

Speech of H.E. The Ambassador of Italy, Antonio Alessandro, for the Celebrations of the 80th Anniversary of the Italian Republic

Honorable Minister for Commerce, Industry, Textiles and Jute, Mr. Khandakar Abdul Muktadir

Honorable Minister for Cultural Affairs, Mr. Nitai Roy Chowdhury

Hon'ble State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief, Mr. Iqbal Hossain

Hon'ble Adviser for Post and Telecommunications, Mr. Rehan Asif Asad

Excellencies, Ambassadors

Civilian and military Authorities (Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan)

Business representatives,

Members of the Italian community

Ladies and gentlemen

Welcome to the **80th Anniversary of Italian Republic!**

In 1946 Italy was a poor country, ravaged by the war, with limited resources and a painful legacy of fascism.

The choice to become a democratic Republic, made by Italian women and men in the referendum of 2nd of June 1946, was a turning point in our destiny.

In a few decades, Italy managed to evolve into one of the **most advanced economies** in the world.

The Italian case shows better than many other examples the **importance of good democratic governance** to ensure **progress and development**.

We are glad to see **Bangladesh on a similar path**. The 12 February elections, supported and monitored by the EU, opened a new era of modernization and growth, that Italy is committed to support.

Trade, investments, migration, aviation and defense industry, satellite technology, seismic preparedness, people-to-people relations, and culture, are the **areas** in which our bilateral partnership is most active.

On trade, I would like to announce a **significant development**: a group of Italian and Bangladeshi small and medium size enterprises, under the patronage of the Embassy, have registered a new and much-needed **Bangladeshi Italy Chamber of Commerce and Industry – BICCI**.

We have just presented the **vision of the new Chamber** to Minister Muktadir. I thank him, also on behalf of the founding members, for his encouragement and valuable suggestions for the work that lies ahead.

Companies from across Italy and Bangladesh are **invited to join this new instrument**. I wish this new initiative success, which I am certain will contribute to further increasing bilateral trade, already amounting to €2 billion annually. Interested guests can visit the Chamber's booth for more info.

As for culture, to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Italian Republic we brought to Dhaka the acappella Italian musical group **Mezzotono**. Many of you attended their **performance** at the Shilkapala Academy. I thank Hon'ble Minister Chowdhury and his staff for their **invaluable support**. Other cultural events will follow throughout the year. I also thank all our partners for the **Italian design day** last May.

The embassy is also pleased to see **Bangladeshi culture reach Italy**. A group of leading Bangladeshi artists, coordinated by the Hernet Foundation and supported by the Apostolic Nunciature, will exhibit in the **Vatican City** in early July. This will be a unique opportunity for **Romans** to appreciate the quality of Bangladeshi contemporary art.

On a lighter note, you may know that a few days ago, the Bangladeshi national football team had their **first ever match** on European soil against **San Marino, and won!** It was amazing to see thousands of people from the **Bangladeshi diaspora in Italy** arrive in San Marino to support their flag. This gives you the sense of the **huge Bangladeshi diaspora** in Italy, which is made of families, Italy born people and double citizens. I congratulate Bangladesh for its victory and San Marino for hosting the match.

Italy looks forward to deepening its partnership with Bangladesh including in **global affairs**. Our two countries share the same interest in **free trade, effective**

multilateralism, and **legal, safe and orderly migration**. Together, we can achieve great things.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Hon'ble Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman for his election as **next President of the UN General Assembly**. Italy looks forward to supporting him in this important role and working with him to advance our **common priorities**.

Finally, you may know that the **Italian cuisine** has been declared an intangible cultural heritage of Humanity. To live up to this **responsibility**, Chef Cristiano Marrosu came to Dhaka to prepare some **authentic Italian dishes**, which I hope you will enjoy.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your **friendship** with Italy. We count on you to nurture our relations and take them to **greater heights**.

Thank you