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bouring, European, North American, and other hosting countries, with Albania shouldering the heaviest burden of them all with more than 500,000 refugees from Kosovo. In addition more than 400,000 Kosovars where internally displaced within Kosovo and whole regions where burned and destroyed. The most devastating part of the war was and continues to be the heavy death toll of approximately 13,000 innocent people killed, and more than 6026 of which 1716 are still missing, as a consequence of the Serbia's terror in Kosovo.

The Star: **Except for Serbia, the three other countries bordering Kosovo have recognised Kosovo's sovereignty, and you have also become members of the World Bank and the IMF. 105 countries have also recognised Kosovo; to what extent have you progressed in getting the membership of the UN and the OIC?**

Hashim Thaçi: Kosovo has declared its independence on February 17, 2008, and since then it has been recognised by majority of members of the UN, 23 out of 28 members of the European Union, and 35 members of the OIC, including here most of the neighbours of Kosovo. The government of Kosovo is pursuing a vigorous policy to increase the number of recognitions and also membership in international organisations such as EU, UN and other organisations. In addition, our philosophy is good relations with all the countries including neighbourly relations for the benefit of European Integration. As you know, Kosovo and Serbia have embarked into dialogue for the normalisation of their relations with the mediation of the EU. As result of this process, we have been able to achieve the first historical agreement on normalisation of relations between Kosovo and Serbia on 19 April 2013. Thus, with the dialogue ongoing between me as Prime Minister of Republic of Kosovo and my counterpart from Serbia, I remain confident that in the future Serbia will be amongst the countries to recognise Kosovo.

Having in consideration the progress made by Kosovo, I also remain very confident that time will come for Kosovo to take its deserved seat in the UN and in all other international organisations.

The Star: **How do you think Bangladesh can be benefited if it gives recognition to Kosovo?**

Hashim Thaçi: Kosovo now is parliamentary democracy, with functional state institutions, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society aspiring for Euro-Atlantic integration. In addition, Kosovo is a factor of stability and prosperity in the region of Western Balkans. As I said, now we have also reached the agreement with Serbia for the normalisation of the relations between our states. All the minorities living in Kosovo, including the Serbs, enjoy all their rights in accordance with the highest international standards and are fully integrated in Kosovo state institutions and society. Therefore, in order to continue to support the stability and prosperity of the Western Balkans region, it is highly important that Kosovo's independence is recognised from all remaining countries worldwide, including yours.

In addition, Bangladesh and Kosovo share similarities and their historic path towards freedom and democracy is highly similar. As such, the Government of the Republic of Kosovo and all the citizens of Kosovo would be highly appreciative towards the Government of Bangladesh and its people for their decision to recognise Kosovo. ■