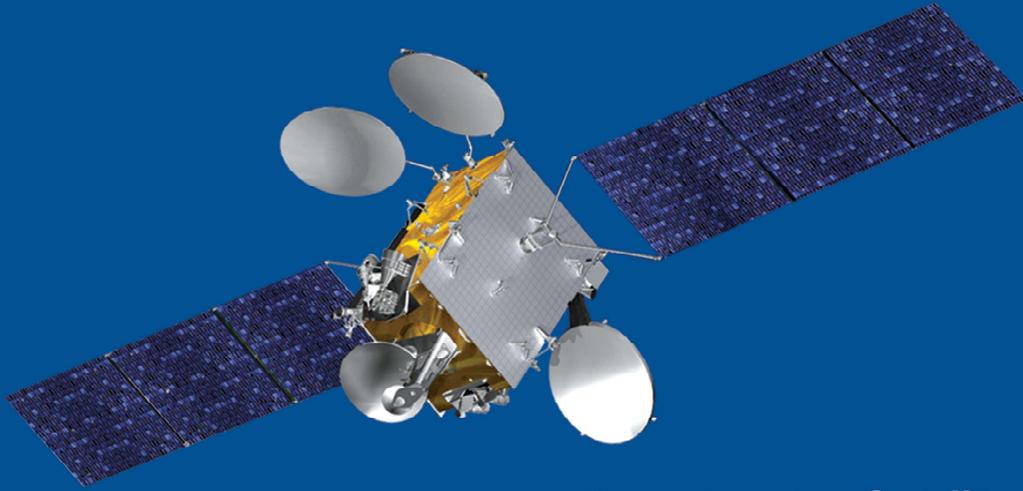


# Bangladesh

April-June 2018

## Quarterly



Bangabandhu Satellite  
A Journey To Space

Budget 2018-19  
A Pathway to Prosperity



# Bangladesh

## QUARTERLY

Vol. 38, No. 4, April-June 2018, Boishakh-Ashar 1425



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina signing over the proposed budget for the fiscal 2018-19 on June 7*

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## Editorial

**T**he country's first communication satellite, Bangabandhu-1, was launched in May. The Falcon-9 rocket propelled the satellite into space from Cape Canaveral, Florida, USA. With the launch of the satellite, Bangladesh became the 57th country in the world and fourth in South Asia. It will be controlled and maintained from ground stations in Gazipur and Rangamati. The satellite costs Tk 27.65 billion (about US\$ 240 million) and is manufactured by Thales Alenia space, France. The Bangabandhu Satellite-1 weighs 3.7 metric ton and has 40 transponders with the capacity of 1,440 megahertz bandwidth. The coverage of the satellite will be the South Asia, part of south-east Asia and central Asia. Currently, Bangladesh meets its demand for satellite connectivity by renting bandwidth from foreign operators, which costs the country about \$14 million a year. Bangabandhu-1 could save the foreign currency and its unused capacity could also be rented to other nations. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has greeted the countrymen for successful launching of Bangladesh's first communication satellite into space, saying that it added a new milestone to the path of continued advancement of the country.

Finance Minister has placed a Tk 4.65 trillion national budget for fiscal year 2018-19 setting the GDP growth target at 7.8 percent before the parliament on 7th June. The budget has outlined strategies to build a prosperous, happy and peaceful country. The main objective of the budget preparation is to alleviate poverty, reduce inequalities and bring basic and qualitative changes in people's living standard. Moreover, regional parity, human resources development, infrastructure development as well as assuring quality of expenditure are focused in allocation of resources. The size of budget for FY 2018-19 is 16.07 percent higher than the original budget size of the outgoing fiscal year 2017-18.

The May Day is observed every year around the world as International Workers' Day. The Day is also marked to express gratitude to those who laid down their lives for realizing the realistic and reasonable demands for the working classes back in 19th century. The Day creates and promotes awareness, focuses and highlights solidarity, dedication, and unity among the working classes in various countries across the world. Bangladesh also observes the historic May Day every year with befitting manner.

Articles on the above topics along with the writes-up on poet Munshi Meherullah, pharmaceutical industry, wildlife etc have been accommodated in this issue. Hope, the readers will enjoy and find them useful.

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## Budget 2018-19: A Pathway to Prosperity

**Munshi Jalal Uddin**

**F**inance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith unveils a Tk 4,64,573 crore national budget for fiscal year 2018-19. In his budget proposal, he outlines a set of plans-strategies to build a prosperous, happy and peaceful country. The main objective of the budget preparation, as mentioned by Muhith, is to alleviate poverty, reduce inequalities and bring basic and qualitative changes in people's living standard. Styling the budget as 'Bangladesh on a Pathway to Prosperity' the finance minister said, "Regional parity, human resources development, infrastructure development as well as assuring quality of expenditure are focused in allocation of resources."

In the new fiscal 2018-19, the government has set a target of achieving 7.8 percent GDP growth while keeping the inflation down to 5.6 percent.



*President Md. Abdul Hamid signing over the budget bill at his Jatiya Sangsad Office on June 7*



*Finance Minister A.M.A. Muhith placed the national budget for FY 2018-19 before the parliament on June 7*

The size of budget for FY19 is Tk 64,307 crore or 16.07 percent higher than the original budget size of Tk 4,00,266 crore of the outgoing fiscal year (FY18).

The allocation for operations and other expenditures is Tk 2,91,573 crore while the development expenditure is estimated at Tk 1,73,000 crore. Besides, Tk 7,869.17 crore has been allocated for projects to be implemented through self-finance of autonomous bodies. As a result, the total size of the ADP will stand at Tk 1,80,869.17 crore. Out of the overall ADP allocation, Tk 1,19,810.95 crore will come from the local sources while Tk 61,058.22 crore from foreign ones. The original ADP outlay for the FY19 is 16.59 percent or Tk 24,619 crore higher than that of the revised allocation for the current fiscal year of FY18.

