



PRESS RELEASE

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Fifty prominent British Bangladeshi community leaders sign a letter of action to be presented to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh calling for the global community to tackle climate change and its effects on Bangladesh

As the 600,000-strong British Bangladeshi community marks the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence this year, fifty prominent leaders from the community call upon the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and global leaders at the 26th UNFCCC Conference of Parties to protect Bangladesh from the catastrophic impacts of climate change. The community recognises the sacrifices made to create Bangladesh. The challenge for this generation is to protect our ancestral lands for its centenary and beyond.

Extreme weather conditions such as flooding, storm surges, cyclones, droughts, sea levels rising, and saltwater intrusion are all directly linked to climate change and forcing families in Bangladesh deeper into poverty and displacement, threatening the lives and futures of more than 19 million children in Bangladesh and threatening to displace over a million by 2050.

Jelina Berlow-Rahman, human rights lawyer and climate change activist: "Climate change is happening here and now, with very real impacts for millions of people who have done the least to contribute to it. It poses a clear danger to the environmental integrity of Bangladesh and the security, economic and social well-being of those who live there. If the world does not take collective action now, my children and their children will have lost the heritage of their grandparents."

Cllr Abdal Ullah, Co-founder British Bangladeshi Power & Inspiration and BBPI Foundation: "In his landmark speech on 7 March 1971, the founding father of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, called upon Bengali people around the world to unite and fight for the freedom of Bangladesh. The community in the UK responded to that call to action. In 2021, as we mark the 50th anniversary of independence, the British Bangladeshi community calls upon the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to unite the global Bangladeshi community and countries all around the world to work together to protect Bangladesh from the catastrophic impacts of climate change. We recognise the sacrifices made to create Bangladesh. The challenge for this generation is to protect our ancestral lands for its centenary and beyond."

Dr Mya-Rose Craig aka Birdgirl, Founder & President Black2Nature:

“The Parties to the Conference have a duty to act now, and safeguard the environment for the future of humankind, and all living creatures on this earth. Now is the time to act.”

ENDS

1. The Bangladeshi community in the UK is one of the largest Bengali diasporas in the world and contributes significant skills and financial resources both to Bangladesh and to the UK. This year is significant for the British Bangladeshi community as it celebrates fifty years of friendship between the UK and Bangladesh and the UK hosts COP26.
2. With over 165 million people, Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, and one of the most vulnerable to climate change and natural hazards. Bangladesh has made remarkable economic progress since independence, taking 25% of its population out of poverty in the last 20 years. However, frequent natural disasters and vulnerability to climate change are key challenges facing Bangladesh as it transitions to become an upper-middle-income country.
3. In the last 20 years, Bangladesh has been one of the ten most affected countries and the impact is intense, damaging, and on the increase. Children, women, and the poor are the most affected with an estimated 4.1 million new displacements in 2019, placing Bangladesh among the top countries globally with the most disaster-related internal displacement.”

For more information, please contact xxx on email xxx