



National Day of Switzerland

AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE



René Holenstein
Ambassador of Switzerland to Bangladesh

Today is the National Day of Switzerland. On this special occasion, I wish to extend my best wishes and greetings to the people and the Government of Bangladesh. I would like to also offer felicitations to my fellow compatriots living in this beautiful country.

Switzerland and Bangladesh enjoy long standing bilateral relations based on mutual respect and strong partnership. Switzerland was one of the first countries to establish bilateral relations with Bangladesh after its independence. Swiss priorities in the development cooperation with Bangladesh are aligned with Agenda 2030 and Bangladesh's national goals with a strong focus on facilitating people's socio-economic empowerment and wellbeing. At the same time, bilateral trade and investment ties are growing rapidly. While development and

economic cooperation remain two corner stones of our relations, mutual exchanges in a number of other areas are rapidly expanding as well.

Bilateral relations between our two countries received renewed momentum and attained a new height in 2018 when the President of the Swiss Confederation, H.E. Mr. Alain Berset, paid an official visit to Bangladesh in February 2018. The establishment of closer bilateral relations was one of the main objectives of this important visit. In this first official visit by a Swiss President to Bangladesh, the leaders of the two countries agreed to encourage a transition to a broader relationship, affirmed strong commitment to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and placed emphasis on shared commitment to democratic values.

Switzerland has always stood beside Bangladesh in its humanitarian efforts at times of need, including in the ongoing Rohingya refugee crisis. Expressing solidarity with Bangladesh was the main focus of the visit of the Swiss President. The influx of Rohingya refugees have put enormous pressure on Bangladesh resulting in additional challenges for the host community in Cox's Bazar. Switzerland commends the Government and the people of Bangladesh for the assistance and protection offered on humanitarian grounds to the Rohingya refugees, despite various socio-economic challenges.

At the same time, Bangladesh is heading towards national elections. Very much in line with the founding principles of Bangladesh I have got to know Bangladesh as strongly committed to democratic principles, values and aspirations. In this regard I feel a close connection between the people of Switzerland and Bangladesh. It is my sincere wish for the people and the democracy of Bangladesh that the upcoming national elections in Bangladesh will be held in a free, fair and inclusive manner allowing every citizen in this country to cast his or her vote without fear or intimidation.

Today, human rights are at the heart of the values represented by Switzerland and the Swiss political model founded on the principles of direct democracy, gender equality, non-discrimination and the rule of law. Promoting respect for human rights is a foreign policy objective enshrined in the Swiss Constitution. This objective is based on the belief that the realisation of human rights is an indispensable condition for sustainable economic and social progress and wellbeing.

Like in Switzerland, human rights are enshrined as fundamental rights in the constitution of Bangladesh. Human development, which is a priority for both our countries, is intrinsically linked to human rights. Each of the 17 goals of the Agenda 2030 are closely connected with key international human rights principles. Switzerland will continue to cooperate closely with the government of Bangladesh and the civil society bodies in the area of democracy and human rights.

Given the importance of bilateral trade and investments between Switzerland and Bangladesh this newspaper supplement dedicates a specific article on successful Swiss investments in Bangladesh. I would like to congratulate the Swiss and Bangladeshi business actors and entities for promoting bilateral economic engagements and for their contributions to both the economies. It is my strong conviction that with further improved infrastructure and energy supply, regulatory predictability and legal security, Bangladesh will continue to become a more preferred destination for foreign direct investments in the future.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate that Switzerland and Bangladesh always have had excellent relations based on mutual understanding and trust. It is my endeavour and honour to contribute to the continuation and strengthening of such good cooperation between our two friendly countries. I take this opportunity to convey my sincere wishes to the people of Bangladesh for a prosperous future.

Swiss companies have long standing investments in crucial sectors

ECONOMIC relations between Switzerland and Bangladesh are stronger than ever. After many years of steady growth, annual bilateral trade between the two countries reached US \$680 million in 2017. This amount is almost three times that which Bangladesh and Switzerland traded in 2010. Behind the numbers, there is a growing mutual interest from both Swiss and Bangladeshi companies in looking for business partners in the other country. Many Swiss companies have been making successful direct investments in Bangladesh through local subsidiaries. Small and medium-sized Swiss businesses, which are the backbone of the Swiss economy, are gradually becoming more interested in doing business in Bangladesh.

Some of these Swiss ventures started in Bangladesh decades ago. Besides the inflow of financial capital to Bangladesh, a long history of innovation and best practices has accompanied these investments. The story of the economic success of Bangladesh is also a story of partnership with Swiss businesses.

