DAY 8:

0900 Journey starts from respective hotels
1030 Arrival at the Bangladesh Ansar-VDP Academy at Shafipur in Gazipur District
1330 Lunch at the Bangladesh Ansar-VDP Academy
1600 Leaving the Academy for respective hotels

Brief Introduction of the Venue:
Bangladesh Ansar-VDP Academy, Gazipur is a place of scenic beauty. The site is the hub of huge volunteers from all over Bangladesh. They work for women development and skill development in income generating activities. They are champions in sports and cultural activities. The main attractions waiting here are:
- Huge collection of hand-made crafts and artifacts
- Open cultural show
- Cake-fair (handmade)
- Skills of heritage and traditions of rural life (depiction of a typical village fair)
- Band show/sports display (Archery/Ushol)
- Swimming pool

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Continuing to Enhance the High Standards of Performance of Parliamentarians

PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN PARLIAMENTS

63rd COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE (CPC)
DHAKA, BANGLADESH
1-8 NOVEMBER 2017

PROGRAMME: DAY 8

63rd COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE (CPC)
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Bulletin Daily
63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference

PROMOTING YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN PARLIAMENTS

63rd CPC Photo Gallery

Continuing to Enhance the High Standards of Performance of Parliamentarians

63rd CPC Photo Gallery
Youth Roundtable led by the Hon’ble Speaker
Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP

The 63rd CPC is the first of its kind where a youth roundtable was organized and was given as much importance as the other very fruitful workshops of the day. Two participants of the previous Commonwealth Youth Parliament (CYP) in British Columbia had the opportunity of joining the Hon’ble Speaker, Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP as the leads of the youth roundtable organized at the BICC. Students from the Law Department of the University of Dhaka were selected to be a part of the roundtable discussions. The aforementioned students also took part in the ‘Youth Roadshows on Parliamentary Democracy’, which is a program by the CPA. The topic of the roundtable was “The Importance of Participatory Governance in Peaceful Democratic Societies”. “The issues that concern the youth and are related to the youth are very important to us”, said the CPA President, “and the discussions about them are not nearly as effective if the youth themselves are not involved. This is a very special event since we have organized a youth workshop of this format for the very first time,” she continued. Many Hor’ble delegates and Members of Parliament were also present during the workshop.

At first, the youth representatives at the podium had the chance to introduce and present themselves. The session moved on to the participants defining their own views of a “peaceful society” and “participatory governance”. Two groups were created to work out the best mechanism in which these could be involved in the process of governance, and to discuss the main topic. The interactive group session commenced and the two sorted out their own presentations andde/finitions of the topic, which was delivered by one student selected by the group. Both were highly intuitive and gave creative answers to the issue.

The success of the youth roundtable proves that the youth are indeed interested in politics and parliament. However, as acknowledged by many of the young participants, themselves, there is a great “disconnect” between the youth and the legislature which leads to a gap between them and the policy makers. The CPA took a huge step towards bridging that gap in this iteration of the CPC.

A Chat with Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi, MP
CWP Steering Committee Member for India Region

Is this your first visit to Bangladesh? How have you been liking it so far?
Yes, it is. I find it quite similar to my own country, India. I would compare Dhaka to maybe Kolkata or Mumbai. I have been enjoying my stay here and feeling much at home.

What do you think about the youth roundtable that took place yesterday?
Youth empowerment in politics is important. The youth consists of a large percentage of the population in countries like Bangladesh and India. We need to cater to their dreams and change the way the world is. This is only possible when the youth of the world comes together and finds peace. They need to cooperate with each other for matters such as global warming, political participation, making the world more equitable in terms of gender inclusion, etc. The world will only become a much better home.

