

# Celebrating 50 Years of Kuwait-Bangladesh Friendship



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

ARAB TIMES, TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 2024

## President's Message



PRESIDENT  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
DHAKA

23 April 2024

Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh

On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Bangladesh-Kuwait diplomatic relations, I am pleased to extend my sincere greetings and congratulations to the Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Government of the State of Kuwait, the brotherly people of Kuwait and the Bangladeshi citizens living in Kuwait.

Bangladesh and Kuwait have been enjoying excellent bilateral collaboration since our independence under the unflinching stewardship of our Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. With profound gratitude, I recollect that the diplomatic ties of the two countries' prudent leadership was established in 1973 when Kuwait recognized Bangladesh as the first among the Gulf countries. I express my sincere thanks to all former and present leadership of the State of Kuwait who have been supportive to us and contributed in various ways to our development for the last fifty years.

I reiterate with deep appreciation that the diplomatic ties between the two brotherly countries have grown over the years and flourished into excellent cooperation in many fields with particular focuses on human resources, trade, investment, development, and defense sectors.

On this great occasion, I reaffirm my commitment that our two countries would step up efforts to further strengthening and consolidating the existing engagements while exploring for new partnership in the emerging areas of our common interests in the years ahead.

I pray for good health, personal well-being of the Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and continued peace, progress and prosperity of the brotherly people of Kuwait.

Joi Bangla.

Long Live Bangladesh-Kuwait Friendship.

*(Mohammed Shahabuddin)*

## Prime Minister's Message



PRIME MINISTER  
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
BANGLADESH

10 Boishakh 1431  
23 April 2024

Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh.

On the occasion of 50th Anniversary of Bangladesh-Kuwait diplomatic relations, I am pleased to extend my sincere greetings and congratulations to the Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Government of the State of Kuwait, the brotherly people of Kuwait and the Bangladeshi citizens living in Kuwait.

I am happy to recall Kuwait's recognition of Bangladesh on November 4, 1973, as the first Gulf country to recognise Bangladesh following the historic meeting between Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Head of Government of Kuwait on the side-lines of the NAM Summit held in Algiers in 1973.

The bilateral relations between our two brotherly countries have strengthened and expanded during the last five decades in various sectors including human resources, defense cooperation, trade and commerce, energy, investment, and finance. Our shared collaboration has been excellent, and the Government of Bangladesh remains deeply committed to expanding and taking forward the bilateral and multilateral engagements with Kuwait in every possible domain. For mutual benefits, both countries vowed to identify new areas of cooperation such as food security, health security, climate change, renewable energy, green technology, ICT, etc.

I take this opportunity to underscore that Bangladesh is moving fast on its development journey. We have achieved enormous success in various areas of socio-economic development, women's empowerment, reducing child and maternal mortality rates, eliminating gender discrimination, and increasing life expectancy. Bangladesh has already been graduated to a Developing Country. With the continuation of this sustained development processes, we dream of turning Bangladesh into a Developed and smart country by 2041.

In this development journey, the State of Kuwait has been contributing significantly, in particular by hosting around three hundred thousand Bangladeshi nationals as well as by providing soft loans through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development in the priority projects of the power and energy, communications, and agriculture sectors of Bangladesh.

I am glad to perceive that the military cooperation between Bangladesh and Kuwait is very distinct. This cooperation started in 1990 when the Bangladeshi Armed Forces took part in the war to liberate Kuwait from the Iraqi invasion. To date, the Bangladeshi Military Contingent (BMC), comprising around 5,000 Bangladeshi Armed Forces Personnel, has been working with Kuwait Armed Forces as part of the Coalition Forces. The cooperation between the two Armed Forces reflects the trust and confidence of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait in Bangladesh.

I am pleased that our two countries maintain close working relations on issues of our common priorities in the United Nations and other multilateral forums. We are eager to diversify our cooperation further in Trade and Investment, Energy, Climate Change, Cyber Security, Agriculture and Food Security, and Health services.

I express my sincere thanks to all Bangladeshi expatriates living in Kuwait for sending remittances and thus contributing to the economy and development of Bangladesh.

I pray for good health, long life and happiness of the Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the friendly people of Kuwait peace, progress and prosperity.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu,  
Long live the Bangladesh-Kuwait Friendship.

