



# Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

The Daily Star

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

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## HIGH COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE

# UK and Bangladesh: Forty years of *winning* partnership



Stephen Evans  
British High Commissioner to Bangladesh

Today, we enjoy a partnership which is centred on a shared vision in global affairs; a common prosperity powered by excellent business ties; and a deep commitment to democracy, tolerance and security.

Since 1971, Bangladesh has made huge strides in its economic and social development. The economy has grown by an average of 5-6% a year in the past two decades and there has been remarkable progress in reducing income poverty, getting nearly all boys and girls enrolled in primary schools, and reducing child and maternal mortality. Today, Bangladesh is a global competitor and an influential voice in international fora, with an intellectually aspiring class and a young generation which is eager to learn, emerge and thrive on the domestic and global stage.

### Enduring partnership

Britain is proud to be a close partner in Bangladesh's achievements. Together, we work on a range of bilateral and global issues, including UN peace-keeping operations and climate change negotiations, to name but two. Our commercial relationship grows from strength to strength: the UK is one of the largest investors in Bangladesh, with approximately £2 billion investment projects to date and over 50 UK companies operating in the cities of Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Khulna. We are also the third single largest destination for exports from Bangladesh, with garments and seafood accounting for the bulk of total sales to the UK.

Despite these uncertain economic times, the UK government is committed to Bangladesh's development and ambition of achieving middle income status within the next decade. We not only remain the largest

bilateral grant donor in Bangladesh, but will double our aid programme over the next four years to directly help more than 15 million people living in poverty. By 2015, we will give more children a better quality education; improve family planning and reduce deaths in childbirth; and develop technical skills for more young women and men seeking employment. We will also encourage private investment; help more people adapt to the future; and strengthen key democratic systems, institutions and services for the poor.

### Human bonds

The success of our relationship is founded on a long-standing and deep bond which stretches across - and beyond - these four decades. People-to-people links lie at the very heart of this relationship: their personal and familial ties, their values and their futures. Britain remains

firmly the destination of choice for thousands of students every year, thanks to the excellence of British education and the work of the British Council in building strong cultural and educational links between our two countries.

Britain is also home to nearly half a million British nationals of Bangladeshi origin or heritage - a community renowned for its fusion of cultures and its impact on British culinary tastes, but whose contributions to UK society, and to UK-Bangladesh relations, are visible today in every sphere: government, politics, business, law, innovations and technology, education.

Increasingly, our mutual passion for sports is helping cement the links between our two countries. I congratulate Bangladesh for the hugely successful co-hosting of the Cricket World Cup. Britain also is looking to the future with a great deal of expect-

ation, with the London 2012 Olympic Games taking place in just over one year's time. Lying at the heart of where many British Bangladeshis live in London, the Olympics will not only generate tremendous business and exchange opportunities between our two countries, but also link schools through the British Council's International Inspiration programme.

### Common future

Britain is proud of its winning partnership with Bangladesh in the past forty years. The British High Commission, the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the British Council and all other UK interests here will be working with Bangladesh for a bright and common future.

It is in this spirit of enduring friendship that we celebrate this year's Queen's Birthday Party.



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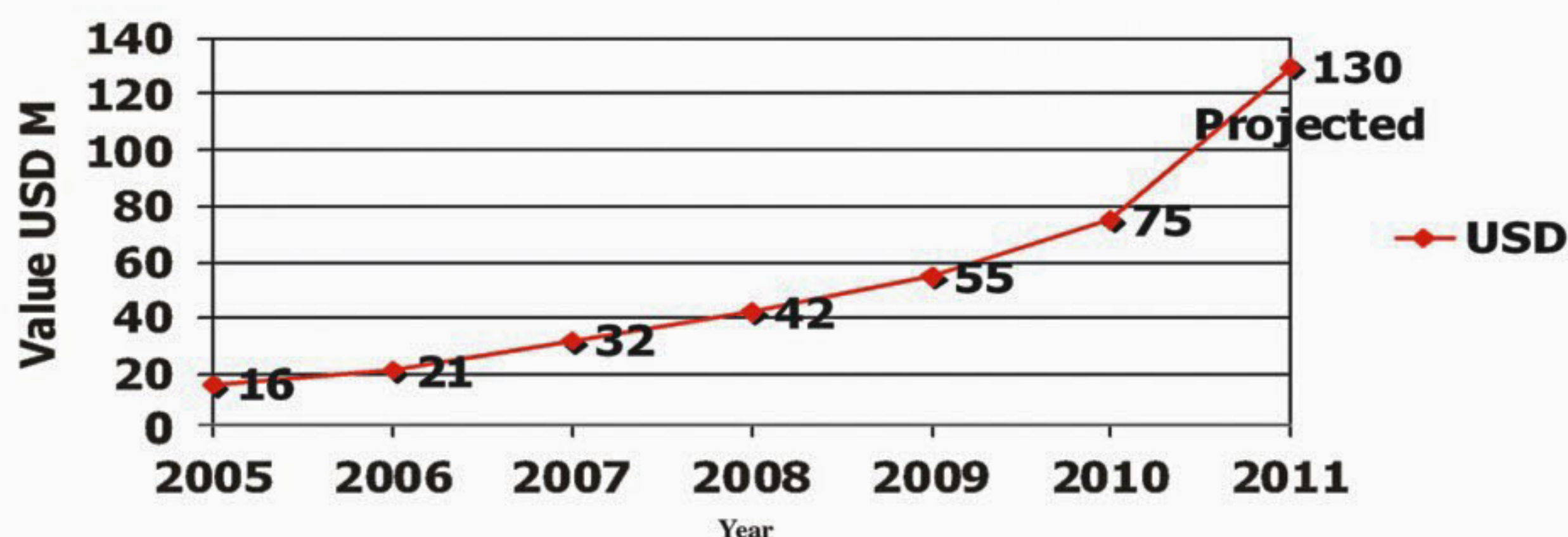
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