What is your take on the Rohingya Issue?
The Rohingya issue is a difficult matter as far as India is concerned. There are some elements of fundamentalism involved that needs to be looked at. India has already been burdened with a huge amount of migration from different nations due to lack of consistent migration policies. India also has its own share of poverty, social, employment and many other issues that we are currently dealing with. However, India has already done more than asked for. Thus, under these circumstances I believe that countries with lesser populations and better economic and social conditions should come forward to help out in this hour of crisis.
Workshops held at the 63rd CPC

Workshop A

Workshop on “Democracy must Deliver: Role of Parliament in addressing the Challenges”. The workshop focused on taking equipped and informed decisions on law making and budgeting by Parliamentarians along with translating the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into legislation and policies for country-specific goals.

Workshop B

“The role of Parliamentarians in building stronger ties within the Commonwealth: including new trade issues, visa issues, travel restrictions, non-tariff restriction etc.” was the theme of the workshop. Concerns like setting up a committee charged with arranging a seminar with outside experts to examine the reason for the decline in momentum in removing obstacles to international trade and to recommend appropriate remedies was discussed in the workshop.

Workshop C

Workshop on “The Climate Change Debate: A Challenge for the Commonwealth?” was the hub to discuss issues like ensuring a developed framework for combating climate change within each region and how these frameworks can help legal reform to uphold a low carbon and climate resilient development pathway.

Workshop D

“Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): How can CPA Members work with their own governments in ensuring that the SDG goals have a proper gender lens to ensure success in the areas of alleviating poverty and women’s empowerment” was the topic of the workshop, which also talked about concerns about women and gender sensitivity.

Workshop E

The problems of small jurisdictions in terms of logistics and infrastructure challenges was discussed in the workshop titled “Critical Mass: Small jurisdictions and big problems—logistics and infrastructure challenge”. Concerns like policy making, regulations, funding and resource management in Parliaments at national and sub-national level were talked about in the discussions.

Workshop F

Workshop on “CPA Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures: Progress in the past 10 years” dealt with issues like identifying improvements and enhancements within the Parliament, having transparency and accountability, updating CPA Benchmarks on Democratic Legislatures as a tool to ensure their contribution to SDG16, calling upon members of the CPA to conduct regular meetings, and reviews to enhance the benchmarks to suit the current developments.

Workshop G

Workshop on “Giving Voice to the Youth: Mechanisms for Ensuring Effective Participation of Youth in the Governance Process” included recommendations like Parliaments must ensure that the Young Parliamentarians were given a voice in the parliamentary processes at national, regional and international representative bodies, and that Parliamentarians should ceaselessly endeavor to ensure the role of the youth in governance and nation building.

Workshop H

“What Factors Fuel the Rise of Different Kinds of Nationalism?” was the theme of the last workshop that focused on identifying different definitions of nationalism, recognizing how different factors like history, political systems and geography influences the differing types of nationalism across different countries of the world and how leadership quality of a nation can affect the people’s idea of nationalism.
Know Bangladesh

Progress and Prosperity through ICT

S

ince 2009, the ICT sector of Bangladesh has been developing very fast which has resulted in the
country being named as the next big IT Hub after India. However, only 7 years
prior to 2009, the ICT sector was
extremely inadequate. Since 2015, the
progress of this sector has been visible
sustaining momentum since 2009. The
dream of Digital Bangladesh is turning
into reality. One of the world’s leading
management consultancy firms AT
Kearney reported that due to immense
growth in IT outsourcing, business
processing and software development,
Bangladesh has secured 22nd place on
the Global Location Index. Currently,
Bangladesh is behind only India and Sri
Lanka when it comes to the ICT sector in
Southeast Asia.

The goal of the government is to conduct
mass digitization, and thus has set up a
large number of ‘Digital Centers’ around
the country to reach out to even the
smallest unit of local government, the
Union. These centers are providing
various types of services to the people
that include computer training, mobile
banking, employment information, birth
registration, visa processing, etc. These
centers also cater to local ICT
entrepreneurs who can earn from Tk.
20,000 to 100,000. These centers have
also provided employment opportunity
to the youths of those locality and has
allowed the government to de-centralize
the large cities of the country to an
extent. The government is also trying to
convert the post offices into Digital
Centers.

