

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, announced today that the Canadian Government has extended recognition to the independent state of Bangladesh and to the government of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Prime Minister has sent the following message to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh:

"I am happy to inform you that Canada has today accorded full recognition to Bangladesh as an independent state. On behalf of the Government and people of Canada, I wish to extend greetings and best wishes to you and your government. It is our sincere desire that harmonious and mutually beneficial relations may develop between our two countries and that these relations will be enhanced through an association within the Commonwealth."

In making this announcement, Mr. Sharp observed that it has been evident to all for some time that a new state was emerging in what was East Pakistan. With the usual legal criteria of an independent government in effective control of a defined territory having been substantially met, as many states have already recognized, the only matter that has remained in doubt has been one of timing. In weighing all consequences the Government has taken careful account of the very great problems facing the Government of Pakistan from whose nation the new state has been formed. It has been the hope of the Canadian Government that both Pakistan and Bangladesh might be members of the Commonwealth.

Arrangements are currently being made for the opening of diplomatic relations with the new state. It is expected that initially a Canadian Ambassador from a neighbouring country will be dually accredited to Bangladesh and that his staff will make frequent visits to Dacca.