

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

TEL: 880-2-883-7150-4

FAX: 880-2-9881677, 9885688

E-MAIL: DhakaPA@state.gov

WEBSITE: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>



PRESS RELEASE

10,000 VISIT AMERICA WEEK IN BARISAL

DHAKA, JANUARY 28 – America Week, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy, concluded today in Barisal. During this three-day event, Ambassador James F. Moriarty and other Embassy officials met with thousands of people in Barisal to highlight the important ties between the people of the United States and Bangladesh. The U.S. Embassy previously hosted America Week in each of the other division capitals in Bangladesh.

This year's America Week focused on the democratic and economic transitions that both the United States and Bangladesh are currently undergoing. Events featured presentations, outreach and site visits showcasing U.S. Government-funded programs in Barisal. Over 5,000 visitors attended the events and learned how to study at a U.S. university, apply for a U.S. visa, or participate in a U.S. Government-funded development project. The Embassy sponsored a jazz concert as well as screenings of critically-acclaimed American films.

The Ambassador hosted several events for political and business leaders, cultural representatives, educators and other Barisal residents. At the opening dinner, the Ambassador discussed the transitions that both Bangladesh and the United States are undergoing. He stated, "Now, more than ever, it is critical that our two great democracies, the United States and Bangladesh, work together to confront common threats and achieve our common objectives of a freer, safer, and more prosperous world." Speaking about Barisal's recovery from Cyclone Sidr, the Ambassador emphasized that Barisal is the ideal place to celebrate the region's transition from recovery to rebuilding the lives of people affected during the cyclone. (Please see the U.S. Embassy website at dhaka.usembassy.gov for the full text of the Ambassador's America Week remarks, photos from America Week events and the Ambassador's daily America Week blog.)

In addition to hosting events, Ambassador Moriarty also visited U.S. Government (USG) funded development projects in Barisal focusing on health, education and livelihoods. Ambassador Moriarty inaugurated the USG-funded Social Marketing Company's (SMC) floating Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Center for Tuberculosis Awareness Program, otherwise known as TB Ahoy. The boat will provide services to 1,000 people each day and benefit more than 200,000 in its first year of service. The Ambassador also visited a Blue Star outlet in Barisal, part of SMC's Social Franchising program. He stopped at a USG-supported HIV clinic.

Ambassador Moriarty visited several USG-supported education projects. He met with a group of religious leaders participating in the USG-funded Leaders of Influence (LOI) Program at the Barisal Imam Training Academy. The Ambassador and religious leaders discussed the role of religious leaders in promoting good governance, advancing human rights and maintaining the tradition of religious tolerance and harmony, particularly in the context of the recent transition of power.

At BM College in Barisal, Ambassador Moriarty met with students and spoke about U.S. higher education and the value of cross-cultural education. Representatives from the U.S. Embassy's Consular Section and the Student Advising Center (SAC) also discussed admission procedures for U.S. institutions of higher learning and answered questions about the application process for a U.S. student visa.

Ambassador Moriarty also visited with Bangladesh's youngest students at a USG-funded SUCCEED pre-school in Bakerganj. SUCCEED provides pre-primary education to children to build a strong foundation for life-long learning and increase the likelihood that children remain in school. He was proud to see first-hand the wide range of child-oriented activities that enhance each child's math and language skills.

In addition to providing direct funding for education, the U.S. Government, through U.S. Department of Agriculture funding to the World Food Program (WFP), will provide U.S. \$1.6 million in 2009 for school feeding activities in the Cyclone Sidr-affected region of Bangladesh. With these funds, WFP will each day provide 133,200 primary school children in the Barisal region with fortified biscuits. The program encourages school attendance of schoolchildren affected by Sidr and helps to prevent a recurrence of the surge in malnutrition caused by the

cyclone. The Ambassador visited a school in Bakerganj receiving this assistance made possible by U.S. Department of Agriculture funds.

National cricket stars joined the Ambassador for a cricket exhibition sponsored by the local police and the U.S. Embassy. The event helped build bonds between law enforcement officials and average citizens. The Ambassador gave cricket equipment donated by the U.S. Government to 15 local schools, watched a cricket exhibition featuring local police and former National Cricket Team members, and swung a bat himself.

Ambassador Moriarty visited several jobs projects in Barisal District. At a USG-funded aquaculture project designed to help fish and shrimp farmers affected by Cyclone Sidr, the Ambassador met with farmers who had received training on fish and shrimp farming techniques, as well as fish and shrimp stock and feed. About 200,000 farmers benefit from this initiative.

A beneficiary welcomed Ambassador Moriarty to his home to view his Grameen Shakti solar power system, improved cooking stove and the bio-gas cooking system that makes gas from manure. The U.S. Government funds a Grameen Shakti program that provides electricity to more than 200,000 households across Bangladesh. The Ambassador also visited a USG funded Jibon-O-Jibika (Life and Livelihood) food security program operating in more than 1,300 villages.

The U.S. Government has a long history of extending assistance to Bangladesh. The U.S. Government's assistance to Bangladesh includes support for free, fair and credible elections and more transparent and accountable governance; assistance for a better educated, healthier and more productive population; and funding to increase economic opportunities through equitable economic growth, and improved food security and disaster mitigation. The U.S. Government has provided more than \$5 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh since 1971, and over \$120 million in 2008.

=====

GR/2009

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)