The government has also been trying to
digitize the activities of the government
bodies. The Bangladesh National Portal
(www.bangladesh.gov.bd) was also
launched which has more than 25,000
websites and 42,000 government offices
linked to it. It provides over 150
e-services. It also won the World Summit
on the Information Society year for the
2nd time in 2015. The national web portal
was nominated under the ‘Access to
Information and Knowledge’ category.
Infrastructure work of two hitech parks,
one in Gazipur and another in Jessor is
going on right now. The government also
has plans to establish silicon cities in
every divisional headquarters. A software
technology park has been opened which
aims to connect the ICT based startup
organizations. Internet usage has drastically increased in
the country and to further connect
people, the government has installed free
public WiFi service in many places. A
significant number of initiatives have
been taken to enable Bangladesh to
take a top IT outsourcing nation.
Training programs have been launched to
generate ICT skilled professionals.
Content from Khan Academy is being
translated in Bangla to ensure that
students across the country get an
opportunity to gain knowledge beyond
their schooling.

The government has further very
extensive plans to develop the ICT sector
even more. The plans focus on industry,
e-governance, infrastructure, human
resources development, laboratories and
services. The roadmap for industry has
targets to generate 1000 innovations,
raising software export earnings to $5
billion by 2021.

Know Bangladesh

First Commonwealth Parliamentary Lecture for the
CPA Asia Region at the 63rd CPA
By Professor Dr Gowher Rizvi

Yesterday at the 63rd Commonwealth Parliamentary
Conference (CPC), Professor Dr Gowher Rizvi presented a
briefing on the issues addressed at the first Asia Region
Commonwealth Parliamentary Lecture. Professor Dr
Gowher Rizvi is a renowned International Affairs Advisor to
the Prime Minister who has taught in many foreign
universities such as Oxford, Harvard, the University of
Virginia and the University of Warwick. In this important
briefing he brought out the most prevalent problems
surrounding the Asian nations in the Commonwealth, and
has emphasized greatly how political values must be
realized for better eradication of global predicaments.

The CPA President and the Chairperson of the CPA
International Executive Committee, Hon. Dr Shirin Sharmi
Chaudhury, MP, Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh,
and Mr Akbar Khan, the Secretary-General of the CPA, also
attended this lecture. Also attending the lecture were over
100 participants of the 63rd CPC, which includes Members
of Parliament, staff, official members, diplomatic corps and
international delegates. This lecture was one of its kind due
to the fact that it was the first Commonwealth
Parliamentary Lecture for the CPA Asia Region.

Revolving around the theme of “Commonwealth Political
Values”, Professor Dr Gowher Rizvi spoke of the
development of the Commonwealth and emphasized the
history that has played a significant role throughout the
generations. He talked about how Britain used the
Westminster system, a parliamentary government system
which was birthed in the United Kingdom, to colonize
other nations during their reign. According to Dr Rizvi, the
Commonwealth was used as a soft landing pad to restore
former pride, once the British had lost power. Moving on,
he also talked about how the Commonwealth also
functions as a self-serving organization that helps all the
Commonwealth nations. In his opinion, the
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) truly is
the epitome of unity and diversity. The rich history of the
Commonwealth and its endearing objective has always
stayed true in solving global crisis and helping any fellow
nations in need.

Professor Dr Gowher Rizvi spoke on the idea of nationalism
and how the definition of this term changes in time. He
referred the colonist struggles of the past and defined
colonialism to be a heroic battle of nationalism. Dr Rizvi
also complemented the Bangladesh government system,
saying that “the 1972 constitution of Bangladesh was the
finest essay in liberal, plural democracy”. All in all, the
lecture proved to be an effective discussion session, where
ideas such as nationalism, struggles of history, evolution of
nations, and political values shifting in timelines were
talked about in detail.