

Celebrating Portugal National Day 10th June, 2014




Ambassador of Portugal
H.E. Jorge Roza de Oliveira

Message

It is with great pleasure that I was informed a few months ago of the intentions to celebrate Portugal's National Day in Dhaka, and of all the efforts by our Honorary Consulate to make this possible. We celebrate our National Day on June 10, which is the date of the death of our national poet, Luis de Camões, who also visited the subcontinent. But this year we also celebrate the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations, established in December 1974, following the April Revolution in Portugal, which returned us to the community of democracies. Our first non-resident Ambassador presented credentials in Dhaka in 1978.

But our histories go back a long, long way. The Portuguese first landed on the shores of what is today Bangladesh centuries ago. The first Christians in Bengal were the Portuguese themselves. Father Francesco Fernandes and Father Domingo da Sousa - two Portuguese Jesuit missionaries - with the permission of Raja Pratapaditya, built the first church of Bangladesh at Chandecan, in the present district of Satkhira. They dedicated their church on January 1, 1600, more than 400 years ago. And Roman Catholic Christians in the greater Dhaka District, and the districts of Chittagong, Noakhali and Barisal still carry Portuguese surnames.

We also know that there is big support in Bangladesh for the Portuguese football team. We will soon have opportunities to attest this, with the coming World Cup games. They will present further proof of how close our peoples are, although distant in geography.

It is with this common background that we should build stronger relations. Politically there are no disputes between our two countries. Culturally we have a very strong common heritage. And there is an important Bangladeshi presence in Portugal, through its large community. It is in the economic field that more efforts should be made, to bring Portuguese companies and Portuguese products to Bangladesh, and to encourage Bangladeshi companies to build links in Portugal, now that you have a resident Ambassador in Lisbon. The opportunities have not presented themselves, but I am sure that, also with the efforts of the Honorary Consul, Mr. Shakhawat Hossain, with whom I have maintained an excellent relation, things will change in the near future.




Honorary Consul of Portugal
in Bangladesh
Hon. Shakhawat Hossain

Message

Greetings from the Honorary Consulate of Portugal in Bangladesh. It is a great privilege and pleasure for me to represent Portugal in Bangladesh. Since my appointment as the Honorary Consul in 2007, I have been working to foster ties between the two countries, which extend back several centuries, in order to promote economic and socio-cultural development.

Our two countries enjoy a long, shared history that extends back several centuries. Indeed we owe a great deal to our Portuguese friends, even our beloved mishti. It was the Portuguese who introduced the process of making ricotta cheese, which became the basis of a variety of mouth-watering Bengali sweets we have since become famous for, such as roshmolai and shondesh. What would jhal-muri be without the jhal? Once again, it was the Portuguese who brought the chillies to the region from their colonies in the Americas, giving us the spicy condiment for which our food is known. These are just a few of the many examples of our rich history of shared experiences has coloured our own culture.

However, we should also remember that the flow of information, exchange of ideas, trade of goods and movement of people was both ways. When the Portuguese explorers came to this part of the world, following the Spice Route, they called Bengal the "Paradise of India", such was the wealth, abundance and technological advancement they encountered. As we work together to build our bilateral relations, we should try to capture the spirit of global exchange and equal partnership so that the gaps that divide us are shrunk and the bonds that unite us are strengthened.

My colleagues and I have been working to promote and protect our two countries' shared interests. I am confident that the cordial relationship and goodwill Bangladesh and Portugal have for one another, combined with the efforts of the Ambassador of Portugal to Bangladesh, will ensure that the relationship will go from strength to strength. Our two countries have a long and rich history, one that is full of exchange of knowledge, language, culture and trade, and a future that is full of promise. I once again extend my warm greetings to the Portuguese nationals in Bangladesh and call on the entrepreneurs, investors and civil society figures both our countries to join our efforts to strengthen bilateral trade and cultural relations.