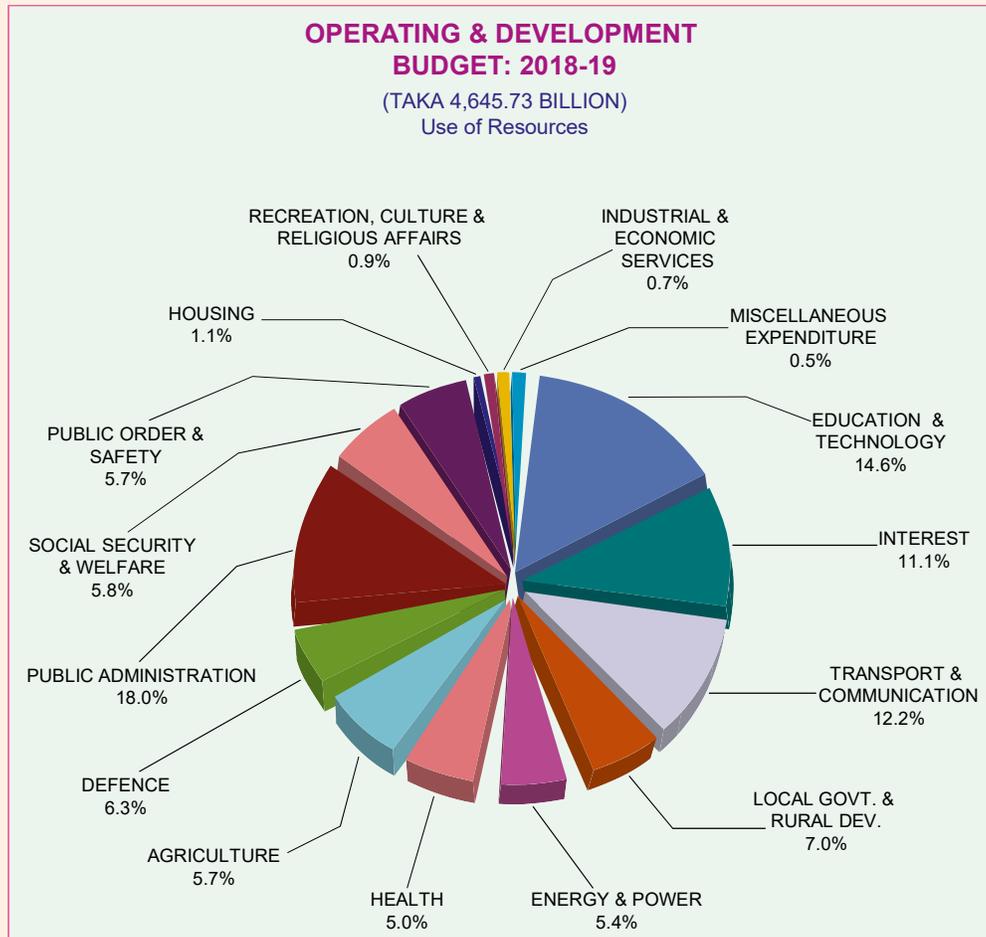
The overall budget deficit will be Tk 1,25,293 crore which is 4.9 per cent of GDP. Of the amount, Tk 54,067 crore will be financed from external sources while an amount of Tk 71,226 crore will be financed from domestic sources. Of the domestic sources, Tk 42,029 crore will be borrowed from the banking system while Tk 29,197 crore from National Savings Schemes and other non-bank sources.

The salaries and allowances of government servants, interest payment and subsidies will account for over half of the non-development expenditures (operations and other expenditures).

In the proposed budget, 27.34 per cent of the total outlay has been allocated for social infrastructure of which 24.37 per cent allocation will go to human resource development, 30.99 per cent for physical infrastructure of which 12.68 per cent will go to overall agriculture, 11.43 per cent for overall communication sector and 5.36 per cent for power and energy sector.

## Sector-wise Resource Distribution

Sector-wise total resource distribution is shown in the following graph:



*Sector-wise Resource Distribution (Including Subsidies & Incentives and Pension)*

## Revenue Income Plan

The estimated total revenue income is Tk 3,39,280 crore. Out of this target, an amount of Tk 2,96,201 crore will come from the NBR sources. Alongside, Tk 9,727 crore will come as tax from non-NBR sources while Tk 33,352 crore from non-tax sources.

The tax exemption threshold has been kept unchanged except that of the threshold for a parent or guardian of a person with disability will be Tk 400,000 in place of Tk 375,000.

Finance Minister has proposed to reduce the tax rate of manufacturer and exporter of readymade garments to 15 percent and if any such taxpayer is a public limited company, the tax rate will be 12.5 percent. Any garment factory having green building certification shall enjoy a tax rate of 12 percent.

The minister proposed to bring truncated VAT rates down to 5 rates from existing 9 VAT rates.

Muhith proposed to impose 5 percent supplementary duty on production of all kinds of polythene and plastic bags to encourage the use of jute bags and to protect environmental pollution.

Two percent surcharge has been proposed on the import of mobile handsets. At the same time, exemption of surcharge has been proposed on mobile manufacturing. Muhith proposed to reduce the duties on some raw materials of cellular phones in this budget to facilitate cell phone manufacturing.

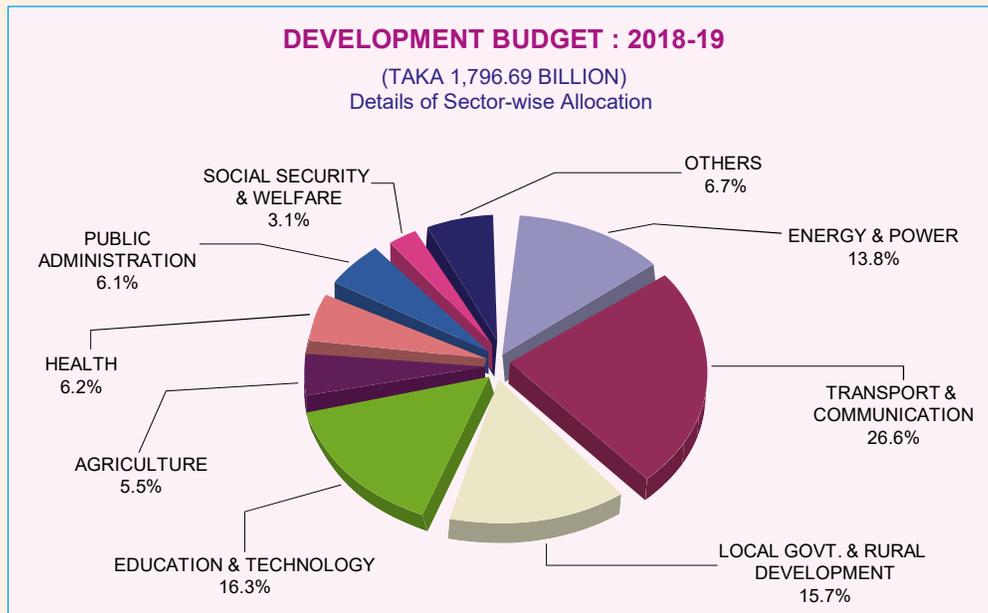
Muhith proposed to introduce punishment provisions for any person who deliberately conceals information or provides inaccurate information to tax authority. Noting that his aim is to increase revenue collection, by not increasing tax rate but ensuring compliance through combating tax avoidance and tax evasion, the minister said, “Most of our taxpayers pay their due tax complying with tax laws and evasion while a section of people deliberately conceals information or provides inaccurate information to the tax authority.”

Finance Minister AMA Muhith proposed tax facilities on importation of school bus upon receiving intents from schools or related agencies.

