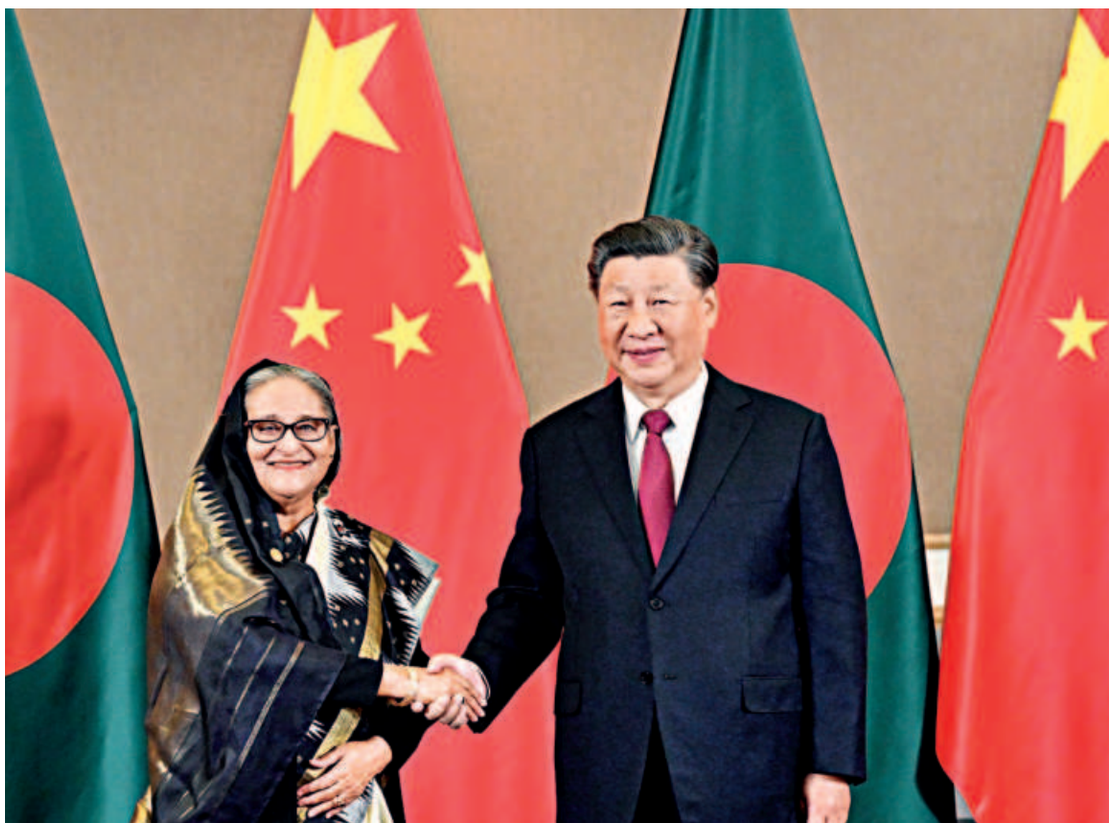
CHINA AND BANGLADESH

Heart to Heart, @Future

In Celebration of the 74th Anniversary of the Founding of the People's Republic of China



Chinese President Xi Jinping meets with Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the sidelines of the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, Aug. 23, 2023.

BY YAO WEN, *Ambassador of China to Bangladesh*

Over the past 74 years, under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), China has undergone earth-shaking changes, and created the "two miracles" rarely seen elsewhere in the world, namely rapid economic development and long-term social stability. Along the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the Chinese people have not only changed their motherland profoundly, but also made the world a better place. The Chinese path to modernization presents unparalleled vitality. Having realized the first centenary goal of building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, the Chinese people are now marching in confident strides toward the second centenary goal of building China into a great modern socialist country in all respects.

The world is facing increasing instability and uncertainty, and the global economy is undergoing a rocky recovery. Nevertheless, China's economy survives from the harsh pressure by securing its scale and improving its quality. In the first half of this year, China's GDP exceeded 59.3 trillion RMB, hitting a year-on-year growth of 5.5 percent, higher than last year's growth rate of 3 percent and outspeeds many other major developed economies during the same period. The IMF expects China's economy to expand by 5.2 percent, contributing to the total growth of world economy by one third. China will remain on an uprising trajectory over the long run and achieve the steady growth on the track of high-quality development, continuing to inject confidence and impetus into the global recovery.

