

‘Bangabandhu-Edward Heath’ and ‘Bangabandhu-Harold Wilson Friendship’ Awards handed over in London

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Online Desk: Speaker of the British House of Commons Sir Lindsay Hoyle and Bangladesh Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud have handed over the Bangladesh High Commission London’s ‘Bangabandhu-Edward Heath Friendship Award 2023’ to British Conservative Peer Lord Jonathan Marland of Salisbury and the ‘Bangabandhu- Harold Wilson Friendship Award 2023’ to Cross-bench peer Lord Swaraj Paul, Baron of Marylebone.

The ceremony was held during the 54th Independence and National Day diplomatic reception of Bangladesh held at the Churchill Room of the historic Queen Elizabeth II Centre at Westminster recently, said the High Commission on Friday.

Before handing over the awards, Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK Saida Muna Tasneem told the media that these two awards were launched during Mujib Borsho in 2022 by the High Commission to honour the special friendship of Bangladesh’s Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with two of UK’s celebrated Conservative and Labour Prime Ministers, namely Sir Edward Heath, and Sir Harold Wilson between 1964 and 1975 that laid the foundation of today’s vibrant Bangladesh-UK relations.



She added, “It was Bangabandhu’s two historic meetings as president of independent Bangladesh during his one-day visit to London on 08 January 1972, at 10 Downing Street with the-then Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath and the other with then Leader of the Opposition, Sir Harold Wilson, that laid the foundations of today’s vibrant Bangladesh-UK bilateral relations. That is why we took the initiative to dedicate these awards to recognise”

The ‘Bangabandhu-Edward Heath Friendship Award’ was given to Lord Jonthan Marland, former British Minister for Energy and Climate Change, and Business, Innovation and Skills, and Chair of Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council for his extraordinary contributions to promote trade and business relations

between the UK and Bangladesh, while the ‘Bangabandhu-Harold Wilson Friendship Award’ was given to Lord Swaraj Paul, Philanthropist and former Deputy Speaker of the lords and member of the Privy Council for his extraordinary contributions during Bangladesh’s epic War of Liberation in 1971 and strengthening Bangladesh-UK relations.

High Commissioner Tasneem further informed that the 2022 ‘Bangabandhu-Edward Heath Friendship Award’ was given to Julian Francis OBE for his contributions during Bangladesh’s liberation war as head of Oxfam and in strengthening post-independence Bangladesh relations, whereas the 2022 ‘Bangabandhu-Harold Wilson Friendship Award’ was given to Cherie Blair CBE KC for her extraordinary contributions promoting girls’ education in Bangladesh.