In his closing speech on 28 June 2018 on the discussions in the national parliament on the proposed budget, Muhith brought some changes in VAT and tariff rates, aiming to boost the ICT sector and promote local industries and the budget was passed in Parliament with these changes. The VAT on internet service lowered to 5 percent from the proposed 15 percent, while 5 percent additional VAT from assembling mobile phone sets was exempted. The prices of 10-stick low category cigarettes increased from Tk 32 to Tk 35 while that of high-category 10-stick cigarettes to Tk 105 from Tk 102. Tariff of per gram Jarda was fixed at Tk 1.20 while that for Gul Tk 0.60. Supplementary duty from petroleum jelly was waived considering its wide range of use during the winter by the rural and marginal people. Ten percent supplementary duty on filament bulbs was scrapped as energy bulbs are still costly for the poor and marginal people. Seven percent additional VAT on locally produced motorcycles was also exempted.

### **Mega Infrastructure Projects Emphasized in ADP**

Annual Development Programme (ADP) for the fiscal 2018-19 gave emphasis on speeding up the construction works of some mega infrastructure projects, including the Padma Bridge, Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Karnaphuli Tunnel, Matarbari Power Plant, Padma Bridge Rail Link and Dhaka Metro-Rail. Sector-wise allocation of development budget is as follow:



### Social Security Coverage

Muhith has proposed to expand social security coverage including rising the number of recipients of old age allowance, the allowance for widows and oppressed women, increasing the rate of allowance for financially insolvent disabled persons and transgender people. He has also proposed allocation of Tk 400 crore in the budget to support insolvent war-wounded and sick freedom-fighters or their wives, children or grand-children.

Poor people, including old, widow and financially insolvent disabled, will get more allowance in the next fiscal 2018-2019 as additional allocations have been proposed for social protection. In his budget proposal, the finance minister proposed for widening the beneficiary coverage of old age allowances to 40 lakh from 35 lakh, coverage of the allowances for widow and poor women to 14 lakh from 12.06 lakh and coverage of the allowances for financially insolvent disabled to 10 lakh from 8.25 lakh.

Liberation War Affairs Ministry is preparing a system to support insolvent war-wounded and sick freedom-fighters or their wives, children or grand-children. Taka 400 crore has allocated in the budget for that.

According to the proposed budget, the number of beneficiaries of special allowances and stipend for the Bede and the underprivileged community would be increased to 64,000 from 36,000. Of them, the number of beneficiary for special allowances will be increased to 40,000 from 23,000 and that for special allowances to 19,000 from 11,000.

Muhith suggested for raising the maternity allowance for poor mothers to Tk. 800 from Tk. 500 per month and extending the term of the allowance to 3 years from 2 years. Besides, the number of beneficiaries will be increased to 7 lakh from 6 lakh, he added. The minister also recommended for raising the allowance for working lactating mothers to Tk. 800 from Tk. 500 per month and extending the

term of the allowance to 3 years from 2 years. Besides, the number of beneficiaries will be increased to 2.5 lakh from 2 lakh, he added.

According to the proposed budget, the number of beneficiaries of VGD programmes would be increased to 10.4 lakh of which the number of beneficiaries in the upazilas of Teknaf and Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar district will be increased by 20000 for each upazila.

The freedom fighters will get the Boishakhi and the Victory Day allowances from the next fiscal year.

### **Gender Budget**

Finance Minister proposed an allocation of Taka 1,37,742 crore for women development in the Gender Budget of fiscal 2018-19, which is Taka 25,723 crore more than that of the proposed budget of outgoing fiscal 2017-18. Muhith placed separate allocations under 27 ministries and 16 divisions of the government in the proposed budget for 2018-19 fiscal. The allocation for the women development is 29.56 percent of the total budget and 5.43 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The allocation for women development has been more than double in the last five years. The allocation to the Gender Budget in 2013-14 fiscal was Taka 59,756 crore.

### **Child Focused Budget**

The proposed allocation for children development under Child Focused Budget (CFB) is Taka 65,650 crore, which is Taka 9,750 crore more than that of the budget of outgoing fiscal 2017-18. Muhith placed separate allocations for the selected eight ministries and seven divisions of the government under CFB for 2018-19 fiscal. The percentage of the allocation for the children is to 14.13 percent of the total budget.

### **House Loan for Public Servants**

The government has decided to raise the amount of loan to the public servants for construction of house and purchase of flats from the next year to a reasonable level. Under this loan policy, a public servant will be entitled to loan for the construction of house or purchase of flat anywhere in the country. This loan will be provided to them at a moderate interest rate through the banking system and the interest differential will be paid by the government as subsidy to the commercial banks. It is hoped that this will motivate the government employees to be more proactive in delivering public services and establishing good governance everywhere.

### **Universal Pension Scheme**

Finance Minister outlines a universal pension scheme for all working people engaged in private sector to cascade down the benefits of economic growth to everyone and cut down social discrimination. Under the proposed arrangement, an employee will subscribe a specific amount to the pension fund having registered his name in the government administered pension scheme. The appointing authorities will also deposit a specific amount

into the employee's pension account. Besides, the government will deposit a specific amount into the pension fund in the cases of ultra-poor workers.

***The writer is Director, Department of Mass Communication, Ministry of Information***

# Bangabandhu Satellite: A Journey To Space

**Nasrin Mustafa**





**T**he country's first communication satellite has been launched on 10 May 2018 from Florida at a cost of Tk. 27.65 billion. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina greeted the countrymen for successful launching of Bangabandhu Satellite-1. As a nation we are really proud of this achievement. The journey to space, which was started by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from Betunia, Satellite Earth Station, just been completed with the launching of Bangabandhu Satellite-1 by his daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Let's look back into the history. June 14 of 1975, it was a day of Bangladesh, a newly born country that just learned how to walk but started to run to an eternal journey. The day is remarkable for the country's technological history, because the first satellite earth station at Betunia under Kawkhali upazila of the Rangamati district was inaugurated by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The station situated on 128 acres of land at Betunia beside the Rangamati-Chittagong road is connecting the world with Bangladesh through a satellite located over 35,900 kilometres high from the earth station.



*Postage stamp of Betbunia satellite earth station*

The leader could understand the importance of the development of communication and power sectors in war-ravaged Bangladesh and had taken appropriate measures in all aspects. From the history, it was gathered that, the then Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi urged Bangabandhu to use India's earth station to communicate with the outer world. But, Bangabandhu denounced the request with modesty and decided to set up the country's own earth station.

The journey was started but the then nation wholeheartedly could not assume the power of the dream of the Father of the Nation. Worldwide technological advancement day by day stepped down Bangladesh and the country became only the consumer of this technological adventures. We have the satellite earth station, but we were out of the satellite communication though it becomes the integral part of most major telecommunications systems. We are talking about the mass people communication whereas satellite allows people with no access to physical connectivity to join in anywhere as the world becomes a very small place. Here comes the importance of satellite because it is staying in the so high altitude from ground in the sky that they can see larger area of the earth at one time and also have a clear view of the space. TV signals usually travel straight lines and can't go so far. So, these signals would go off into the space instead of following earth's curve and sometimes would be blocked by mountains or tall building. Phone calls which come from so faraway places were also problems and thus very much costly, hard to set up network through wires over long distances or underwater.