Ten years ago, President Xi Jinping raised the vision of building a global community of a shared future when addressing the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. The vision is being enshrined in various aspects of China's diplomacy and actions, including advancing the Xi-proposed Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative, as well as jointly building the Belt and Road. Over the past decade, the vision has been widely acclaimed and recognized by an increasing number of countries, and has been endorsed by official documents of leading international organizations including the United Nations. With partners, including Bangladesh and others, across the globe, China has enriched the vision steadily over the past decade, making it an encompassing platform that shores up growth and unity and offsets unilateralism and hegemony.

The friendly exchanges between China and Bangladesh could be traced back to more than a thousand years ago. Since its establishment in 1975, our bilateral ties has been defined by mutual trust and joint development, setting an example of win-win cooperation. The fraternal relations between the two peoples has been passed on from generation to generation.

China and Bangladesh are time-tested friends with unwavering mutual trust. China-Bangladesh relations was upgraded to Strategic Partnership of Cooperation in 2016 and deepened in 2019. Last month, Chinese President Xi Jinping and the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina held a long-awaited meeting in South Africa, further providing strategic guidance for the development of our bilateral relations. China and Bangladesh have long been upholding each other on respective core interests and concerns. China supports Bangladesh in safeguarding national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and in opposing external interference, so that the country can maintain domestic unity and stability and achieve development and revitalization. Bangladesh firmly pursues the one-China principle and appreciates the important role China has played in promoting regional peace and stability.

China and Bangladesh are close partners for joint development. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the launching of the BRI by Chinese President Xi Jinping. Bangladesh is the first South Asian country to join the BRI. Over the past seven years, the BRI has taken root and blossomed in the golden Bay of Bengal. Mega projects like the Padma Multi-function Bridge and its rail link, the Dasherkandi Sewage Treatment Plant, the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel under the Karnaphuli River and many other mega projects have been completed one after another, making significant contributions to improving the people's livelihoods and upgrading infrastructure conditions in Bangladesh. The Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina commends the BRI that it has opened a new door of development for Bangladesh. Looking ahead, the two countries should seize the historical opportunities of development, further integrate development strategies, carry out Belt and Road cooperation targeting high-quality development, and exploit our respective economic advantages to complement and supplement each other, particularly in the fields of infrastructure development, information technology, new energy and agriculture.

China and Bangladesh are good brothers supporting each other. This year also marks the 10th anniversary of Chinese President Xi Jinping's proposal of the principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness in developing relations between China and its neighboring countries. Over the past decade, China has adhered to this diplomatic guideline and actively developed the amicable neighborhood relations. On occasion of the International Children's Day this year, President Xi Jinping replied to letter from Bangladeshi child Alifa Chin, encouraging her to study hard, pursue her dreams and carry on the traditional friendship between Bangladesh and China. The reply from President Xi Jinping has been warmly welcomed in both countries, giving new historical significance and contemporary connotation to the friendship between the two countries. There are many other touching stories like the one of Alifa Chin, which have been widely spread across China and Bangladesh.

Good relations between countries derives from friendly ties between the peoples through frequent contacts. It is an important consensus reached by the leaders of China and Bangladesh to further strengthen people-to-people interaction and cultural exchanges. To this end, China has introduced a series of facilitating measures to meet the huge demand for international travels and personnel exchanges. For the time being, there are 50 direct flights between Dhaka and Chinese cities on weekly basis, with a capacity of commuting ten thousand people between our two countries. This year by far, the Embassy of China in Bangladesh has managed dozens of delegations of the Bangladeshi government, political parties, media, think tanks and youth to visit China. The amount of Chinese enterprises and Chinese people heading to Bangladesh for investment and tourism purposes has also increased by significant scale.

At the moment, Bangladeshi sportsmen and sportswomen are competing for the glory of their motherland at the 19th Asian Games being held in Hangzhou, China. We wish them to excel in the competitions and make the name of Bangladesh heard loud and clear by the world. As the slogan of the Asian Games says, "Heart to Heart, @Future", as long as China and Bangladesh walk heart to heart and hand in hand, we would definitely win the future and realize the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation and the Dream of Sonar Bangla.

Long Live China-Bangladesh Friendship!