*(Sheikh Hasina)*  
Sheikh Hasina

## Foreign Minister's Message



পরিচালক মন্ত্রী  
FOREIGN MINISTER



GOVERNMENT OF THE  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
DHAKA

23 April 2024

Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu

On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of Bangladesh-Kuwait diplomatic relations, I am pleased to extend my sincere greetings and congratulations to the Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Government of the State of Kuwait, the brotherly people of Kuwait and the Bangladeshi nationals living in Kuwait.

Kuwait's recognition of Bangladesh on 04 November 1973 as the first Gulf country following the historic meeting between our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and His Highness the Amir of Kuwait in the side-line of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit held in Algiers in 1973 was the first landmark of our bilateral relations. Our relationship for the last fifty years has deepened in various areas of cooperation, including trade, investment, human resource employment, energy, culture, defense, etc. I take this opportunity to express my firm belief that the existing bilateral cooperation between our two countries will receive momentum to take our engagement to the next level. We are eager to diversify our cooperation in Manpower, Trade and Investment, Climate Change, Cyber Security, Food Security and Health services.

The State of Kuwait has been our development partner through its contribution to employing around three hundred thousand Bangladeshi nationals and by providing soft loans through Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development in priority projects of the power and energy, communications, and agriculture sectors of Bangladesh.

The military cooperation between Bangladesh and the State of Kuwait is very distinctive. The bilateral military ties date back to 1990 when Bangladeshi forces took part in the war to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi invasion. Bangladeshi military personnel have been rebuilding Kuwait by risking their lives for the past 26 years. As many as 5,000 members of the Bangladesh Military Contingent (BMC) are working under the Kuwait Armed Forces on a project named Operation Kuwait Punarghathan (OKP), including the clearing of landmines planted by Iraqi forces during the Gulf War in 1991.

The government of Bangladesh has been consistent in upholding our foreign policy "Friendship to all, malice towards none" as enunciated by the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Our achievement in the international arena, including the establishment of world peace, is also commendable. Despite being densely populated country, Bangladesh has set a unique example of humanity in the world by sheltering more than one million of Rohingyas who have been forcibly deported from Myanmar. Bangladesh believes in a peaceful solution to this problem. We hope the United Nations and the international community will take effective measures for solution to Rohingya problem and to stop war taking place around the world including Palestine. We deeply acknowledge Kuwait's contribution to the 'OIC Fund for Rohingya'.

One of the major objectives of our Vision 2041 of Bangladesh is to achieve the status of developed country by 2041. We look forward to working together with Kuwait in achieving our vision. In the United Nations and other multilateral forums, our two nations maintain close working relations on issues of our common priorities.

I pray for the good health, long life and happiness of the Amir His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and for the brotherly people of Kuwait peace, progress and prosperity.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu.

Long live Bangladesh-Kuwait Friendship.

*(Dr. Hasan Mahmud)*  
Dr. Hasan Mahmud, M.P.

## Ambassador's Message



Ambassador of Bangladesh  
Kuwait

23 April 2024

On the auspicious occasion of 50th Anniversary of Bangladesh-Kuwait diplomatic relations, I convey our heartfelt greetings and warm congratulations to our nationals living in Kuwait. I express our sincere gratitude to the Amir, His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the Foreign Minister, His Excellency Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya and to the brotherly people of the State of Kuwait for their continued support towards further strengthening of the friendly and time-tested relations between Bangladesh and Kuwait. I also convey my deepest appreciation to all the well-wishers and friends of Bangladesh in Kuwait for their contribution to enhancing the bilateral relations between the two friendly countries.

Bangladesh and Kuwait are enjoying an excellent bilateral relations since its recognition to Bangladesh as an independent country. With the passage of time, the relation has been further developed and strengthened by the prudent leadership of the former Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and visionary leadership of Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina. I firmly believe that with the prudent and dynamic leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and present leadership of Bangladesh, the bilateral relations between two friendly countries will reach at a new height.