The TV signal and the phone calls can be sent up to a satellite and satellite can then send them back down to the earth in the different places or spots. The first satellite into the space is called Sputnik 1 which launched by the Soviet Union in 1957. There were many satellites in the space launched by NASA and the first one was Explorer 1 in 1958. This satellite was the first man made satellite by the American's. The first satellite was Explorer 6 which sends the picture from space to earth in 1959. Actually, one geostationary satellite can cover about forty two per cent of the earth in which the consumer Bangladesh was included but not in any kind of ownership. For the last two decades, Bangladesh telecommunications market is also dominated by satellite service especially in remote places of the country.

After the assassination of Bangabandhu along with his family members, progress in telecommunication sector came to a halt like other sectors because of the consecutive governments who tried to turn the Betbunia satellite earth station into a failed one. In her first time of holding power, the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Bangabandhu took steps to fully renovate the station and it was digitalised in 1998. Again this endeavor turned in the opposite direction later by the consecutive government. After Sheikh Hasina's political alliance has



*Falcon 9 rocket launching with Bagabandhu Satellite-1 from cape canaveral at Florida, USA*

won victory in 2008 and 2014 national elections, the implementation of ‘Digital Bangladesh’ has started. With this, Sheikh Hasina had started the unfinished journey not only to reach the sky, but to jump in the eternal space! Yes, Bangladesh started a journey in June 14 of 1975 that is fully ready to fly in the space as the country’s own satellite. Bangladesh is going to launch its own satellite as all the modern and economically developed nations have their own satellite in the orbit. Bangladesh is 57th country of this list.

The Government has the vision to materialize Digital Bangladesh to ensure socio economic changes in the society by introducing new technologies and by creating and facilitating an environment to connect the unconnected to the global network for their economic and social benefits. The government is also determined to make sure that information and communication technology and services are available at an affordable price to everyone in general and to rural areas. Digital Bangladesh concept through delivery of high quality multi-channel television and broadband Internet up to the village level government drove the challenge and in 2008, the Bangladesh Telecommunication and Regulatory Commission (BTRC) completed the primary work, including the submission of electronic filing to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), to launch the satellite. It is the most technologically advanced project to have been undertaken by the Bangladesh government. Thus the National ICT Policy 2009 was formulated to give the responsibility to Ministry of Posts, Telecommunication and Information Technology (MoPT&IT), Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) and private sector to launch Bangladesh’s own satellite in orbit. BTRC took initiative and in January 2012, it got approval of the project

titled “Preparatory Functions and Supervision in Launching a Communication and Broadcasting Satellite” with an estimated project cost of Taka 8,681.51 lakh and with an implementation tenure from 01 July, 2011 to 30 June, 2015.

As the allotment process of orbital position and relevant frequencies from ITU is very complex and Bangladesh had no previous experience in satellite launching activities, the need of expert consultant to assist in the primary activities was highly felt, and a USA based consultancy firm Space Partnership International (SPI), was appointed under the project on 29 March, 2012 following proper rules and regulation. The main objective of this preparatory project is foreign consultancy services for preparatory works, including; frequency coordination, satellite design, tender document preparation & evaluation, LEOP, AIT, launch of Satellite and In Orbit Test (IOT). Half of the capacity of the satellite is being reserved for Bangladesh while the other half will be rented out. Since then the objectives of this Project including:

- Feasibility Study and Business plan for the Satellite services
- Consolidate requirements of potential users, based on feasibility study by the consultant. These requirements shall be combined with regional market conditions to create a business plan for a potential satellite.
- Develop an Overall Communications System Requirements and Performance Characteristics for the Satellite System.
- Preparation and review of filings submitted and to be submitted by the Bangladesh Administration to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and any existing coordination agreements, and recommend the way forward to reserve the required orbital slot and frequencies.
- Define satellite system architecture and prepare RFP/tender document.
- Comprehensive construction monitoring, launch monitoring and In-Orbit test support during the construction and launch phases.
- Background works for the formation of a satellite operating company (Government or PPP) in Bangladesh.
- Training/transfer of knowledge for the operation and maintenance of proposed satellite.

### **Bangabandhu Satellite**

Japan supports non-spacefaring countries to build their first satellite through a program called The Joint Global Multi-Nation Birds Satellite project (BIRDS). Besides Japan, four countries participated in the Birds-1 program: Ghana, Mongolia, Nigeria, and Bangladesh. The two-year period spanning the development, construction, launch and operation of the satellites engaged three university students from each of the five participating countries. The satellite cost about US\$500,000 to manufacture and launch. Their prime objective was to educate the students so that they could go back to build one completely by themselves.

Within this programme, BRAC Onnesha is the first nano-satellite built in Bangladesh was launched on a Falcon 9 rocket to the International Space Station on 3 June 2017. The satellite was designed and built over a two year period to achieve the goal of helping Bangladesh to build her first satellite. The satellite completes an orbit once every 90 minutes, has imaging capabilities and can transmit songs to Earth that are uploaded to its memory. This nano-satellite shaped as a 10 centimeters (3.9 in) cube capable of completing one orbit 400 kilometers

(250 mi) above the ground in 90 minutes and passing over Bangladesh four to six times a day. The primary objective of the satellite is to image vegetation, urbanization, flood, water resources, and forestry. SpaceX launch of CRS-11 with BRAC Onnesha onboard.

Alongside of the launching first nano-satellite, the evidently tech-friendly Bangladesh government has helped a local company set up a unit for assembling cell phones. At the same time a cut in import duty concerned for components required for making digital equipment came as a great boost to companies' intent on assembling mobile phones in the country. The launch of the 4th generation (4G) cellular communication, materialized the international online payment system of PayPal and many other digital steps, Bangabandhu Satellite-1 as the first full-sized Bangladeshi satellite marks the greatest contribution in the communication sector to boost up. The Father of the Nation desired the same for his country as any other sovereign country needs to reduce its dependency on outer nations and the country's own satellite is one of the strongest way to achieve that. Thus, the satellite gets its name- BANGABANDHU SATELLITE or BS. This time we are launching BS-1. In future we will launch BS-2, BS-3 and so on. Geographically disaster prone country is now shaping itself with more and stronger telecommunication infrastructure as BS1 network can play an important role in ensuring uninterrupted telecommunication services in Bangladesh.

