



# National Day of Switzerland

The Daily Star

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

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## Discovering Switzerland and Bangladesh: Two different perspectives

SWITZERLAND and Bangladesh have strong bilateral ties in the areas of development cooperation,

economy and culture. Nevertheless, the people of the two countries often do not know a lot about each other. We interviewed two young

people from both countries – a Bangladeshi who is currently pursuing higher studies in Switzerland and a Swiss who is

working in the development sector in Bangladesh – to find out their impressions and experiences about the other country.

## Swiss investment in Bangladesh

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keeps a state-of-the-art training facility and a dedicated Research and Development (R&D) centre to serve the market. In rural areas of Bangladesh, they are offering fertiliser solutions, essential inputs and high-tech machinery for grain storage and processing. The production of Swiss branded food and beverages in Bangladesh replaces importation and creates more than 4,300 direct and indirect jobs in the country.

Switzerland is also a world-renowned centre for engineering, chemical products, and precision machinery. This makes Swiss products essential for increasing the productivity of industries like construction, garments, oil and gas. Swiss machinery and engineering companies have invested in Bangladesh to provide services to local costumers, employing qualified professionals like engineers and proficient technicians. This creates opportunities for professionals to advance their skills by working together. The information technology sector is another example of a Swiss economic engagement with Bangladesh, which fosters innovation and ideas.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development By addressing the long-term sustainability of global and local economies, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is key to creating value, not only for shareholders, but also for society. Swiss companies are among the organisations championing CSR in Bangladesh. The biggest Swiss investors are taking the opportunity to link core business activities with social action. One example is a Swiss food company that joined efforts with local NGOs to offer training on farming techniques, thus developing local suppliers for high quality rice, honey, and spices. Social projects backed by Swiss ventures in Bangladesh also support children's education and nutrition, and facilitate the access of health workers to rural areas and raise awareness of environmental issues, among many other initiatives.

Different Swiss companies are venturing into various sectors of the Bangladeshi economy. The impact of these investments runs deep and generates long-term gains, such as an increasing diversity in the business environment and higher local quality standards. Successful cooperation has already brought great benefits.

**Zaker Ahmad is Bangladeshi.** In 2013, Mr Ahmad went to Switzerland for his master's degree. He is now pursuing his PhD there.



**What was your experience when you went to Switzerland for the first time?**

I was living in the German part of Switzerland where people mostly speak Swiss German. I had to overcome a language barrier. However, people were very friendly. When I passed by strangers in the streets they would greet me with a "grüezi" (hello), though it took me some time to understand what this word meant.

**Did you face any difficulty during that time?**

Getting to know the food and my way around the city was a challenge. Transport and communication systems are good, so people are very independent and it is not common to ask or take help from anyone. After some days, I could get my bearings and became independent too. The food here is more diverse and very different from Bangladesh.

**What do you think about the Swiss cuisine?**

Switzerland made me "addicted" to its cheese. Bread and cheese are now staples for me. The typical Swiss dishes are very heavy; I have heard that is because Switzerland was a predominantly agrarian society in the past. By the way, this is something unique about Switzerland where traditional lifestyle still goes hand in hand with modern lifestyle.

**Angela Bommer is Swiss.** She is currently working in Bangladesh for the Swiss Red Cross.



**Did you discover a new passion, like a hobby or a sport here in Bangladesh?**

I like the works of famous Rabindranath Tagore and other contemporary novelists and poets in Bangladesh. Since I moved to Bangladesh, I have read many books and I have also started to write myself, feeling inspired by all the literature and poems. However, many books are still only available in Bangla.

**Which aspect of Bangladesh surprise you the most?**

The richness and the diversity in culture surprised me. Depending on which part of the country you go, you will find a completely different Bangladesh. Every corner has its own cultural highlights and specialties.

**In your opinion, what could the Swiss learn from the Bangladeshis?**

I feel that people in Bangladesh are very resilient. They may face many difficulties in their daily life (tremendous traffic, heavy rain, etc.) but somehow most of the people deal with it in a very positive way and can cope well with it. For example, if Swiss people had to face such traffic jam on a daily basis, I cannot even imagine the consequences.

## Want to know Switzerland? Start by its cuisine

ONE of the best ways to learn about a culture is by discovering the nation's food habit. When it comes to describing Swiss cuisine, "variety is the spice of life" would be the most relevant narrative to use. Just as diverse as the culture and languages are in Switzerland, the nation's assorted food palate also extracts and combines cuisines from its bordering German, French and North Italian regions. Like the language divisions, the Swiss cuisine is also heavily influenced by its natural landscape with regional connotations to it. Not only that,

while Switzerland derives from its neighbouring cuisines, it customizes the recipe with local ingredients cooked in own local style, giving the cuisines a very Swiss touch to it. That is how the Swiss food culture has developed its own mystique and flavours!

It is not possible to pinpoint to a single Swiss cuisine because of its varied nature, and the culinary diversity can be observed as one travels through the country. A typical dish that is popular across the nation would be Röstli — Swiss-style buttery home fried grated potatoes or Swiss hash-