The Government of Bangladesh is committed to further strengthening bilateral relations with Kuwait in every domain including political, economic, export and import, trade and investment, manpower, agriculture, education, tourism and defence sectors. State of Kuwait is a development partner of Bangladesh in the Gulf region through the Kuwait Fund and other agencies. Government of Bangladesh and State of Kuwait has signed a number of Agreements/MoUs in various fields including air transport, education and culture, trade and economy, technical cooperation in manpower, defence cooperation, cooperation in tourism sector, establishment of joint commission for bilateral cooperations, agreement on avoidance of double taxation and agreement on mutual exemption of prior entry visa.

The military cooperation between Bangladesh and State of Kuwait is very distinctive. The bilateral military ties date back to 1990 when the Bangladeshi Forces took part in the war to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi invasion. The Bangladeshi Forces efforts during the post-gulf war period in 1991 were so memorable, especially their effective participation in inspecting and clearing the landmines that the Iraqi army planted inside Kuwait during their invasion. Thus, Bangladeshi military personnel have been participating in rebuilding of Kuwait by risking their lives for the past 30 years.

Bangladesh is one of the major manpower exporting countries in the world. More than eight million Bangladeshis are working in various parts of the globe. Of this, more than 60% of whom are in the Gulf countries. As per the statistics of the Government of Kuwait, around three hundred thousand Bangladeshi nationals are living in Kuwait. On this special day, I request all my Bangladeshi people to continue their efforts unitedly and sincerely for the betterment of the country, for achieving the "Sonar Bangla" dream by the Father of the Nation and strengthen the hands of Hon'ble prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for implementing her vision 2021 and 2041 and to establish hunger and poverty free developed Bangladesh.

For the sake of our beloved motherland, that we have achieved through a war prolonged over nine months and through the supreme sacrifices of three million martyrs, I earnestly urge all of you to be sincere and dedicated to your services, respectful to your employers and to abide by the rules, regulations and customs of Kuwait. May Allah bless all of you with good health, safety in workplace and security in life. May the Bangladesh community in Kuwait live in peace and harmony. I sincerely believe that with your continued support, Bangladesh will find its place as a dignified, democratic and secular country in the world.

On this historic day, once again, I express my deep gratitude to the Amir, His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the Foreign Minister, His Excellency Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya for their continued support to me and the Embassy for smooth discharge of our responsibilities.

May Bangladesh-Kuwait friendship live forever.  
Joi Bangla.

*(Major General Md. Ashikuzzaman)*

Major General Md. Ashikuzzaman, ndc, afwc, psc, G (Retd.)

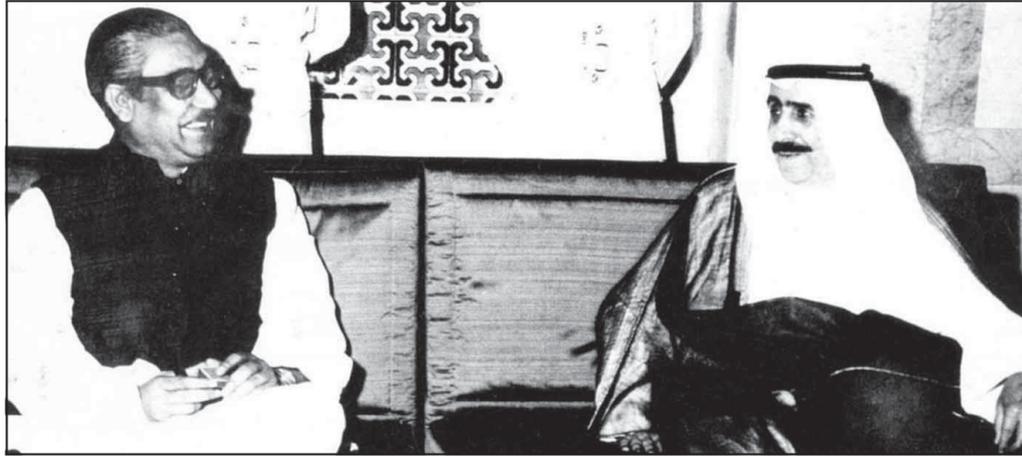
# 50 Years of Kuwait-Bangladesh Friendship

The bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and Kuwait is very historic in nature. With the passage of time, the relation has been further developed and strengthened by the prudent leadership of the former Amir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and visionary leadership of Honourable Prime Minister of Bangladesh Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina. The Government of Bangladesh is committed to further strengthening bilateral relations in every domain including political, economic, export and import, trade and investment, manpower, agriculture, education, tourism and defence sector.

