

**EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

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**REMARKS BY**

**U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan Mozena  
New Year's Water Festival  
Rangamati  
April 15, 2013**

The Minister of State for the Chittagong Hill Tracts Dipankar Talukdar, MP

Nikhil Kumar Chakma, Rangamati Hill District Council Chairman

Raja Devashish Roy, Chakma Circle Chief

Mostafa Kamal, Deputy Commissioner, Rangamati

Other representatives of the government and hill district councils

Friends ...

Shubho nobo borsho ... shubho boishabi ... shubho biju ... shubho ei paanir khela ...

This day ... this day when we celebrate the beginning of a new year is a great day.

It is a new, fresh start ...

It is also a time of reflection.

It is a day to appreciate life's blessings.

I truly have been blessed. First, to have a good family, a wonderful wife and children who have good values and appreciation for themselves and others.

I am blessed to be here in Bangladesh, wondrous Bangladesh ...

I am blessed to be here today with you in the beautiful, magnificent Hill Tracts.

Bangladesh, too, is blessed. When God created the lands of the world, I think He was especially generous with Bangladesh ... the rich soil, ample water, hospitable climate, mineral riches, and the list goes on.

No doubt, Bangladesh's greatest blessing is the people of this nation.

Everywhere I go in Bangladesh, including Khagrachari, Rangamati, Bandarban, the people are extraordinary ... the people ... the wonderful people whose energy, dynamism, creativity, generosity, entrepreneurial skills, resilience are unmatched anywhere.

When people ask me why on this the first day of the new year I am so hopeful about Bangladesh's bright future, my answer is simple: the people.

And as I get to know the young generation of Bangladesh, I am doubly reassured that Bangladesh, the world's seventh largest country, will find its rightful place in the family of nations, as the young people sustain and magnify the beautiful characteristics of the Bangladeshi people.

The nation reflects the beauty of its people.

Bangladesh is a moderate, tolerant country ... a nation that celebrates its rich diversity ... a nation that respects the various cultures, religions, languages of its people.

That rich diversity is nowhere more evident than right here at this moment at this very place, where Bangladeshis representing the nation's cultural, ethnic, religious diversity have come together to celebrate this special day.

That is the beauty and magic of Bangladesh.

As we launch this new year, let us ... each of us ... commit ourselves to sustaining and building the tolerance of diversity that has marked Bangladesh since its birth 42 years ago.

As we launch this new year, let us ... each of us ... commit ourselves to focusing our energies on all those things that unite Bangladesh and not the things that divide.

As we launch this new year, let us ... each of us ... commit ourselves to build an ever stronger, ever more just, ever more tolerant, ever more prosperous Bangladesh.

Such surely is the best way for us to thank God for the many blessings that He has bestowed upon us and most particularly on Bangladesh.

I wish you; I wish all the people of Bangladesh; I wish the nation of Bangladesh the very best as this promising, exciting new year begins.

Happy New Year!

Thank you.

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*\*As prepared for delivery*