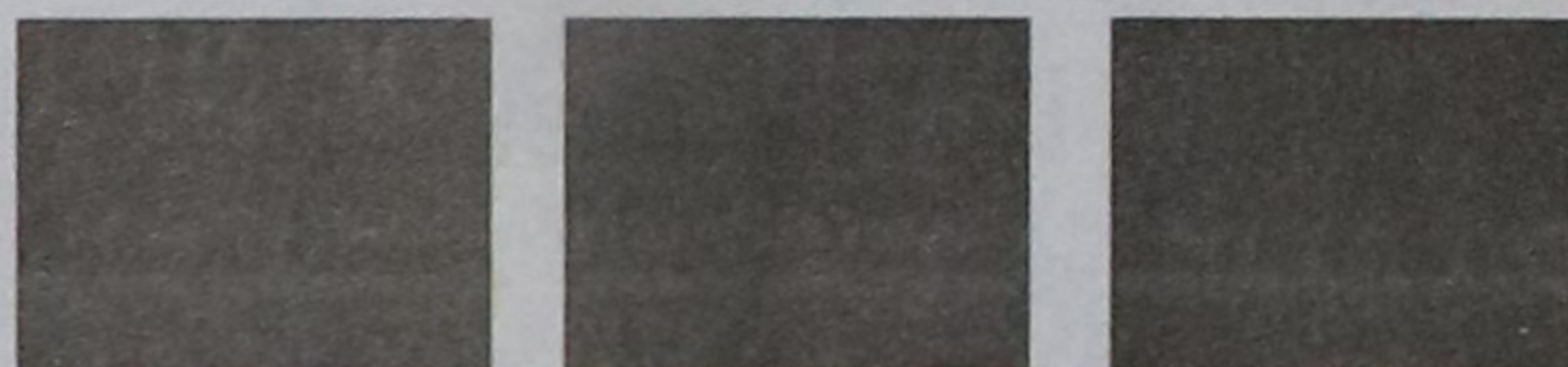
Referring to the recently held London Summit of G20 countries, he said that the UK, through DFID, has promised £200 million to a global Rapid Social Response Fund to help counter food insecurity. In addition UK expects to spend £250 million over the next five years in Bangladesh, to help some of the poorest and most vulnerable groups living in haors, coastal areas and the north-western char

islands; and to support urban agriculture and improved livelihoods amongst slum communities.

'But effective action also requires addressing links between food security and climate change, rural economic growth, safety nets for the vulnerable and drawing on a range of expertise and knowledge,' observed Chris Austin.

Talking as one of the chief guests, Begum Matia Chowdhury, minister for agriculture, said that there

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World War 2 only deepened the problem and we all know that whenever Bangladesh secured a certain ground on food security, she was hit by some form of natural disaster.

But there is some positive news too, as over the years, due to interventions by donors and steps by democratically elected governments, strides were made in tackling food insecurity.

Acknowledging this, Abdur Razzak, minister for food and disaster management said, 'Our achievements in the enhancement of people's economic access to food have also been significant. Poverty incidence has significantly decreased over the years and is currently about 40%. The prevalence of malnutrition has also been decreasing since 1990. However, the rates remain unacceptably high. The situation might have worsened if efforts were not there to actualise continuous agricultural and economic growth.'

However, despite these signs of hope, food security is still not placed on a secure platform and with the recent global economic meltdown, the problem has come out in the forefront with new implications. And despite reasonable size of national food stocks in storage, in some ultra-poor homes the situation is more precarious, in particular for pregnant women and young children who suffer most from malnutrition.

For Bangladesh, where food security has not been solidly secured in all parts of the country, two recent natural calamities of grave proportions didn't help. First was the flood in 2007

followed by the devastating cyclone in the south-west part of Bangladesh that left a whole region battered with crop lands affected by strong winds.

Add to this the perennial problems created by spiraling population and an excess pressure on finite resources. The fact remains that 40% of the population in Bangladesh live below poverty line and cannot afford the energy diet of 2122 kilocalories per person a day. Understandably, the situation surrounding proper nourishment received a further blow when, in the second half of 2008, food prices went beyond the buying capacity of the common man and once again the age-old complication surrounding food insecurity resurfaced, most severely affecting those most vulnerable - the poorest.

In that light, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies and the UK Government, through its Department for International Development (DFID), recently organised a national conference on market volatility, vulnerability and policy options for food security.

Other donors, the European Commission (EC), USAID, World Bank (WB), Denmark and UN specialist agencies, such as Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), were also present. And so were eminent independent Bangladeshi experts in food security and government officials.

At the conference, held on April 9, Chris Austin, country representative of



heartiest felicitations to Her Majesty the Queen of England on her birthday

