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**REMARKS
BY
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA**

**DHAKA ACCESS ALUMNI CLUB
ANNUAL REUNION**

**AMERICAN CENTER, DHAKA
JULY 23, 2013**

Language Proficiency Center Director Javed Karim

And my good, good friends ... all the alumni from the great Access program

Asalaam 'malaikum, Ramadan Mubarak, and good morning!

Faces ...

I see bright faces, eager faces ... an ocean of faces ...

I see lucky faces ...

I see smart faces ...

Lucky faces ... indeed, lucky faces ... you are so lucky to be Bangladeshi ... by being born in Bangladesh, you are blessed with knowing Bangla, one of the world's great languages ... such good luck.

Smart faces ... you are smart ... you decided to learn another language – English – so you can access the world.

English is the language of the global marketplace.

English is the key that unlocks a broader world of information and commerce.

English is the entry point to some of the world's best literature, poetry, films ...

English is the language of scientific discourse, discovery, research, the internet, international dialogue ...

Yes ... you are so smart ... you realize that with solid command of both Bangla and English, the world is at your fingertips ...

I am so glad that you are committed to mastering English.

I believe that mastery of English is critical to Bangladesh's success in becoming a major player in the international arena.

Bangladesh is the seventh most populous country in the world, and I believe Bangladesh should play a role on the global stage commensurate with its being the seventh largest country in the world.

I believe Bangladesh should be a middle-income country where all have the means to provide their families safe shelter, ample, nutritious food, good healthcare and quality education. English is critical to making that vision become reality.

Good, strong English skills would help Bangladesh develop markets around the world so it becomes the largest exporter of readymade garments and household textiles and a major player in the global market for small freighters, generic pharmaceuticals, shoes, finished leather goods, frozen shrimp, jute products, silk and the list goes on.

Good, strong English skills would help Bangladesh become a huge global player in IT (information technology) by developing software, animation for films, and other IT support. With good, strong English, Bangladesh could provide back office support to American businesses, which are 12 time zones away ... geography certainly helps Bangladesh in this regard.

Good, strong English skills would enable Bangladesh to play a pivotal role as the nexus of trade and economic linkages between South Asia and the countries of the east...we call this the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor, which would link the subcontinent and the Pacific. Of course, Bangladesh could be/should be the hub of this trade.

Good, strong English skills would enable Bangladesh to better educate and train its people, so Bangladeshis who work overseas building the Middle East and Southeast Asia would be skilled and semi-skilled, not merely unskilled labor as is currently the case.

Good, strong English skills would enable Bangladeshi peacekeepers to serve more effectively and in greater numbers around the world.

I could keep going, but I think I have made my point: good, strong English skills are important to building the New Bangladesh, the Middle-Income Bangladesh, the Bangladesh that becomes Asia's next tiger ... indeed, to build Sonar Bangla.

So, that's the challenge to you ... keep building, improving and refining your English skills.

You have a big job to do... only you can build Sonar Bangla ...

To contribute most effectively, you should continue to develop good, strong English skills.

For the sake of your nation, I wish you full success in this quest.

Thank you.

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**As prepared for delivery*