**Bangladesh Sets a Shining Example of Communal Peace**

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Bangladesh is made up of 160 million people who are multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual. The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees all citizens the freedom to freely and peacefully practise their chosen religions. Religious minorities make up roughly 12 per cent of Bangladesh’s present population, according to conservative estimates. Hindus account for 10 per cent of the population, Buddhists for one per cent, Christians at 0.50 per cent, and ethnic minorities for less than one per cent.

As an example of how people of different religions can live together, cooperate, and simply be together, Bangladesh is regarded. Bangladesh is a country that values religious liberty, harmony, and tolerance. Bangladesh’s population is made up of a diverse spectrum of religious groupings and ethnic groups. Such communities and groups live in harmony, putting aside their differences and learning to embrace and respect the diverse and diversified culture that has contributed to Bangladesh’s equality.

Bangladesh stands out as a shining example of a country with unwavering social and religious peace. This country is an example of social harmony because of its rich culture of tolerance and respect among everyone regardless of their views and viewpoints. Their liberal attitudes have contributed to the nation’s synchronization.

The Sheikh Hasina government has reached out to minority populations and assisted Dhaka’s famous Dhakeshwari temple in reclaiming property that it had previously lost. Bangladesh is also constructing a Buddhist pilgrimage centre in Lumbini, Nepal, to serve Buddhist pilgrims from throughout the world.

Bangladesh has been winning admiration and appreciation worldwide as a moderate Muslim-dominated country.

The administration of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina maintains a Ministry of Religious Affairs. All mosques, temples, churches, pagodas, and Gurdwaras in Bangladesh are under the Ministry’s jurisdiction.

Can anyone imagine a Muslim country constructing a Buddhist monastery in Nepal (a religiously Hindu country)? Recently, it established a clear example for all countries in the world that Bangladesh is the global role model of communal harmony. The Bangladesh government is interested in and intends to maintain Bangladesh as a non-communal Bangladesh.

For example, for more clarification, according to media reports, two men of different faiths – in Bangladesh’s Khulna division, a Hindu and a Muslim taught communal harmony via acts of compassion toward one other’s religion.

In the Bagerhat district, a Hindu man contributed property for the construction of a mosque, and a local Awami League leader (Muslim guy) handed aside a section of his land to be utilized as a cremation site. Hindus can use this space to foster communal harmony in their community.

Hundreds of Muslim men, women, and children queue every day during Ramadan in front of a Buddhist monastery in Dhaka to receive iftar, the feast with which Muslims break their fast at dusk during the holy month.

The initiative by the Dharmarajika Buddhist monastery to distribute food to poor and destitute Muslims is a shining example of social harmony between two groups from two different religions in this South Asian country.

Bangladesh can be regarded as the world’s champion and role model for communal harmony. People have lived here with long-term inter-communal peace and confidence. The world is well aware of and admires Bangladesh’s inter-communal harmony. Bangladeshis adhere to the policy of “religion is everyone’s festival; everyone has equal respect for all religions.” Bangladesh, as a secular state, strives to protect the rights of all ethnic and religious groups. Inter-communal harmony is synonymous with Bengali culture. It is one of the few countries in the world where Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, and various ethnic tribes coexist peacefully. The government of Bangladesh, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, believes in inter-communal harmony. She makes every effort to participate in religious and cultural programs. Anyone can see that she is dedicated to protecting the rights of all groups. Sheikh Hasina’s regime is committed to ensuring this.

Various religious holidays such as Eid of the Muslim community, Pujas of the Hindu community, Easter Sunday, Christmas Day of the Christian community, and Buddha Purnima are held simultaneously in Bangladesh during Mangal Shobhajatra or Mangal Jatra at dawn on the first day of the Bengali New Year. Muslim festivals such as Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Azha, Milad al-Nabi, Muharram, Chand Raat, Shab-e-Baraat, and BishwaIjtema; Hindu festivals such as Durga Puja and Janmashtami; Buddhist festival of Buddha Purnima; Christian festival of Christmas; and secular festivals such as Pohela Boishakh, Nabanna, Language Movement Day, Independence Day, Rabindra Jay in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region, Bengalis and non-Bengalis celebrate tribal holidays such as Biju, Sangria, Baisabi, and others together. Bangladesh has no religious or racial boundaries. Everyone is there for everyone else. In Bangladesh, people of all religions and nationalities are united.

“I usually say that religion is a personal matter, but festivals are open to everyone.” Peace, friendship, and peace are our pride,” said Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, adding that the communal harmony that has existed here for thousands of years must be preserved at all costs.

Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity are the four major religions in the country. Muslims account for around 88.3 per cent of the population. The majority of Muslims in Bangladesh are Sunnis; however, Shia Muslims make up roughly three per cent of the Muslim population. About 10.5 per cent of the population is Hindu. Buddhists and Christians make up the majority of the others.

Durga Puja, observed by Hindus, Christmas, observed by Christians on December 25, and Buddha Purnima, observed by Buddhists, are some of the other holidays observed by other communities. These celebrations reflect not only the imprint of religion but also the imprint of society and the nation.

The Sheikh Hasina -led Awami League slogan ‘Dhormo Jaar Jaar, Utsob Shobar,’ (Religion as per one’s own, but festivals common to all” as a testimony of its secular values has set a precedent in the international community and is an asset for establishing a shining example in South Asia on regarding communal harmony.

As a result, the government has given enough security for religious minorities’ celebrations, such as the Durga Puja. Over 30,000 Durga Pujas were held across the country in 2017, all of which went off without a hitch. In Bangladesh, 31,272 Durga Pujas are being held this year. This reflects the general sense of security in the country, not just among the Hindu minority.

Despite the historic liberal Bengali culture and the country’s secular underpinnings, which were established following the Liberation War of 1971, the fortunes of religious minorities have changed depending on which political dispensation is in power.

The AL-led government has taken several substantial steps to maintain and improve the country’s secular underpinnings. In the country’s 1972 Constitution, the Awami League, which led the Liberation War under Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, integrated secularism as a guiding principle of the state alongside democracy, nationalism, and socialism.

After that, whenever the AL was in power, it tried to protect these ideals as well as the interests and welfare of religious minorities. The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord, signed by PMSH in 1997, marked a turning point in the region’s peace efforts.

Everyone in Bangladesh has equal rights, and no one is labelled as a religious minority. Attacks on the Buddhist community in Ramu Upazila of Cox’s Bazar and attacks on different temples in Cumilla were some separate incidents in Bangladesh. Those mentioned how social media could sometimes play a negative role, as fake Facebook IDs were previously used to instigate communal attacks.

There are some misconceptions, misinformation, and propaganda regarding the decreasing number and persecution of minority in Bangladesh that is not absolutely true. However, this perception is entirely false. Unfairly and without basis, Bangladesh is portrayed as a nation that discriminates against its minorities, especially Hindus. The separate incidents can’t and don’t symbolize the mindset of the whole Bangladeshi people. Senior government officials visit regularly a number of the impacted locations and give the Hindu community members assurances that they will receive proper protection and reimbursement for any losses.

There are also many ways to realise religious harmony in Bangladesh. Needless to say, Bangladesh has been winning admiration and appreciation worldwide as a moderate Muslim-dominated country.

Community harmony abounds in Bangladesh. People from all faiths interact together in this place. Since the dawn of time, this custom has persisted. Muslims make up 90 per cent of the population. However, there are also peacefully coexisting Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians. For the people of Bangladesh, this is surely a source of pride in South Asia.

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