



**High Commission of India
Ottawa**

PRESS RELEASE

Maitree Diwas Celebration in Ottawa

High Commission of India in Ottawa, in association with the High Commission of Bangladesh, celebrated 'Maitree Diwas', marking the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh Liberation War and 50 years of establishment of diplomatic relations with Bangladesh, on 6th December 2021.

2. The event, held at the prestigious Ottawa Art Gallery, was attended by Canadian Members of Parliament, members of the diplomatic corps in Ottawa, officials from the Government of Canada, friends of India and Bangladesh and prominent Canadians of Indian and Bangladeshi heritage. Mr. Paul Thoppil, Assistant Deputy Minister at Global Affairs Canada was the Chief Guest.

3. Welcoming the guests, the High Commissioner of Bangladesh, H.E. Dr. Khalilur Rahman spoke of the gratitude that Bangladesh and its people held for the role played by India in their freedom struggle and liberation. He also highlighted the multifaceted dimensions of the contemporary Bangladesh-India relationship.

4. High Commissioner H.E. Ajay Bisaria, addressing the gathering, said that it was an honour for India to be a part of the moral struggle of the Bangladeshi people for their liberation. He traced the larger geo-political context of the struggle and said that the people of India and Bangladesh shared deep ties of culture and people-to-people relationship and the contemporary partnership is focused on development partnership and growth. As fellow democracies, India and Bangladesh shared values of democracy, rule of law and human rights with Canada, and the three nations have tremendous potential for collaboration in trade, regional security and combating climate change.

5. H.E. Mr. Paul Thoppil congratulated Bangladesh on the 50th anniversary of liberation and praised the ever-growing India-Bangladesh friendship over the past fifty years and commended India for its role for Bangladesh's independence, particularly taking care of millions of refugees during the war time. He noted Bangladesh's evolving leadership role on matters relating to Least Developed

Countries and its stable democratic and economic credentials. Together, Mr. Thoppil said, the three democracies can contribute much to international affairs.

6. A special documentary on India-Bangladesh friendship produced by the Government of Bangladesh was screened on the occasion. Mr. Asad Chowdhury, a freedom-fighter and poet from Bangladesh, now a resident of Canada, narrated his experience of participating in the freedom struggle. Similarly, Col. Vijay Kumar Dutt (Retd.), an Indian Army veteran who took part in 1971 Liberation War, narrated his experience from the war for liberation of Bangladesh through a video message.

7. A photographic exhibition capturing some important events from Bangladesh's freedom struggle and the Liberation War of 1971, mounted jointly by the two High Commissions, was well appreciated by the guests. A film on the launch of 'Raga Maitree' and other videos showcasing the growth-oriented partnership between India and Bangladesh were also screened.

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