



Queen's Day

National Day of the Netherlands



Her Majesty Queen Beatrix

Solving delta dilemmas

CHANGES in the coming decades are expected to result in no less than 80% of the world's people living in urban areas adjacent to coasts or major rivers. However, space is at a premium and waterside locations present threats as well as opportunities. Especially in view of expected climate changes, the world faces a number of challenges in this respect. The Netherlands has solutions to offer, both at home and abroad.

Living in coastal regions and delta's is a risky business. The Netherlands is vulnerable not only to flooding, but also to water depletion,

shortages of groundwater, subsidence, salt intrusion and pollution. A nation struggling to accommodate over 16 million people on a patch of land measuring only 33,800 km² - with more than half of it lying under sea level - must necessarily find ways to ensure both productivity and safety. The Dutch solution is a combination of hard and soft measures. Innovative delta technology offers a wide range of methods to protect against flooding. In the Netherlands, delta engineering measures are always consid-

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MESSAGE

In its National Water Plan 2010 the Netherlands has formulated its ambitions for its international water cooperation programme 2010-2015: 'Water Mondiaal' (Global Water). In this programme the Netherlands seeks cooperation agreements with countries in delta areas, Bangladesh being an obvious choice for such an agreement. Bangladesh and the

Netherlands have a long tradition of cooperation in the field of water management. This cooperation will, as a result of the ambitious 'Global Water Plan', be broadened. A pre-identification mission is at present in Bangladesh to identify possible fields of cooperation between the two countries. Issues that will be discussed during their visit are 'Water Supply and Sanitation', 'Water and Food and

Ecosystems', 'Water and Safety', 'Climate Change Adaptation' and 'Water Governance'.

I am convinced that the fruitful cooperation in the water sector will continue to grow and I trust that the articles on the Dutch Water sector will provide you with an interesting insight into the Netherlands and its 'relationship with water'.



Alphons Hennekens
Ambassador of the Netherlands to Bangladesh

The Dutch water sector: Resourceful and cooperative

WIND, water and wide open spaces have shaped the Netherlands and its history. To its inhabitants, the Dutch, water has always been both friend and foe. The country that is the Netherlands, often referred to as Holland, is a relatively small deltaic region in Western Europe. Three major European rivers, the Rhine, the Meuse and the Scheldt, fan out across the country before flowing into the North Sea.

As in many other deltas around the globe, fertile soil, natural transport routes and a strategic position for cross-border and overseas trade have made this low-lying region particularly attractive to many people: from early settlers (farmers and fishermen) to contemporary entrepreneurs in manufacturing and service industries. Not surprisingly, the

Netherlands has long been a seafaring nation with an international outlook.

Joining forces

In order to live here, the Dutch had to be both resourceful and cooperative. By systematically draining wetlands and lakes, building dikes around them and keeping them dry, they have created new land on which to farm and build. These polders are a well-known feature of the Dutch landscape. As far back as the 13th century, local communities developed district water boards to manage their water. Today these democratic institutions are still operational as regional water authorities. They are an example of how the Dutch have naturally joined forces to face a common enemy and find lasting solutions to water-related challenges.

Exporting know-how

As for resourcefulness, having lived in a delta for centuries, the Dutch had to become skilled water managers. They have learned by experience, both at home and abroad, and have long exported Dutch know-how for the benefit of others. As early as the 7th century, the Dutch helped to reclaim and cultivate land around the Elbe delta, in what is now Northern Germany. During the second half of the 19th century, Dutch engineers were invited to work on coastal land reclamation, irrigation schemes, river management and port construction in Japan and China. These and similar experiences across the world proved to be the basis for lasting relationships between the Dutch water sector and international counterparts, leading to the constant exchange of knowledge

and application of water management expertise.

Delta and water technology

Large-scale developments like the embankment of the Zuiderzee to create Lake IJsselmeer (1932) and the construction of the Delta Works in the second half of the 20th century generated new knowledge which was repeatedly applied abroad.

Over the decades, the Dutch have honed their expertise in widely varying aspects of water management, from land reclamation to water education. This expertise now encompasses a vast range of disciplines generally referred to as 'delta technology'

(a term which encompasses hydraulic engineering, flood protec-

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On the Occasion of Queen's Day & National Day of the Netherlands


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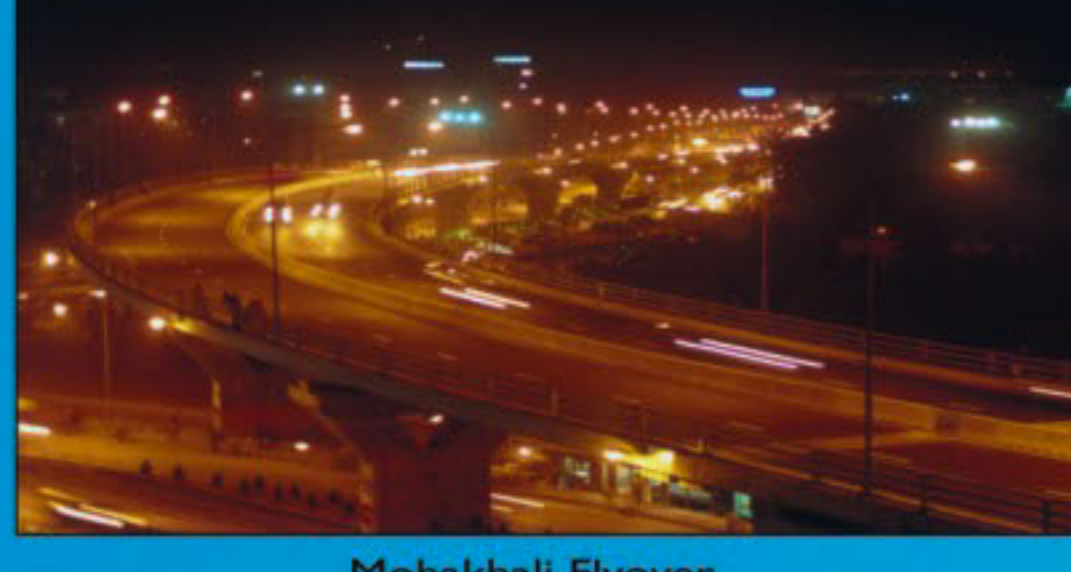
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Best wishes to the people of the Netherlands on their *Queen's day & the National day*

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