#### **How Bangladesh will be benefited by the Bangabandhu satellite**

Both the public and various other private sectors of the country meet the demand of a satellite by renting bandwidth from different satellite operators those have foot print over our territory. For lease of transponder for this purpose, every year Bangladesh spends a huge amount of foreign currency which will increase over the years. Bangladesh now can save this significant amount of foreign currency paid as the transponder rental charge for communications and broadcasting by Television channels, to meet the requirement of satellite usage for ICT, meteorology, military, research etc. The country's new value added services in several sectors will cater and at the same time excess capacity will be leased to the Regional market that will generate revenues in USD and stop the drain of foreign currency. Currently, all private TV channels in Bangladesh use Apstar-7 satellite, which is at 76.5 degrees East. Only government-owned BTV uses Asiasat-7, another satellite, which is at 105.5 degrees East. Bangabandhu Satellite-1 will create new services for Government, Enterprise and Consumers and also create jobs in country to operate the satellite and to manage the overall traffic through the satellite. This is one of the great side benefits for Bangladesh of launching its own satellite is having a knowledge based society of space generation.

The country's remote parts, haors, coastal areas and deep-sea zones will also have impressive internet connectivity. It will also be helpful for telemedicine, video conferencing, distance learning, and improvement of weather forecast facilities. Bangladesh government hopes that the satellite will be a game changer in rescue operations after natural disasters.

Once operational, the satellite will enable the nation to save approximately BDT1.08bn (\$14m) currently being spent on satellite rents each year. BTRC also plans to launch follow-on series of BD-2 and BD-3 satellites in phases.

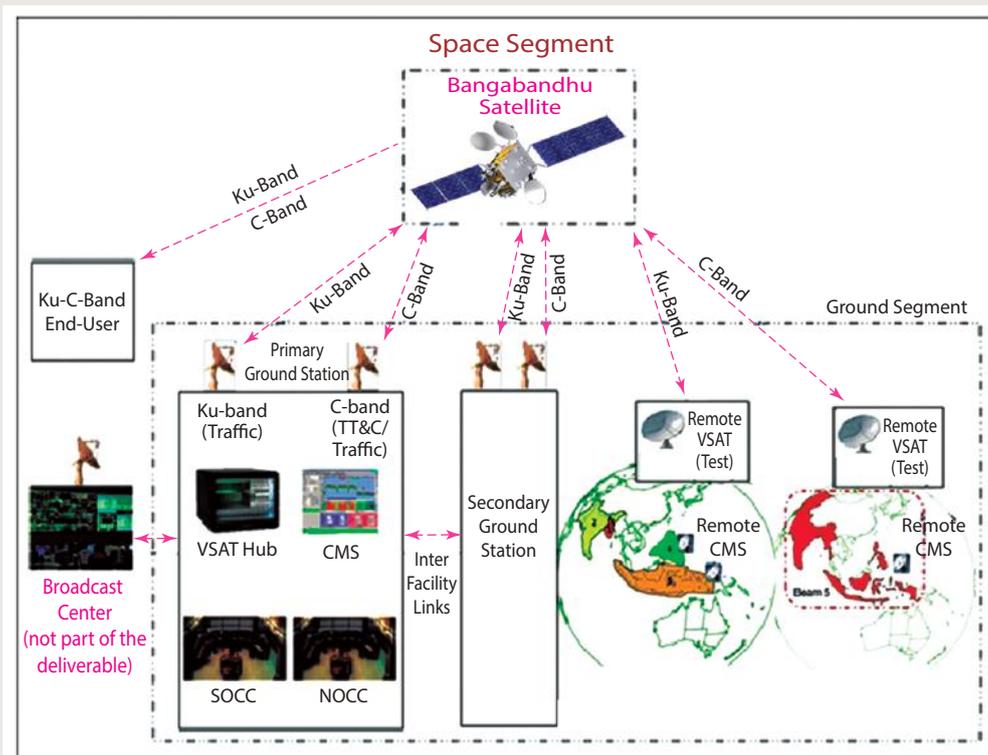
Bangabandhu Satellite-1 has already received the prestigious "Recognition of

Excellence” award from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), a UN body on ICT for its possible socio-economic impact. The then State Minister for Post and Telecommunications Tarana Halim received the award on behalf of the government at the concluding ceremony of the four-day ITU Telecom World 2016 in Bangkok on 17 November 2016.

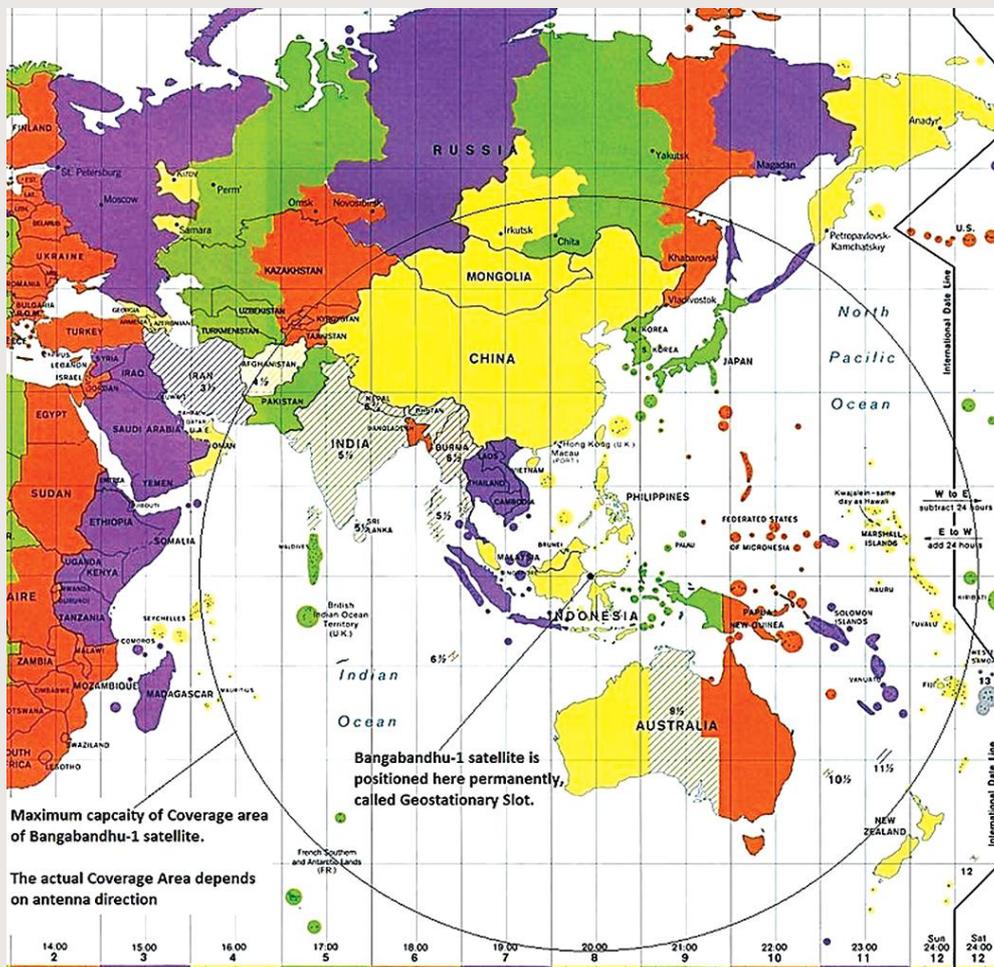
### Services

The priority satellite applications are Direct to Home (DTH), VSAT, Backhaul and Trunking, Network Restoration, Disaster Preparedness and relief etc. The Primary Service Area (PSA) would be Bangladesh and neighboring countries and the Secondary Service Area (SSA) would be South East Asia, Europe, MENA, and East Africa depending on orbital slot. The network will provide service covering Bangladesh and its territorial waters of the Bay of Bengal as well as covering India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan. It will provide 40 different types of services once launched into orbit. The satellite with 1,600MHz capacity will have 40 transponders and the physical equipment of the space capsule that measures the capacity.

