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**REMARKS
BY
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**“DARE TO DREAM”: A GIRL-ONLY EVENT IN OBSERVANCE OF
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY**

**AMERICAN CENTER
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Assalamualaikum, Namashkar.

Shubho Shokal.

Good morning.

It gives me tremendous pleasure to join you this morning to mark International Women’s Day, and launch this U.S. Embassy initiative to ensure Bangladeshi girls and young women are fully benefiting from the unique educational resources and cultural programs offered here at The American Center.

Yesterday on March 8, across Bangladesh and all over the world, women and men came together to celebrate International Women’s Day (IWD), a day set aside to highlight women’s achievements, recognize challenges, and focus greater attention on the necessity of achieving women’s rights and gender equality. These celebrations acknowledged the progress that has been made toward ensuring full equality and opportunity for women, and made clear that much work remains to be done.

It is fitting that we gather here this morning – on the day after International Women’s Day – to talk with you about the opportunities, the tools and the resources The American Center offers to help Bangladesh women and girls close the equality gap that persists.

Doing all we can to empower women and girls is not just something the U.S. Embassy talks about on International Women’s Day; it is something we’re committed to and work toward every day of the year. And it is a priority for the entire U.S. Government – from President Obama, to Secretary of State John Kerry, to all of our embassies worldwide that work every day to put U.S. foreign policy into practice.

In fact, achieving gender equality is *so* important to the U.S. Government that this past Thursday, on March 5th, the U.S. Department of State recognized nine extraordinary women with International Women of Courage Awards, and I'm delighted to tell you that one of those women was Nadia Sharmeen, a Bangladeshi television journalist who has demonstrated a fierce commitment to ensuring women can contribute to – and participate equally in – Bangladeshi society.

So, with Nadia as inspiration, I want to wish all of you an enjoyable day at The American Center, and I look forward to seeing you the next time I visit the library to borrow a book myself.

Advancing the role of girls and women is an endeavor that I am passionate about, dedicated to, and love to talk about, but now I would love to hear from you. Is there a question that anyone would like to ask?

No need to feel shy. When we share ideas and experiences, we can certainly learn from each other. I'd love to hear and learn from you, too.

**As prepared for delivery*

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