



# SWISS NATIONAL DAY, 2023

DHAKA TUESDAY AUGUST 1, 2023  
SRABAN 17, 1430 BS



## MESSAGE FROM THE EMBASSY OF SWITZERLAND

On this special occasion of the National Day of Switzerland, I wish to extend the warmest greetings to our friends in Bangladesh and my Swiss compatriots living in this beautiful country that I am eager to discover during my tenure as the Swiss Ambassador.

The Swiss National Day celebration in Bangladesh serves as a fantastic opportunity for us to reflect on what Switzerland as a country stands and the current state of our bilateral relations that has traversed and flourished over fifty years of robust friendship and equal partnership. It also gives us the



opportunity to envision what the future may hold for us and which avenues we should explore more to further the collaboration and the growth of our bilateral ties.

First, let's take a quick history trivia tour. Did you know that the roots of the Swiss National Day celebration can be traced back over 700 years (1291)? However, it was only in 1848 that Switzerland was founded in its present form, with its unique federal structure. Subsequently, more and more instruments of direct democracy were gradually added to our constitution. All this to say that the Switzerland we know today- a country that espouses direct

democracy, human rights and humanitarian values, and a developed nation that thrives on innovation, scientific excellence and entrepreneurship - these achievements didn't happen overnight. They are the result of long and often arduous debates and developments.

I arrived in Dhaka only a month ago to lead the Embassy of Switzerland and, exactly two weeks ago, I had the privilege to present my Letter of Credence to the Honourable President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. I am grateful to be able to build on the solid foundation that has been established between Switzerland and Bangladesh. Last year we celebrated our 50 years of bilateral relations. Over the past decades, our two countries have established a strong and diverse partnership in numerous areas. With \$1 billion+ annual bilateral trade and an extensive footprint of Swiss investors in crucial economic domains, our economic relations have emerged as a vital touchstone of our bilateral ties, arguably making Switzerland one of Bangladesh's most active per capita trading partners!

Solidarity is another underlying aspect of our bilateral relations. Switzerland has proven to be a committed, effective and innovative development partner, investing over 1 billion USD in development cooperation in this country in the last five decades. Our ongoing development cooperation program aims to assist the sustainable graduation of Bangladesh from the LDC group. Our bilateral cooperation began with humanitarian aid in the early 70s. Humanitarian principles remain essential to our collaboration, particularly in light of the Rohingya refugee crisis.

Our cultural ties are also growing! Culture and artistic expressions are widely recognized as key enablers of sustainable development. Our Embassy is developing a dedicated culture and development program to engage the communities and support local artists, including theatre performers, dancers, painters, multimedia artists, filmmakers and musicians etc. This grant scheme will help them become agents of positive and progressive transformation to strengthen social cohesion and freedom of expression. We have dedicated this newspaper supplement with several articles to illustrate our burgeoning ties in the area of culture and arts. I hope that you will enjoy reading this special newspaper supplement.

Looking ahead, I am incredibly motivated about the future prospects for our bilateral ties. Earlier in June this year, Switzerland

and Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance and deepen their knowledge and skills partnership in the presence of the Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Swiss President Alain Berset in Geneva. While signing an MoU is one thing and implementing it is another, this MoU, in a way, embodies the future course of our bilateral relations. Increased collaboration between the private sectors of both countries in innovation and technology will likely shape the future course of our economic relations. With Switzerland's forte in innovation, technology and competitiveness, my country is well positioned to support Bangladesh to make its economic transition smooth, sustainable and faster and make the collaboration mutually rewarding for our two countries, people and economies. We live in changing and challenging global and economic contexts. Against this backdrop, the Embassy of Switzerland will endeavour to deepen and expand business-to-business and people-to-people contact between our two countries.

Multiple milestones are coming up for Bangladesh, the upcoming national elections and the graduation from the LDC group in 2026, for instance. Coming from a country that holds fostering peace and democratic practices very close to its heart and prioritizes sustainable development for all - values and principles that are very much in line with the founding principles of Bangladesh - it is my sincere wish for the people and the democracy of Bangladesh that the upcoming milestones, including the upcoming elections, will aptly reflect the hopes and aspirations of citizens. Fair and peaceful elections will augment the country's stride toward development and prosperity.

Switzerland values its friendship and cooperation with Bangladesh and will remain a longstanding, committed and reliable partner based on mutual respect. I am confident that our multifaceted cooperation will expand and further deepen in the near future.

I take this opportunity to convey my most sincere wishes to the people of Bangladesh and my Swiss compatriots for a prosperous future. I express the hope for a continued enhancement of the friendly relations between our two countries.

**Reto Renggli**  
*Ambassador of Switzerland to Bangladesh*



A snapshot of the Swiss Corner; PHOTO: ØRJAN ELLINGVÅG

## Swiss Corner: A Little Glimpse of Switzerland inside Bangladesh

Nestled in the heart of Europe, Switzerland has charmed people across the world with its iconic landscapes, rich history and vibrant culture. Now, imagine being able to experience a little slice/piece of Switzerland without leaving Bangladesh. Welcome to the Swiss Corner, a hidden piece of Switzerland located within the World Civilization Gallery of the Bangladesh National Museum!

Visiting the Swiss Corner is like embarking on a captivating journey through Switzerland's rich heritage. As you step inside, you are greeted by a fusion of colors, textures and stories that reflect the essence of this Alpine nation: its unique landscape & nature, linguistic diversity, direct democracy & participatory political system, as well as its penchant for innovation and technology - all of which draws a picture in your mind showcasing Switzerland's diverse cultural tapestry and quest for innovation. This Corner will also take you on a walk through a historical journey of Bangladesh and Switzerland's friendly and strong bilateral relations, which grew steadily from the onset of Bangladesh's birth as a new country.

Since October 2021, Swiss Corner has been receiving a new wave of recognition with a revamped look. This permanent exhibition, accessible to all museum visitors, provides an excellent opportunity to learn not only about the country's longstanding and broad-ranging partnership with Bangladesh but also about Switzerland's values and unique characteristics: a dynamic and prosperous country thriving on innovation and its rich cultural heritage.

So, if you find yourself longing for a taste of Switzerland in Bangladesh, make sure to pay a visit to the Swiss Corner to discover fascinating stories about Switzerland, its cows & mountains, innovative economy and rich ties with Bangladesh.



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