Based on Spacebus 4000B2 platform developed by Thales Alenia Space, the BD-1 satellite will have a launch mass of 3,500kg. It will include two deployable solar arrays with batteries. The spacecraft will have a designed lifespan of 15 years. The network architecture is shown in the figure below.



Segment and capacity of the satellite



Coverage area of Bangabandhu Satellite-1

### Launching Facts: "Bangabandhu", in the sky

At last, Bangladesh could debut in the global space society. The nation's dream, Bangabandhu satellite-1 went on its way to orbit after its perfect and successful launching at 2:14 am Bangladesh time on May 11, 2018. While the satellite started its journey to the space, people of all ages across the country were awake and many of them started singing with joy and pride the national anthem - 'Amar Sonar Bangla, Ami Tomay Valobashi'. The iconic slogan - "Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu" was also chanted at places across the country while Bangabandhu-I was rocketing the country's flag and national logo to the space. President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also joined the proud nation in witnessing the milestone event for the country's communication sector. People expressed their joy and gratitude to the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for setting another example of great success that made Bangladesh proud on the global stage.

The satellite was launched using vehicle SpaceX & Falcon-9 from the Cape Canaveral launch pad at Florida in USA at 4:14pm US local time. The launch was streamed live on the SpaceX website. A Bangladesh delegation, led by Prime Minister's ICT Affairs Adviser Sajeeb Wazed Joy, witnessed the launching of the satellite, which was visible for around seven minutes in the Florida's clear sky.

Bangladesh will operate the satellite from 119.1 degree East longitude geostationary slot. In the stage of its launching progress the Bangabandhu Satellite-1 project has successfully passed its Critical Design Review (CDR), which held in France in the premises of Thales Alenia Space at the end of 2016. The program then entered into the production phase with the integration of the



*Ground Antena at Gazipur, Bangladesh*

communications module in Thales Alenia Space plant in Toulouse, France and the service module in Cannes, with the mating set for March 2017. At the same time, the ground team is kicking off factory acceptance tests and starting local work on the installation of ground antennas.

Bangabandhu Satellite-1 comprises a satellite and the complete ground segment including satellite control, mission and user segments. The turn-key contractor Thales Alenia Space has built two ground facilities in Gazipur and Betbunia in Bangladesh for all support equipment needed to control the satellite and operate the telecom system. Thales Alenia Space Italy and Thales Alenia Space Spain are

all involved in this project, as suppliers of various ground and satellite components.

The Falcon-9 rocket has four parts, with the satellite on top, followed by the adaptor. Below the adaptor is Stage-2 of the rocket, while the lowest section is Stage-1. During take-off Stage-1 was fired and carried the spacecraft upwards with tremendous speed. Expatriate Bangladeshis in Florida stayed within three or four kilometers from the launch pad saw the take-off with their own eyes. At one point the Stage-1 rocket was jettisoned and fell back to Earth and the Stage-2 rockets began firing. Stage-2 carried the 7-metric tonne the spacecraft to 35,700km before being jettisoned and lingered in orbit at a certain distance from the satellite.

The entire launch process had two phases. The first phase was the Launch and Early Orbit Phase (LEOP) and the second phase was Satellite in Orbit. The three ground stations in the US, Italy and Korea operated the process to bring the satellite under complete control and move the satellite 300km to its assigned position (119.1 east longitudinal orbital slots). Once it is completely operational, the control has been transferred to the ground stations in Bangladesh.

### **Eye in the Sky**

Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh has gained the ability to dream big and achieve also big. Bold and ambitious decision of the government to start implementing a series of mega projects, which includes the Padma Bridge, Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, Dhaka metro rail and Payra Sea Port project have created confidence of the nation indeed. A whirlwind of development activities are going on at breathtaking speed. Once implemented, these projects will change the face of Bangladesh. Including these, the Bangabandhu satellite-1 is a symbol of our growing national prosperity, our self-dependency and our sky-high ambition. It proves that nothing is impossible for this resilient nation.

So, our eyes are in the sky. Bangabandhu satellite-2, 3 and more will be announced to take over the orbit. Space has no limit, such as dream also.

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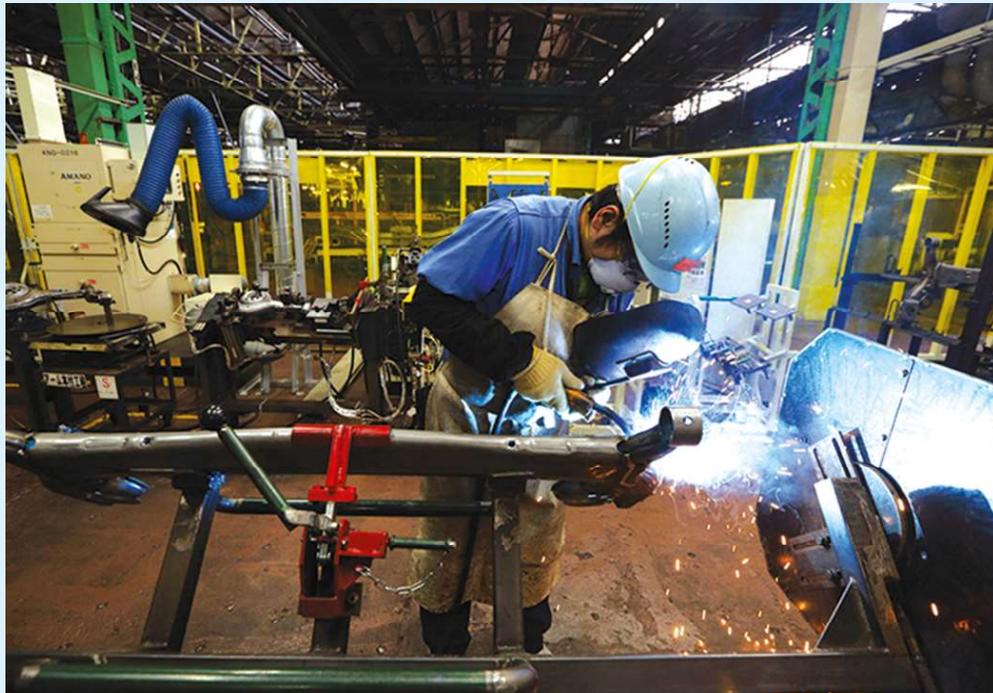
**Nasrin Mustafa, Science Writer**