Kuwait recognized Bangladesh on 04 November 1973 following the historic meeting between Father of our Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the then Prime Minister of Bangladesh and the Head of Government of Kuwait in the side-line of NAM-Summit held in Algiers in 1973. Strong support extended to the Arabs during the Arab-Israel war in 1973 further boosted Bangladesh's image in Kuwait. The former Emir His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who was then Foreign Minister along with Palestinian Leader His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat, undertook a special mission to negotiate the issue between Bangladesh and Pakistan, leading to mutual recognition by both Bangladesh and Pakistan which paved the way for Bangladesh to participate at the 2nd OIC Summit in Lahore on 22-24 February 1974. Both the countries started their missions on reciprocity basis in April 1974.

One of the major objectives of Kuwait's Foreign Policy is to stand by its friends throughout the world. The late Amir of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, highlighted Kuwait's global outreach strategy in 1961 during the establishment of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. This support comes in the forms of loans and grants that go into the recipient country's development of infrastructure, strengthening of socio-economic status and different sectoral advancement. With the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kuwait and Bangladesh in 1974, Kuwait evinced keen interest in providing soft loans to the newly independent country. All forms of Kuwaiti official assistance to Bangladesh is channelled through Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. Kuwait fund provided soft loans in the priority projects of power & energy, communications and agriculture sector of Bangladesh. So far, Kuwait has provided loans for twenty four (24) development projects amounting to approximately half a billion dollar over a three decade period. These loans have been provided as soft loans with highly flexible terms and conditions.

The government of Bangladesh has been consistent in upholding our foreign policy "Friendship to all, malice towards none" as enunciated by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Our achievement in the international arena, including the establishment



Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman meeting with The Amir of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah in 1974.

of world peace, is also commendable. Despite being densely populated country, Bangladesh has set a unique example of humanity in the world by sheltering more than one million of Rohingyas who have been tortured and forcibly deported from Myanmar. People of Bangladesh are peace loving. Bangladesh believes in a peaceful solution to this problem. We hope the United Nations and the international community will take effective measures for solution to Rohingya problem and to stop war taking place around the world. Bangladesh deeply acknowledge the contribution of Kuwait to the "OIC Fund for Rohingya" amount of US\$1,00,000.

Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina visited Kuwait in her first tenure in November 2000. Hon'ble Prime Minister paid an official visit to Kuwait in February 2010 at the invitation of the Kuwaiti Amir which is the symbol of friendly gesture of Kuwait towards the present government. This has further strengthened bilateral relations between the two countries at the highest level of comfort/co-operation in all respects. Both governments of Bangladesh and Kuwait are happily running towards brotherly relations having economic impact from each other and mutual support in the regional and international forum.

His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait paid a three-day Official Visit to Bangladesh at the invitation of Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh from 3-5 May 2016. During the visit, His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait paid a courtesy call on with His Excellency Mr. Md. Abdul Hamid, Hon'ble President of Bangladesh. The two leaders emphasized on the importance of deepening cooperation between Bangladesh and Kuwait both in bilateral, regional and multilateral arenas. The two Prime Ministers recalled with deep respect the relations between Father of the Nation

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the former Amir of Kuwait that had laid down the foundation of bilateral relations between the two countries. Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh recalled with fondness the visit by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait in 1974, as the then Foreign Minister of Kuwait to accompany Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to the OIC Summit in Lahore in 1974.

During the visit, the two sides agreed to cooperate in various fields and to expand the scope of the partnership in the fields of trade, investments, energy and power, defence, human resources, infrastructure and in the priority sectors in the Economic Zones under Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (BEZA) and IT parks. Expressing satisfaction at the signing of the Agreement on Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investment between Bangladesh and Kuwait, the two Prime Ministers affirmed that it would facilitate Kuwait investments in Bangladesh.