Hon'ble Minister
Minister of Cultural Affairs

Message

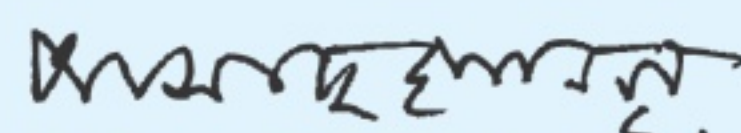
Greetings on the occasion of Portugal National Day. Though it is the National Day of Portugal, it is celebrated across the Portuguese speaking world as it also commemorates the life of the great Lusophone writer Luis de Camoes, who died on this date in 1580.

Camoes' epic poem Os Lusíadas is considered one of the finest and most important oeuvres of Portuguese literature. The poem narrates the voyages of discovery in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and in fact the most important canto of the whole poem recounts the Portuguese arrival in the Indian subcontinent. Indeed Camoes himself embodied the adventurous spirit of the early explorers. Legend has it that after being shipwrecked on the coast of present day Vietnam, he saved the only copy of his manuscript by swimming with one arm above water. It was this adventurous spirit and the search of spices and trade that brought the Portuguese to the region and initiated the cultural exchange between our two regions.

I call on our students and young people, artists, musicians, poets, writers and creative people, to continue the cultural exchange in order to strengthen the ties between our countries and bring us closer together. The cultural landscapes of both Portugal and Bangladesh would be so much poorer without one another's influences.

In this spirit of friendship and cultural exchange, I send my best wishes to the President H.E. Anibal Cavaco Silva and all the citizens of Portugal.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu
Long Live Bangladesh
Long Live Bangladesh-Portugal Friendship


Asaduzzaman Noor, MP



Historical Relation with Portugal
Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed

Today Portugal and the Lusophone world mark the country's National Day, which commemorates the life of literary icon Luis de Camoes, who died on 10 June 1580. Camoes wrote Portugal's national epic poem, Os Lusíadas, which celebrates Portuguese history and has come to be a symbol of the Portuguese Empire. It focuses on the fifteenth century Portuguese explorations, which expanded the European kingdom's territory and fortune - and this is of particular interest for us in Bangladesh.

For it was during this period of expansion and exploration the first Portuguese ships arrived in the Bay of Bengal. Indeed the Portuguese were amongst the earliest European powers to reach our soil. By 1537, Portuguese traders were allowed to settle and open customs houses in Chittagong, which they called Porto Grande, and in 1577 the Mughal Emperor Akbar granted them permission to build permanent settlements and churches in Bengal. The influence of the Portuguese traders and missionaries grew until the British - through the British East India Company - solidified its control over the region following the Battle of Plassey. But the legacy of the Portuguese lives on and is still with us today - and chief amongst their influences may have been on our language.

But the exchange also worked both ways - the widespread use of Portuguese as the lingua franca amongst the foreign traders and missionaries in the region meant that many of their idioms have been absorbed into the Bengali language. Some of the words we borrowed from the Portuguese include almari (armorio), balti (balde), chabi (chave), lebu (limao) and cha (cha).

And so, while the curtains closed on the Portuguese in Bengal, and other foreign powers such as the Dutch and the British replaced them as the dominant European power in the Indian Ocean trade, their presence is still felt to this day. Each time we eat anaras or pepe (we have both the fruits - pineapple and papaya- and the names thanks to the Portuguese ananas and papaia) we ought to remember our Portuguese friends.

PORTUGAL VISA PROCESSING & CONSULAR SERVICES

Visas to Portugal are not issued by the Honorary Consulate of Portugal in Bangladesh.

Short term visas to Portugal for tourism, business or family visits may be obtained through the Embassy of the Republic of France, located at:

House 18, Road 108
Gulshan, Dhaka 1212.

For further information, please visit to:

www.ambfrance-bd.com

The visa application forms may also be downloaded from the link above.

Attestation of all documents is done by the Embassy of Portugal in New Delhi and does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Honorary Consulate of Portugal in Bangladesh.

For more information,
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www.portugalconsulatebd.com
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