



NORWEGIAN CONSTITUTION DAY

17 May

Message from the Ambassador



Today the 17th of May is The Norwegian Constitution Day. This day is of immense importance for the Norwegian people, and it is therefore a great pleasure and honour for me to address the Government and the people of Bangladesh. Our Constitution Day is celebrated all over Norway as well as at our missions all over the world. The children are the centerpiece of this celebration. In every municipality each elementary school arranges its own parade with marching brass bands. The biggest parade is in the capital Oslo with students

from more than 100 schools marching through the city centre and passing the Royal Palace where the Royal Family greets the parade and the people.

This year we commemorate our national poet, playwright and writer Bjørnsterne Bjørnson who died on 26 April 1910. Bjørnson wrote our national anthem: "Yes, we love our country", and he received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1903. Throughout his life Bjørnson had a fierce interest in politics and played a significant role in Norway's fight for independence.

The Norwegian-Bangladeshi ties date back to 14 April 1972, shortly after Bangladesh gained its independence. Since 1973, Bangladesh has been one of the main recipients of Norwegian development assistance. Such assistance has thus been central to the bilateral relationship, and Norway's main goal has been to assist Bangladesh in its efforts to reduce poverty. Both government and non-government actors have played important roles in this partnership. Until 1995, the principal areas of cooperation were import assistance, health, river transportation and shipping. After 1995, the emphasis shifted to democratization, education, culture and private sector development. Governance, with a particular focus on human rights, women and gender equality, have been overriding concerns in all policies.

Through reaching social and economic milestones, Bangladesh has become increasingly independent of foreign assistance. Against this backdrop Bangladesh and Norway have entered into a new era of cooperation, based more on political dialogue and institutional cooperation.

Areas such as commercial interests, energy and renewable energy, climate change and disaster management, promoting women's participation in society, human rights, curbing corruption and improving the quality of governance, technology transfer, cultural cooperation and common international challenges such as UN-reforms, UN peace keeping missions and regional peace and stability, are all suitable for this new mode of cooperation. The future direction of bilateral relations between our two countries was discussed during the very fruitful and recent visit to Norway in February this year, by the Bangladeshi Foreign Secretary, Mr. Mijarul Quayes. During the bilateral consultations, a Protocol was signed by Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes and his Norwegian counterpart the Norwegian Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Atle Leikvoll.

During the last years we have seen an increase in trade between our two countries. Bangladesh has a huge trade surplus in its trade with Norway, and there is even more scope and opportunities for commercial cooperation.

As private sector development cooperation is one of the focus areas for future cooperation, it has been decided to establish a Business-to-Business program in Bangladesh this year. A government institution, Innovation Norway, has been given the task to implement such a program within sectors such as ICT, energy and power, ship building, marine activities and trade.

I believe that co-operation with other countries reinforces a sound and democratic development in any country. The partnership between Bangladesh and Norway is a trusted one, and I am confident that it will continue to play an important role in the years to come.

The people of Norway fought many hard and difficult battles for independence and the nation's Constitution. So did the people of Bangladesh. This is a shared heritage of our nations.

Today, on our Constitution Day, it is my sincere wish that the road ahead for Bangladesh and its people will be a peaceful one, based on the principles of a democratic society governed by the rule of law as envisaged in the Constitution of Bangladesh.

Ingebjørg Størfing
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Ambassador of Norway to Bangladesh



The Norwegian Royal Family greets the children's parade from the palace

Some quick facts about Norway

- Location: North Western Europe
- Borders: Sweden, Finland and Russia
- Coastline: 2500 km straight coast, including the fjords and islands the coastline extends up to 83,000 km
- Area: 385,555 sq. km, more than twice the size of Bangladesh
- Population: 4.8 million, about one third of Dhaka
- Minorities: Indigenous Sami, population 50,000
- Foreign nationals: 415,000

