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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. EMBASSY CELEBRATES LEGACY OF EDWARD M. KENNEDY

ANNOUNCES NEW CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE IN DHANMONDI

DHAKA, FEBRUARY 14 -- The American Center at the U.S. Embassy, in partnership with Dhaka University and the Bangladesh Association for American Studies (BAAS), celebrated the 40th anniversary of Edward M. Kennedy's historic visit to Dhaka on February 14, 1972 with reflections on the Senator's commitment to public service and the announcement that a new Center for Public Service and the Arts will be established to honor his legacy. The event was attended by visiting U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert O. Blake and U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan Mozena, along with Chief Guest Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University, AAMS Arefin Siddique.

The day-long celebration began with a series of academic workshops organized by BAAS that examined Kennedy's political and humanitarian ideals and his love for Bangladesh. The afternoon program, introduced by American Center Director Lauren Lovelace, featured a documentary on the historic 1972 visit and panel discussion on the legacy of 1972. Panelists were *Daily Star* Editor-in-Chief Mahfuz Anam, Akku Chowdhury, Founding Trustee of the Liberation War Museum, noted academic and activist Professor Rounaq Jahan, and eminent Dhaka University historian Professor Abdul Momin Chowdhury.

In his remarks announcing the launching of the new Center, Ambassador Mozena recalled the days following the end of the Liberation War and Senator Kennedy's visit to Dhaka University's campus, where he planted a tree to replace the giant banyan tree known as "Bawt Tawla." "Over the past forty years, as this tree grew, Bangladesh, too reached upward," Mozena said, noting that today both tree and country are strong and flourishing. "Today, as we mark forty years of friendship between the people of the United States and the people of

Bangladesh, I am proud to announce that U.S. Embassy Dhaka, in partnership with the Liberation War Museum, will launch a new Center for Public Service and the Arts. This center will honor the legacy of Edward Kennedy and public servants everywhere.” The center will particularly focus on inspiring and supporting young people of Bangladesh who are interested in public service.

Assistant Secretary Blake, in his address, praised Kennedy’s legacy of public service and commitment to improving the lives of others, and called on young people to maintain the spirit of volunteerism and public service embodied by Senator Kennedy’s career. “Bangladesh already has a well-earned reputation for its active civil society and volunteerism. Having pioneered some of the most successful grassroots and community activity programs in the world, Bangladesh is now a leader for other societies to emulate. In honoring the legacy and spirit of Senator Edward M. Kennedy here in Bangladesh, therefore, you do him a great tribute, indeed.”

The new center, to be located in Dhanmondi, represents a joint partnership between the U.S. Embassy and the Liberation War Museum. The center will provide youth leadership workshops and professional development training, student advising and counseling on study in the U.S., and will act as a hub for Americans and Bangladeshis to interact and exchange ideas on volunteerism, public service, and the creative arts. Construction of the new center is expected to begin later this year.

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Note: A Bangla translation of this press release is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)