

Round Table Dialogue with Malaysia Investors

Address by

H.E Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Mr. Chairman,
Leaders of Malaysia's business community,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum and a very good morning to you all.

I am happy to be here with you this morning to share some thoughts on how to boost business initiatives between Malaysia and Bangladesh to their maximum potential. I, therefore, express my sincere thanks to the organizers of this important event.

Since establishment of diplomatic ties nearly 40 years ago, Bangladesh and Malaysia achieved remarkable progress in many areas of our relations. At present, Malaysia is the 5th largest investor in Bangladesh with total investment of nearly US \$ 1.5 billion, creating jobs for 13,000 people. Our Board of Investment (BOI) records 72 Malaysian joint venture projects in the private sector as of 10 April 2010.

In my meeting with Prime Minister Dato' Seri Mohd Najib, both of us committed to finding new avenues for intensifying our countries' relations. In the economic sphere, much is achievable, of course, by our private sectors. Here, Malaysian business could play a big role. It has already transformed Malaysia, in the last three decades, as a model of success for developing countries.

Bangladesh is pursuing a free market policy. We have liberalized our trade regimes, investment policies; reduced interest rates and cost of doing business; removed infrastructure bottlenecks; improved port facilities. Investment climate is now attractive with liberal fiscal policies like tax holiday; concessionary duty on imported machinery; remittances of royalty, technical know how, technical assistance fee; 100% foreign equity; unrestricted exit policy; and full repatriation facilities of dividend and capital exit.

Bangladesh also maintains healthy macro-economic fundamentals, enjoys stable environment; and has a competitive workforce. Despite, recent world recession Bangladesh succeeded in maintaining 6 % growth rate. Our social economic indicators are outperforming others at similar income level. Our primary school enrollment rate is highest in the developing world, and we have achieved gender parity in enrollment, food security, capacity to cope with natural disasters, and reduction of poverty.

I assure you Bangladesh's economy today rests on sound foundation. We welcome Malaysian entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh in particularly labor intensive industries as RMG, textile, light engineering, electronics, agro-based products, ICT, power and infrastructure. We also welcome increased Malaysian import of our jute and leather goods, RMG, ceramics pharmaceuticals, which are marketed in also developed countries. For first hand knowledge, I believe, frequent visits and participation in trade fairs by businessmen of both countries are important.

Our government has adopted Public Private Partnership Policy (PPP) for building infrastructure projects as power, gas, water etc. Our 2009-2010 national budget had allocated a huge amount for PPP in these areas. Malaysia, with its experience with PPP, could support Bangladesh in building these projects. A Joint Working Group of our two countries could promote these potential areas of investment and trade. As you may know the confidence in the global

market has placed Bangladesh in the list of next 11 promising economies. Bangladesh has also been rated by both S&P and Moody's ahead of all South Asian economies, except India.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Malaysia and Bangladesh are bound by strong, durable relations founded on commonality in history, customs, traditions and values of life. We are brotherly countries which must strengthen and consolidate our overall relations with mutual support and cooperation. Our governments are there to do their best, but a big share of responsibility rests on you all, the champions of business, commerce and industry. As for Bangladesh, the wind is in our sails, and you are all invited to join us in our journey to a great future.

I thank you all.

Khoda Hafez
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever
Long Live Bangladesh-Malaysia Friendship.

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