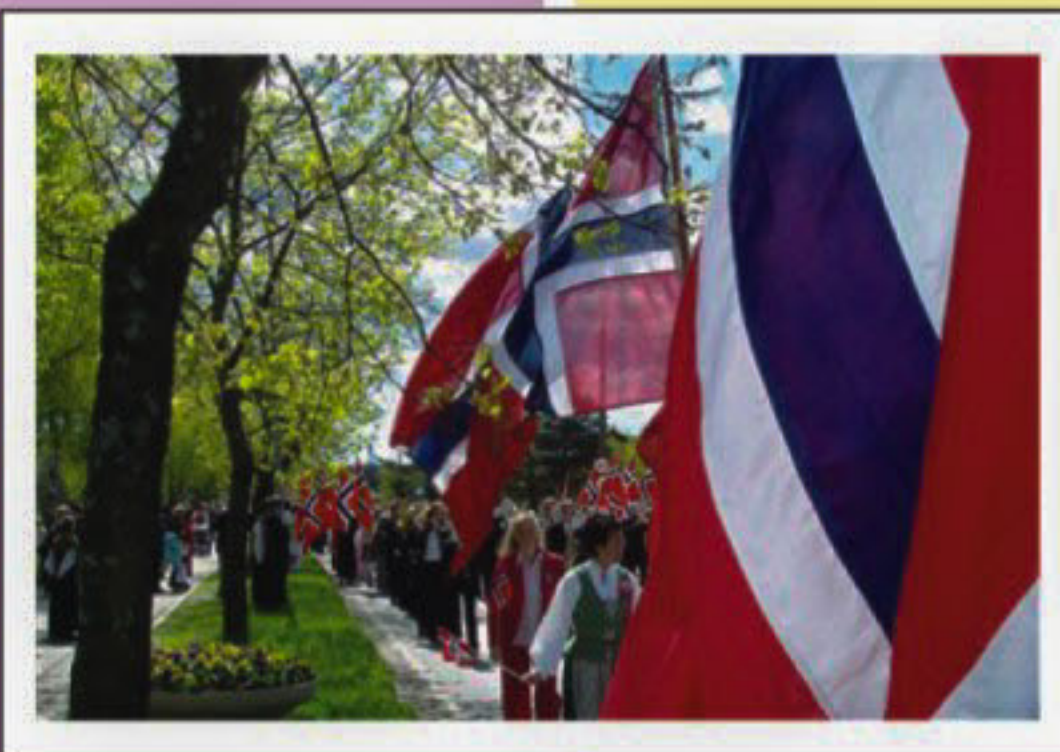
History of Independence

- 885: Unified under the Viking king Harald Hårfagre
- 1397 – 1538: Union with Denmark (and Sweden 1397-1438)
- 1538- 1814: Under Danish rule
- 1814 (17th of May): Norway signed its own constitution
- 1814 – 1905: Union with Sweden (separate states, but one king)
- 1905: Declared independence



Norway – a leader in renewable energy

Renewable energy has been high on the global political agenda for a long time. There is a clear realization that the earth's resources are limited and that the world's dependency on fossil fuels must be reduced. The global climate change challenges have further increased the need to develop renewable energy sources. The Norwegian government has therefore increased the investment in renewable energy production and in the research, development and testing of alternative energy.



Norway is in a fortunate situation when it comes to renewable energy, as 60 per cent of the Norwegian total energy consumption is already based on renewable energy. Norway has the world's largest per capita hydropower production, and is the sixth largest hydropower producer in the world. In a year with normal precipitation, hydropower generation is around 120 TWh, corresponding to approximately 99 percent of Norway's total power production. In addition to hydropower, Norway has wind, gas and thermal power plants, and there is also a large potential in offshore wind power and wave power, as well as production of bio-energy from wood.

Offshore wind is a market which is set to grow substantially over the coming years. A law and strategy on offshore renewable power was approved by the Norwegian Parliament last year and Vestavind Offshore was awarded a license for the Havslu I-project, which is the first large-scale offshore wind power project in Norway. Statkraft, which is the largest renewable energy company in Europe, has invested more than NOK 100 million towards development of osmotic power, and last year the world's first full scale prototype of an osmotic power plant was opened in Norway.

Norway has limited resources in solar energy, but is one of the world's largest producers of solar grade silicon and silicon solar cells. The Renewable Energy Corporation (REC) is among the world's largest producers of polysilicon and wafers for solar applications, and is also a rapidly growing manufacturer of high performance solar cells and modules.

The Government of Bangladesh has emphasized the need to produce more energy, including from renewable sources, and there are many business opportunities between Norway and

Bangladesh in this field. Norway possesses cutting edge technologies which combined with Bangladeshi entrepreneurship and manpower can create strong partnerships. Norway is establishing a Business to Business Program (B2B) in Bangladesh this year and we hope that this will stimulate Norwegian and Bangladeshi companies to establish partnerships. The energy sector is a sector with high Norwegian expertise and know-how, and therefore has a lot of potential for future cooperation between our two countries.



Telenor Group

At Telenor Group we are confident that sustainable growth is the key to future success. In all our markets, we become an integral part of the societies we join. Our goal is to create shared value for our company Grameenphone and for Bangladeshi society.

Our business matters. Access to mobile communications delivers significant positive socio-economic impacts in any society. It offers empowerment and economic growth. We are therefore proud of Grameenphone's relentless drive to deliver mobile and Internet access in areas underserved by fixed-line.

Grameenphone is committed to improve the quality of life for rural Bangladeshis. The company's Community Information Centres, strategically located at the heart of village communities across the country, provide access to vital information about health, available jobs and accurate prices of agricultural products – and they allow families to keep in touch with loved ones abroad.

Did you know this about Norway?

- In the northern parts of Norway the sun doesn't set for two months in the summer, and doesn't rise for two months in the winter
- The average age for giving birth first time is 28 years
- It has compulsory school for ten years, and education is free through university level
- Norwegians rejected EU membership twice in referendums, but has adopted more EU legislation into domestic law than any EU country
- In summertime the temperature can rise to over 30 degrees Celsius and in wintertime drop as low as minus 45 degrees Celsius. If you throw hot coffee out of the window, it will freeze to ice before it hits the ground!
- Norway was rated the most peaceful country in the world (global peace index 2007)
- The well-known paper clip made from a thin wire is assumed to be a Norwegian invention. During the Second World War, the paper clip became a symbol of resistance to Nazi occupation. When Nazi authorities recognized the symbolic meaning it was forbidden to wear
- The capital has more than 350 km of ski trails in the surrounding forest during wintertime. There is a saying that Norwegians are born with skis on their feet!
- It gives 1.06 % of GNI in development assistance (2009), the second highest in the world after Sweden
- It gave men and women equal inheritance rights in 1854, and it was among the first countries in the world to implement women suffrage in 1913
- It topped the UN Human Development Index, which includes indicators such as life expectancy, education and income, 2009
- It has 1/10th of the world's shipping, and the 5th largest fleet in the world
- The first UN General Secretary was a Norwegian (Trygve Lie)

Congratulations
on the 196th Norwegian Constitution Day