Partnership and Knowledge Sharing
Bangladesh has attained impressive socio-economic achievements over the last decades in various sectors. The Bangladeshi private sector,

A sample of Swiss companies and investors:	
ABB	
Bühler (Bangladesh)	
Kuehne+Nagel	
Lafarge Holcim Cement (Bangladesh)	
Nestlé Bangladesh	
Novartis (Bangladesh)	
Roche Bangladesh	
Secure Link Services BD	
SGS Bangladesh	
Swiss Biohygienic Equipments	
Syngenta Bangladesh	

besides other actors, has played a pivotal role to this end. Swiss companies have contributed to this tremendous success story. For instance, Swiss pharma investments arrived in 1973, and since then have been promoting the latest treatment solutions, collaborating with local partners and producing high quality health care products in Bangladesh. The pharma industry of Bangladesh currently meets 98 percent of local demand and continues to grow its exports each year. Produced in Bangladesh, medicines from a Swiss company are being exported to 55 countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, creating hundreds of direct jobs.

Along the value chain from agricultural fields to the consumer table, Swiss companies enhance the competitive edge of the Bangladeshi food industry. In the city of Bogra, 200 kilometers northwest of Dhaka, the local branch of a Swiss agribusiness company

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Heartiest Felicitation on Swiss National Day

From

Switzerland-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce & Industry

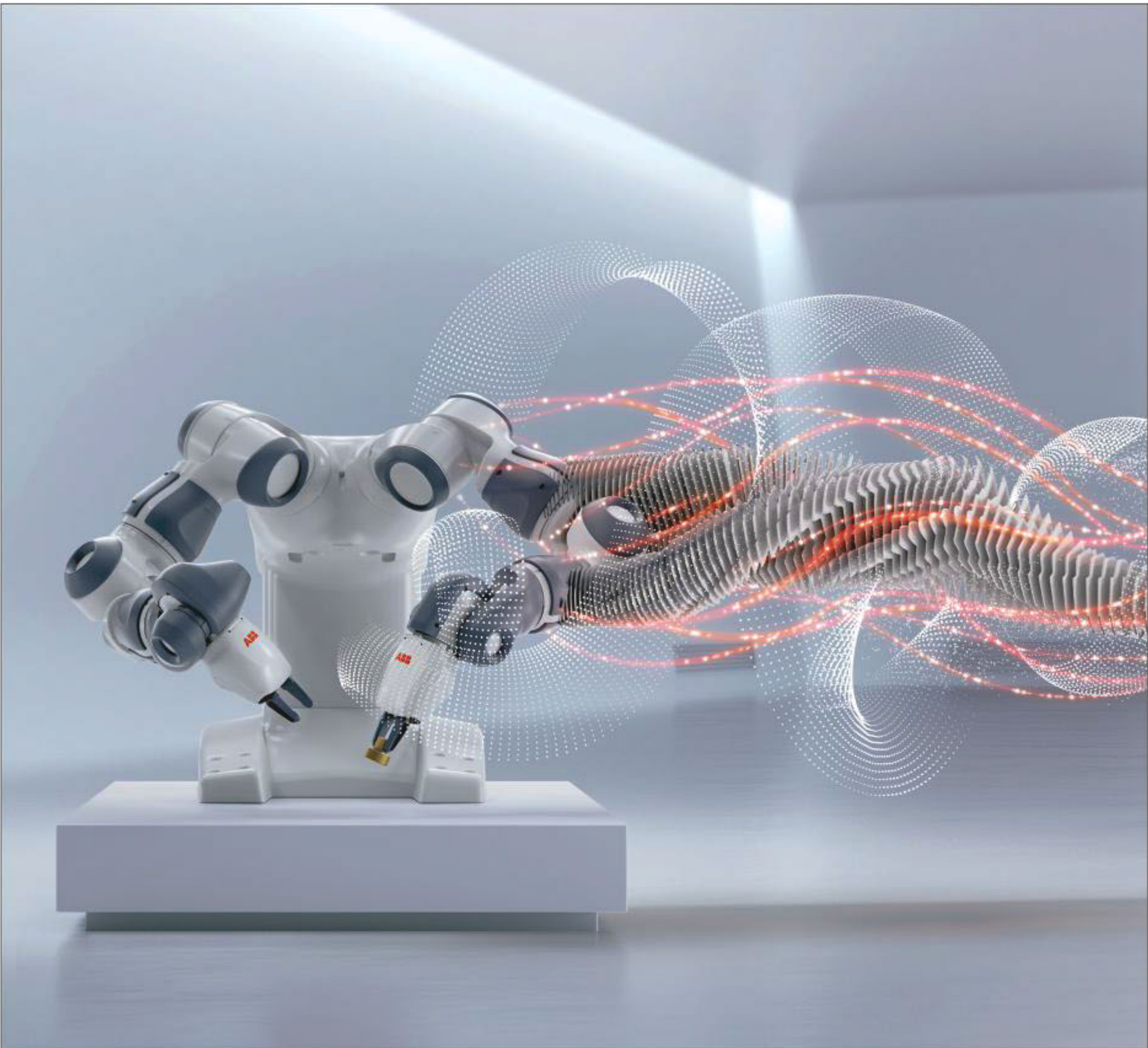


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6. ABB LIMITED,
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