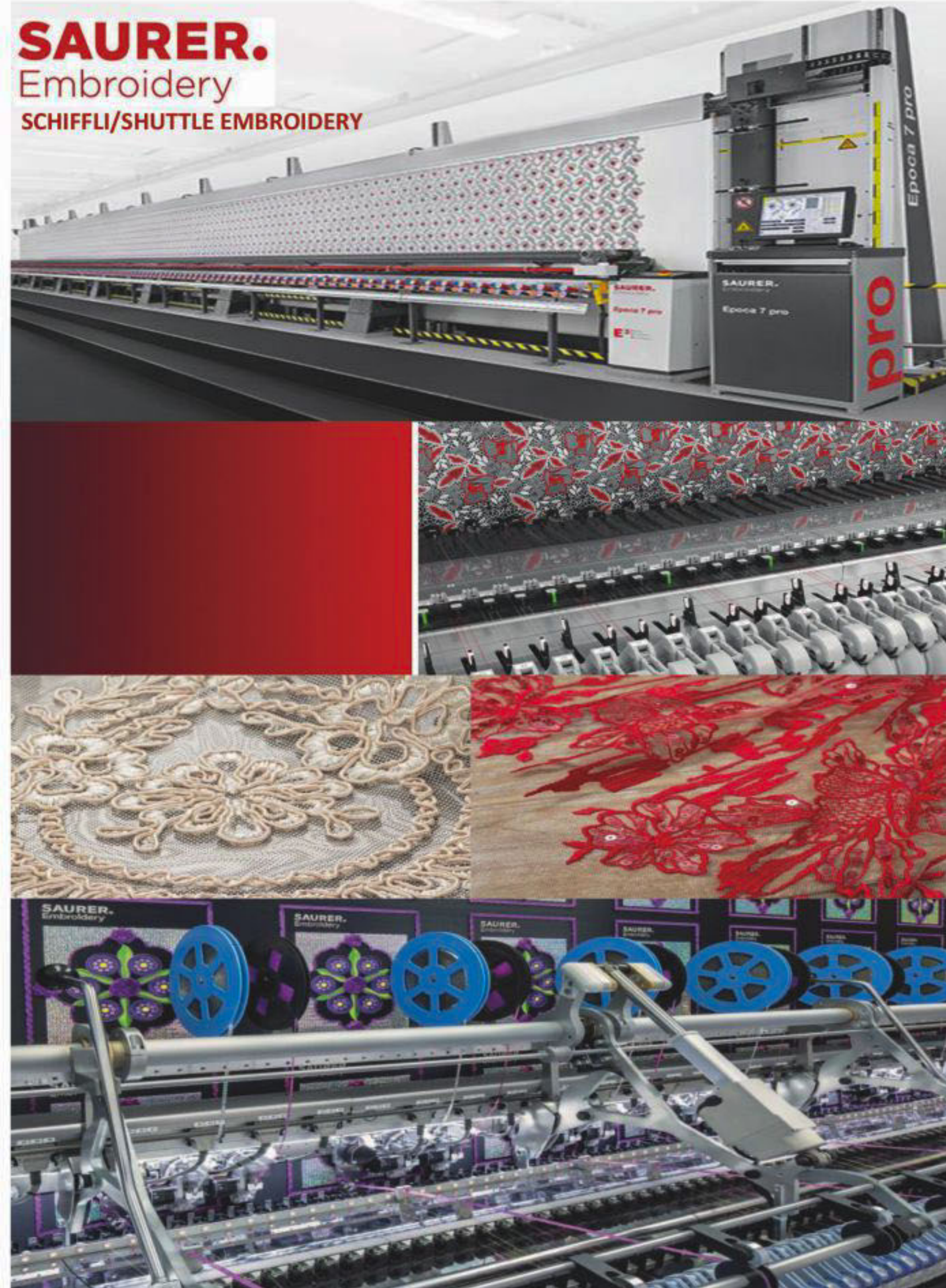
browns. It is usually topped with cheese, roasted onions or even fried eggs depending on the region. Sometimes Röstli is also served with main dishes, such as the famous Zürcher Geschnetzeltes - this Zurich-style creamy shredded veal meat. In some cantons, it is also served with noodles or rice. When speaking of the nation's cuisine, one cannot ignore to mention the prevalent presence of cheese in its various dishes, especially the popularly known Fondue. Mainly originating from the French-speaking part of the country, the Swiss palate consist of long tradition of cheese production with over 450 different

types of cheeses ranging from hard to soft cheese, cottage cheese, valley factory cheese all with their own distinct taste and flavour. Gruyère is the best known with others including Sbrinz, Appenzeller, Raclette and Tête de Moine.

Also it is no secret that the nation's large talent lies in chocolate production – the fame of which has crossed international borders and is renowned across the world. Starting from the invention of milk chocolate in early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the nation's cuisine is highly enriched by variety of chocolatey treats; from chocolate bars to pralines and spread.



**Swiss Flag** **Heartiest Felicitations and Best Wishes** **Bangladesh Flag**  
**On the Occasion of Swiss National Day**



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The Zurich-styled *Zürcher Geschnetzeltes* with sliced tenderloin beef (as an alternate to original recipe of veal meat) in mushroom and cream sauce can be prepared in Bangladesh as well. The recipe is presented below- Enjoy!

**Meat**

- 600 gm of tenderloin beef, sliced into thin strips
- Butter as needed for frying
- 1 tablespoon of plain flour to sprinkle all over the tenderloin strips, and coat well

In a frying pan over medium-high heat, melt the butter until it is slightly foamy, immediately add the meat and quickly brown on all sides for about 3 minutes each side. And then set aside the meat to a dish and cover with foil to keep warm.

**Sauce**

- 1 tablespoon of butter, melt in the same pan
  - 200 gm of mushrooms, ½ sliced onions (finely chopped) and 2 cloves of garlic minced. Sauté the onion and garlic together for a minute or two and then stir in the mushrooms and add one teaspoon of fresh lemon zest (finely chopped) and cook until mushrooms begin to soften, about 5 minutes.
  - 200 ml cream to be blended well and added to pan, bringing to boil, stirring and cook for approx. another 3 minutes
- Return the cooked veal meat to pan, warm through and add salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with 2 tablespoons of finely chopped parsley leaves

**Preparation time: approx. 40 mins.**



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