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**REMARKS
BY
U.S. AMBASSADOR TO BANGLADESH DAN MOZENA
METAL SHARKS
HANDOVER CEREMONY
BANGLADESH COAST GUARD, CHITTAGONG
SEPTEMBER 19, 2013**

The Honorable Minister of Home Affairs Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir, MP

Rear Admiral Kazi Sarwar Hossain, Director General, Bangladesh Coast Guard

Captain Md. Aminur Rahman Khan, Director, Plans and Acquisition

Captain Md. Abidur Rahman, Commander, East Zone

Asalaam 'm laikum and good afternoon

I am having a wonderful day today!

I hope you are having a great day, too, as we undertake to hand over six more powerful, effective Metal Shark boats to the Bangladesh Coast Guard, most respected protector of Bangladesh's maritime border.

While we celebrate, others commiserate.

For some, today is a horrible day ... a dreaded day ... an awful day.

For some, today will long be remembered as one of the worst days ever.

Indeed, those who kidnap innocent Bangladeshis or traffic people, drugs, arms ... these people are not celebrating now.

Those who rob ships at sea and in port ... these people are not celebrating now.

Those who seek to import terrorism ... these people are not celebrating.

Those who steal your fish or threaten development of your maritime assets ... these people are not celebrating now.

I understand why these people today are having a bad day ...

... because the Bangladesh Coast Guard today is building an even stronger capacity to defend the maritime borders of this great nation.

Today, as the Bangladesh Coast Guard acquires six more 38 foot Metal Shark Defiant boats, the Coast Guard is becoming more capable than ever before in its history to protect the nation's 580 kilometer-long coastline from those who seek to do harm to Bangladesh ... truly, kidnappers, robbers, pirates, smugglers, terrorists are having a very bad day today ... a very bad day ... and I am glad for that.

Bangladesh is a great maritime nation ... Bangladesh's growing economy is dependent upon the safe passage of international shipping through Bangladesh's coastal waters ... and that is the job of the Bangladesh Coast Guard.

And what a job the Bangladesh Coast Guard does!

Robberies in coastal waters and in port have dropped by over two-thirds ... maritime insurance rates have dropped by a third ... kidnapped fishermen in the western coastal area are now being successfully rescued ... a most impressive track record by any measure.

These Metal Shark Defiant boats are dazzling. They are powerful; they are fast; they can handle the challenging seas of the Bay of Bengal; they can run down and overtake those who seek to use the seas to harm Bangladesh. These six new Defiants will help the Coast Guard reign supreme over the coastal waters.

And there will be more ... next year we will be back here to hand over another ten Metal Shark Defiants ... and in 2015, yet another three of these boats will be handed over to the Coast Guard.

These great boats, which cost about half a million dollars each, come with a complete package of spare parts and advanced training for the crew and officers. The Bangladesh Coast Guard has a proven track record of keeping the Defiant boats fully operational and in using them effectively to safeguard the maritime border.

Thanks to the Bangladesh Coast Guard, Bangladesh's sea link to the global economy is more secure than ever.

This sea link is essential if Bangladesh is to fulfill our shared vision of Bangladesh's becoming the next Asian tiger ... the Royal Bengal Tiger ... the world's largest exporter of readymade garments and household textiles, replacing China ... and a major player in the global market place for shoes and finished leather goods, for small freighters and tug boats, for generic pharmaceuticals, for frozen shrimp, for bone china, for jute and silk and so much more.

This Bangladesh ... this surging Bangladesh ... this middle income Bangladesh where all Bangladeshis have the means to provide their families secure housing, ample, nutritious food, good healthcare, quality education ... this wonderful, prosperous Bangladesh ... this emerging Asian Tiger ... indeed Sonar Bangla ... this Bangladesh is possible only if Bangladesh's coastal waters are free and open to international trade.

I am so pleased; I am so proud that America is Bangladesh's faithful partner in building the nation's capacity to protect these maritime assets. The six boats that we hand over today add to others that we provided last year and before to both the Bangladesh Coast Guard and the Bangladesh Navy. In addition, America is helping Bangladesh build a string of 30 specialized cyclone shelters along Bangladesh's coastline ... these shelters, called Coastal Crisis Management Centers, will be permanently manned by the Bangladesh Coast Guard, thus further enhancing protection of the coast line and capacity to respond to cyclones and tidal surges. America also partners with the Bangladesh Navy to build the SWADS, the Bangladesh version of the Navy Seals. And later this year, the Somudra Joi will arrive in Chittagong, where at 378 feet, it will be the largest vessel in the Bangladesh Navy ... this platform was contributed by America to Bangladesh, and I am working to line up a second such vessel for the Bangladesh Navy.

As Bangladesh strengthens its capacity to protect its maritime borders, everyone gains. America gains as Bangladesh is the second largest source of readymade garments for us and these products arrive by sea; the region gains as secure Bangladeshi waters make for a more secure Bay of Bengal; and, most especially, the people of Bangladesh gain as their lifeline to the world is secure. Bangladesh's success in protecting its maritime borders is a win-win-win for all ... for all except the kidnappers, robbers, smugglers, terrorists who today are most miserable.

I conclude by congratulating the Bangladesh Coast Guard for making this great day possible.

Thank you.

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** Prepared for delivery*