Government of Bangladesh and State of Kuwait has signed a number of Agreements/MoUs in various fields including air transport, education and culture, trade and economy, technical cooperation in manpower, defence cooperation, cooperation in tourism sector, establishment of joint commission for bilateral cooperation, agreement on avoidance of double taxation and agreement on mutual exemption of prior entry visa. Personnel of the Bangladesh Armed Forces are being deputed to the State of Kuwait through an Agreement between the two Defence Ministries of both the countries signed in 1980 for the deputation of the Bangladesh Armed Forces Personnel to the State of Kuwait. A group of 250 Bangladesh Air Force personnel first came to Kuwait on deputation under the said agreement.

Bangladesh and Kuwait on 31 May 2023, Wednesday, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding recruitment of nurses and other supportive technical

staffs from Bangladesh to work in the hospitals and medical centres of the Ministry of Health in Kuwait. His Excellency Major General Md. Ashikuzzaman, Ambassador of Bangladesh and Dr. Mostafa Ridha, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health signed the MoU on behalf of Bangladesh and Kuwait respectively at the Ministry of Health of Kuwait.

Bangladesh is trying to import various types of skilled manpower to Kuwait. As a result, for the first time, a total of 635 nurses have arrived and joined their respective workplace in Kuwait. Hiring of skilled manpower from Bangladesh to Kuwait is a milestone event and beginning of export of Bangladeshi skilled manpower to Kuwait through nurses would gradually pave the way for skilled manpower in various sectors in Kuwait, which in turn would further strengthen Bangladesh-Kuwait bilateral relations.



Former Amir of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bangladesh during her visit to Kuwait in 2010.

## Vision 2041: Smart Bangladesh

The ambitious socio-economic plan laid out by Bangladesh in the 2021-41 perspective plan implies that Bangladesh will need to make the journey from 'Digital' to 'Smart' which essentially means becoming focused on data centric design and human centric experience rather than automation & digitization. ICT will play a key role in achieving the Smart Bangladesh Vision and will straddle 4 key pillars: Smart Citizen, Smart Government, Smart Society & Smart Economy.

Smart Citizen will aim at empowering the citizens of Bangladesh with a digital first mindset through driving campaigns and implementing widespread digital literacy programs. Smart citizens of 2041 will not only have digital embedded in their way of life but will also collaborate with the govt and industry for co-creation of services and policy making.

Smart Government of 2041 should be able to bring to life the concept of "invisible governance" through implementation of 100% paperless offices and hyper personalized service platforms across priority areas like healthcare, education, agriculture, revenue management, public security etc. It will engage in proactive and collaborative policymaking to catalyse Bangladesh's evolution on frontier technologies.

Smart Society will essentially be characterized by inclusive communities and sustainable living. Digital tolerance, ethics, and values will be embedded among citizens. High degree of inclusivity will be enabled through interoperable cashless payment ecosystem, easy access to credit etc. and life will be sustainable & resilient in smart cities, energized by smart grids and boosted by an integrated technology platform.

Smart Economy will be about creating an innovation economy to enable Bangladesh to be on the fore front of ever evolving industrial technology revolution, especially across

priority segments like RMG & Textiles, Light Engineering, Agriculture etc. This will go hand in hand with creating a \$50 Bn ICT industry, creating a robust startup ecosystem.

adopted: (i) Landscaping of current progress and plans, (ii) Listening to the voice of Bangladesh's stakeholders, and (iii) Taking learnings from global benchmarks.



These combined, will position Bangladesh to build on its current industrial strengths & become technology fore-runners in the same. Action across these 4 pillars will ensure that Bangladesh collectively achieves the objective of creating an innovation economy for Bangladesh through fostering ICT and scientific research.

When translating the vision to an actual Master Plan, a 3-pronged approach was

### Landscaping of Current Progress and Plans

Detailed study of marquee initiatives across the 4 pillars of Digital Bangladesh has indicated that significant tangible value has been delivered through these programs till date. Only a few examples are as below:

- 2000+ government services have been digitized under the ambitious National eGovernment Master Plan.
- Mobile internet penetration grew 6x over the last 10 years. Over half the population has access to mobile phones.
- National mega-projects like info-Sarker, Union Digital Centres, multimedia classrooms, etc. have connected the nation's citizens to digital technologies.
- Bangladesh has one of the highest 4G penetration in South Asia.
- Investor friendly policies have attracted investments from majors like Oracle, Samsung, Huawei, Nokia, etc.
- Startup Bangladesh Ltd. has set the foundation for an emerging startup ecosystem
- Bangladesh had over 65,000 IT/ITES graduates as of 2018. Approximately 2 Lakh teachers have been trained on multimedia content development.