## International Workers' Day: Its History and Celebration in Bangladesh

**Dr. Md. Matiur Rahman Khan**

**I**nternational Workers' Day is observed on May 1 every year almost around the world to celebrate and enjoy the achievement and victory of the working classes against exploitation, unhygienic working conditions, hazardous environment, prolonged work-hour and lack of security and social justice for the workers. The Day is also marked to commemorate the memory of, pay tribute to, and express gratitude to those who laid down their lives for realizing the realistic and reasonable demands for the working classes around the globe. So, the Day creates and promotes awareness, focuses and highlights solidarity, dedication, and unity among the working classes in various countries across the world. In most of the countries, it is



*Welders at a workshop*

celebrated on May 1, while in some countries like the United States of America, and Canada, it is celebrated on first Monday of September. This International Workers' Day in some countries is also called May Day or Labor Day.

### **Background of the Day**

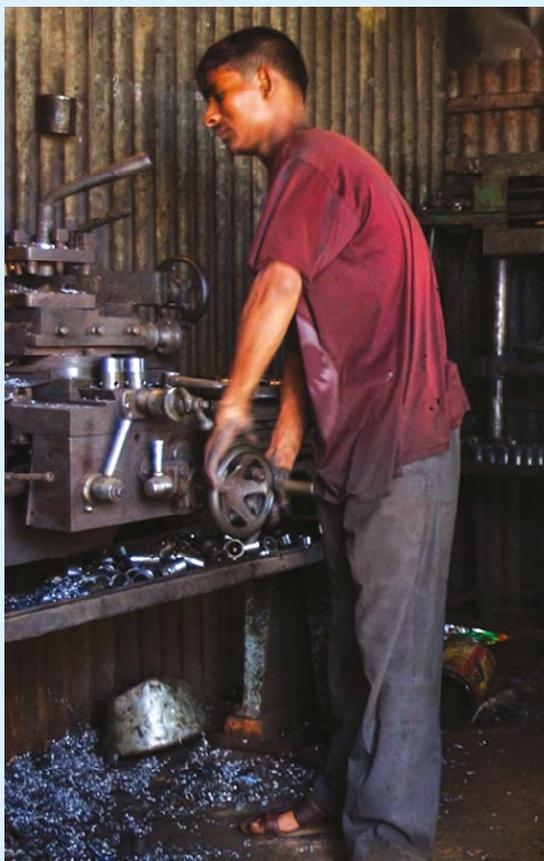
During the 1700's and early 1800's great changes took place in the lives and work of people in several parts of the world. These changes resulted from the development of industrialization. The Industrial Revolution started spreading to other parts of Europe and to North America in the early 1800's, and by the mid-1800's industrialization had become widespread in Western Europe and the Northeastern United States. With the expansion of Industrial Revolution, more workers were engaged to meet the need in mills and factories. But the owners of mills and factories looked after their own interest, and they never took care of the interest and facilities of the workers. The workers had to work even for 10-16 hours a day in a very unhygienic and health-hazardous condition. The environment of the workplaces was very dirty, noisy, and dangerous for human health. Moreover, remuneration and wages were too low to meet their need. They had no enough money to buy good food, good clothes and medicine for them. They were always in hardship and extreme poverty, and led a very miserable life and were never treated with dignity. They had to work and toil for the interest and satisfaction of their owners. In spite of that the owners were not pleased; they wanted more and more toil from the workers. They were unethical and had the immoral principle and used to say, "Use labors for longer time, and earn more profits."

The workers tried to improve their existing miserable condition but failed, and with the passage of time, it became the question of life and death for them. Then the workers gradually got united, and towards 1860's, the working people started agitation, and went on strike in demand for friendly environment at workplaces, and reduction of length of duty-time from 10 working hours to 8 working hours without a cut in pay. This movement in demand for 8-hour work a day, spread and became strong throughout Europe and America. In 1864, Marx and Engels founded International Workers' Association which promoted workers' movement to be more dynamic and forceful against the exploitation and economic oppression from the hands of the owners. Two years later, in 1866, 60 trade unions together formed National Labor Union in Baltimore (the largest city in the US states of Maryland), which also promoted 8- work hour a day. Thereafter, the USA Government was prompted to pass a labor law which fixed 8-work-hour a day. But that law was not in force at all. In 1875, around Pennsylvania coal mine (Pennsylvania, a northeastern US state), 10 revolutionary leaders were mercilessly hanged in order to gag and choke the vice of the Workers' Union, but this could not suppress the workers. Then in 1877, Steel Mill Workers called a strike where tens of thousands of workers had active participation. Then realizing the future consequences of the intensified strike of the workers, the American Federation of Labor declared in 1984 that 8-work hour a day would lawfully be implemented from May 1.

### **Origin of International Workers' Day**

For rapid implementation of the declaration of the American Federation of Labor, movement and strike all over became forceful, and the members of the unions began growing more in number. The workers' unions became united and the

working people were determined not to work more than 8 hours a day from May 1, 1886. Then the great expected historic day came, about 6 lakh working people walked off the jobs and directly participated in strike on May 1, around 1,572 children's institutions were locked and about 11,562 workers' institutions participated in strike. The government and the owners became unnerved and puzzled, and tried their level best to foil the strike and movement but failed. Strikes, rallies and processions took place on streets peacefully on May 1. The next day was a holiday. But on May 3, again the factory workers went on strike.



*A lathe machine worker*

The government and the owners' party became very desperate to foil and baffle the united movement and strike of workers by provocation and terrorist acts. On the same day they unleashed police and miscreants on the MC Cormic Machine factory workers who were on strike. Police and miscreants killed 6 workers, and injured many more. To protest these barbaric and savage acts, a meeting was called by workers on May 4, at Haymarket Square in Chicago, a city of Illinois, a state in America. Towards the end of the meeting, the miscreant and the bullies of the owners' party blasted a bomb that killed 7 members of the police forces, and four workers who were in the meeting. As a result, the armed police forces fell on the unarmed innocent workers. Police on charge of leading the movement arrested many workers' leaders including Albert Persons, August Spies, Samuel Fielden, Oscar Neebe, Michael Schwab, George Engel, Adolph Fischer and Louis Lingg. They were put on a travesty of trial and were

convicted of murder, though three of them were present at Haymarket. The jury in their trial consisted of business leaders in a gross mockery of justice. The entire world watched as these eight organizers were convicted not for their actions, of which all of them were innocent, but for their political and social beliefs. On November 11, 1887, after many failed appeals, Persons, Spies, Engel and Fisher were hanged to death. Louis Lingg, in his final protest of the State's claim of authority and punishment, took his life the night before with an explosive device in his mouth. The remaining organizers Fielden, Neebe and Schwab, were pardoned six years later by Governor Altgeld who publicly lambasted the judges



