



HIGH COMMISSION FOR THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
CANBERRA

Press release

Analysts see dynamic Bangladesh-Australia partnership

Melbourne, 13 June 2019: Bangladesh High Commission, Canberra together with Centre for Policy Development, a Melbourne based think tank organized a two-session seminar on 12 June at the Melbourne Law School. The seminar focused on two dedicated roundtable sessions. The first one was on Bangladesh as an emerging middle power in the Indo-Pacific region; prospect of partnership and greater role that the two countries can play together in preserving international order and regional stability. The second one was on challenges for the region from forced migration and how the countries in the region can play stronger role for a sustainable solution to the ongoing Rohingya crisis to avoid instability in the entire region.

The seminar brought together stakeholders from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), academia from the top ranking universities in Melbourne and Canberra, civil society representatives, leading think-tanks, scholars and business agencies to discuss how Bangladesh has been maintaining significant social and economic progress for the last one decade that has created new prospects and dynamics in bilateral relations with Australia and opportunities for diversifying and strengthening the relationship further. The speakers include former New Zealand Minister and UN Advisor for Rakhine State Chris Carter, former UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner and Vice Chancellor's fellow at the Melbourne University Erika Feller, CEO of Centre for Policy Development Travers McLeod, Associate Dean in the ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, Nicholas Farrelly and Assistant Secretaries of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Andrew Collins and Steve Scott.

Bangladesh High Commissioner Sufiur Rahman presented a keynote speech at the roundtable on emerging Bangladesh and prospects of deeper partnership with Australia where he projected Bangladesh's faster and resilient economic and social progress in comparison to similarly situated developing countries in the region. He invited Australian thinkers to study Bangladesh to understand its recent development trajectory and its emergence as a middle power. He also invited them to identify areas of mutual interest on which both countries can focus on to strengthen engagements for a deeper relation, beyond aid and trade into education, skill development, science and technology, agriculture, defence and strategic cooperation.





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The panelists in the second session focused on the recent forced displacement of Rohingyas in large scale from the Rakhine State who are the victims of decades' long discrimination under the Myanmar governments. The speakers agreed that regional countries and international community should assume their responsibility and take coordinated efforts for a durable solution to the crisis. High Commissioner Sufiur Rahman stated that the solution lies with the Myanmar government and international community should keep pressure on Myanmar to create conducive environment in Rakhine for safe, voluntary, durable and dignified repatriation of the Rohingyas to their country. He appreciated international community's humanitarian support to Bangladesh including Australia but underscored the need for strong political support to encourage Myanmar to take rectifying measures as well as regional and global responses for orderly return of the Rohingya people.

The contributors emphasized on the prospects of immense risk of security threat for the entire region that might jeopardize regional peace and stability if these hopeless people become radicalized and if the crisis is not addressed. The speakers opined that instability in Rakhine State has led to transnational organised crime, in particular drug, human trafficking and gun running. As such, comprehensive regional action is essential, they viewed.