However, there are emerging areas of concern to be addressed in the journey to

Smart Bangladesh 2041. Quality of services, lack of end-to-end digital experience, limited standardization across ministries, and limited interoperability of data are areas of concern. Also, the ICT industry growth itself needs to be turbocharged to achieve targets of \$5 Bn domestic ICT spend and \$5 Bn ICT gross exports by 2025. Limited scale in semiconductor and electronic devices manufacturing hinders ability to drive nation-wide affordable smart device penetration.

Low smart phone penetration, lack of smart device affordability, limited awareness of benefits from digital, and lack of cloud-first mindset need to be addressed. Bangladesh needs to firm up existing policies on cybersecurity and emerging technologies (e.g., AI, Robotics, Blockchain, IoT, Microprocessor design). Ambitious programs like Sheikh Hasina Institute of Frontier Technologies, and planning of new education curriculum are underway. However, lack of STEM focus in universities, disjointed digital skilling efforts with limited quality assurance, and lack of organized inclusion of gig workers and marginalized sections in skilling initiatives are key concerns. 4IR technologies present a great opportunity to automate and modernize traditional industries like RMG, but this also poses the risk of job losses and hence, needs to be looked at from an angle of re-skilling the workforce and moving up the innovation value chain across priority industries.

### Listening to the Voice of Bangladesh's Stakeholders

Key themes emerged from consultations, surveys and interviews across Government, citizens, and key industries of Bangladesh. Voice of Citizen: Bangladeshis clearly emerged as heavier users of digital government services. Over 70% users are keen on using personalized government services. Laptops and tablets will lead adoption of smart devices over the next two years; however, affordability will be a barrier to adoption.

**Voice of Government:** Multiple themes and concerns emerged across 4 key dimensions, from extensive interviews and consultations with Government stakeholders:

1. Transformation governance needs to be shaped through interventions like nationwide digital awareness program, a common governing taskforce for the Master Plan, cross-ministerial integration, and embedding agile ways of working in

public sector.

2. Investments and policy agenda should be shaped through synergistic investments in public service digitalization and trust on areas like citizen data safety, cybersecurity, proactive policy upgradation and review.

3. Technology agenda should be led by common guidelines and standards, integrated service delivery architecture, data interoperability and fungibility, affordable devices and internet, and scalable digital infrastructure.

4. Skilling and talent development programs should ensure emerging technologies are embedded in university curricula. Skills competency framework should guide skilling interventions. Quality control and outcome orientation of skilling programs should be elevated from current levels. Current demographic dividend is a national advantage but for a limited window – skilling of critical mass should be achieved before it ends.

**Voice of Business:** Five key themes emerged from engagements with business leaders:

1. Smart Government and Smart Economy emerged as top priority change pillars for business leaders.

2. Regulatory support is required in areas like repatriation by investors, and exit support for Startups.

3. Review of data hosting & management policies and technology IP valuation support will be critical allow flexibility and growth opportunities to local IT/IT-ES firms.

4. Limited digitally skilled talent is one of the most critical barriers to digital transformation.

5. Collaboration among Government, Industry and Academia will be critical for digital curricula development and digital skilling of society.

**Learnings from Global Benchmarks**

Global exemplars have been studied for each change pillar and programs within each pillar. Learnings from relevant benchmarks have been distilled and their best practices, contextualized to Bangladesh, have been embedded in the design of each program in the Master Plan.



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Here's to the beautiful journey you've embarked on together  
**Happy 50 Years anniversary (Kuwait - Bangladesh)**  
cheers to many more years ahead!

**MOHAMMED ALI ABDUL HASHIM**  
OPERATION DIRECTOR

Kuwait-Farwaniya-Block 4-Habib Munawer ST.  
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Here's to the beautiful journey you've embarked on together  
**Happy 50 Years anniversary (Kuwait - Bangladesh)**  
cheers to many more years ahead!

**AMINOOR RAHMAN (AMIN)**  
CEO

Kuwait-Farwaniya-Block 4-Habib Munawer ST.  
Basman Bld 11<sup>th</sup> Floor - Office No. 51

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