*Construction workers*

for the trial which was a travesty of justice. In this comment of the governor, we find the truth and its reflection in the protest message of August Spies who standing on the stage of gallows valiantly and firmly said: “The Day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you are throttling today.” This message is engraved in the Haymarket Monument. The government and the owners’ party tried to suppress the workers’ demands by oppression, but failed. At last the owners’ party yielded to the just demands of the workers. The storm of protest rose, and there were sound and demonstration of contempt all around against the oppressive owners until 1889. Then on 14 July, 1889, the second International Conference took place in Paris. A unanimous resolution which was passed in the session of the first day of the convention declared that International Workers’ Day would be observed every year from May 1, 1890. Thus, the historic May Day of 1886 was transformed into and promoted to International Workers’ Day or May Day of 1890.

### **Significance of the Day**

The Day has a lot of significance. It is a public holiday in as many as 80 countries, but more than 100 countries observe the Day across the globe. The Day is marked by the celebration of the achievement and victory of the workers against exploitation of the owners’ party. On this Day, the workers pay tribute to the labors who laid down their lives to establish rights, to promote welfare, to improve working environment, and to reduce working hours without a cut in pay. On this day they commemorate the Haymarket Square Martyrs, MC Cormic Machine factory martyrs and express the sense of solidarity and unity with them. They urge to strengthen their unity and reiterate their firm determination to fight against exploitation and oppression of the ruling class in society. They reiterate their determination, pledge and fighting spirit to safeguard their own rights. The Day symbolizes the workers’ struggle and their empowerment in the late 19th century by trade unions of socialists and communists. This Day refreshes workers’

memory of the past incidents and sacrifices, and imbue them with inspiration, energy, hope and aspiration for a better life.

### **Success of the workers' movement**

Success or achievement that so far is acquired has been possible due to the struggle and strike of the workers. About 132 years have passed since the workers' movement in Chicago City. During the period a lot of things have developed for the interest of workers. The International Labor Organization (ILO) was formed in October, 1919 to safeguard the interest of working people and to deal with labor problems, particularly international labor standards, social protection and work opportunities for all. Many conventions were held, and recommendations were enforced to promote welfare and rights of working class. Labor policy and labor laws have been formulated in many member states. These labor policy and laws have ensured workers' daily working hours, good working environment at the workplaces of mills and factories, compensation in case of accidents, safety of workers, work-hour for women workers, restrictions on child labor, workers' participation in multifarious welfare activities, unfettered power to join trade unions, and formulation of service conditions for security of workers' jobs. Above all, the workers have got the recognition of 'May 1' as the International Workers' Day. So, they are at liberty to celebrate the Day, commemorate the past memory and express grievances and rejoicing.

### **Legal safeguard of workers in Bangladesh's Constitution and Labor Law**

Bangladesh always pays due honor to workers' rights and International Workers' Day. In Bangladesh, the rights of workers are guarded and protected by our Constitution and Labor Law. Some of the rights enshrined in the Constitution and the Labor Law for workers are as follows:

Emancipation of peasants and workers: It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to emancipate the toiling masses-the peasants and workers- and backward sections of the people from all forms of exploitation (article 14).

Provision of basic necessities: It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to attain, through planned economic growth, a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of



*Women workers at a coal processing plant*

the people, with a view to securing to its citizens- the right to work, that is the right to guaranteed employment at a reasonable wage having regard to the quality and quality work- article 15(b), -the right to reasonable rest, recreation and leisure article 15 (c ),- the right to social security, that is to say,

to public assistance in cases of undeserved want arising from unemployment, illness or disablement, or suffered by widows or orphans or in old age, or in other such cases- article 15(d).

**Work as a right and duty:** Work is a right, a duty and a matter of honour for every citizen who is capable of working, everyone shall be paid for his work on the basis of the principle “from each according to his abilities, to each according to his work” article-20(1),- the State shall endeavour to create conditions in which, as general principle, persons shall not be able to enjoy unearned incomes, and in which human labour in every form, intellectual and physical, shall become a fuller expression of creative endeavour and of the human personality- article 20(2).

**Prohibition of forced labour:** All forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law-article 34(1).

**Freedom of Assembly:** Every citizen shall have the right to assemble and to participate in public meetings and processions peacefully and without arms, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of public order or public health- article (37).

**Freedom of association:** Every citizen shall have the right to form associations or unions, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of morality and public order.

### **Labor Law in Bangladesh**

The Labor Law of Bangladesh also gives protection and safety to working classes, and some of the sections of Labor Law are as follows:

**Working hours for adolescent:** No adolescent shall be allowed to work in any factory or mine for more than 5 (five) hours in any day, and 30 (thirty) hours in any week Sec.41 (1)

**Prohibition of employment of adolescent in underground and underwater:** No adolescent shall be employed in any work in the underground and under water-sec 42(1).

**Right to maternity benefit and liability for its payment:** Every woman worker shall be entitled to maternity benefit from her employer for the period of 8(eight) weeks preceding the expected day of her delivery and 8 (eight) weeks immediately following the date of her delivery, shall be bound to give her this benefit- sec 46(1).

**Cleanliness:** Every establishment shall be kept clean and free from effluvia arising from any drain, privy or any other nuisance...sec 46.

**Ventilation and temperature:** Arrangement for adequate ventilation shall be made for securing and maintaining circulation of fresh air in every such worker of every establishment.

**Portable water:** In every establishment, arrangements shall be made at a suitable point to supply sufficient purified portable water for all workers employed therein-sec 58(1).

**Toilets and washroom:** – In every establishment sufficient number of sanitary toilets and washrooms of the type prescribed by rules shall be provided at the suitable places so that the workers employed therein at the time of work may use easily sec 59(a).



*Labourers engaged in road construction*

**Washing facilities:** In every establishment sufficient number of suitable bathrooms and washing facilities with provisions of their eminence shall be provided for the use of the workers employed therein- sec 91(1) (a).

**Canteen:** In an establishment where more than 100 (one hundred) workers are ordinarily employed, adequate number of canteens shall be provided for their use-sec 92(1)

**Rooms for children:** In every establishment, where 40 (forty) or more female workers are ordinarily employed one or more suitable rooms shall be provided and maintained for the use of their children who are under the age of 6 (six) years-sec 94(1).

**Daily working hour:** No adult worker shall ordinarily work or be required to work in an establishment for more than 8 (eight) hours a day-sec 100 (1).

**Weekly working hours:** No adult worker shall ordinarily work or be required to work for more than 48 (forty eight) hours in a week- sec 102(1).

**Limited hours of work for woman worker:** No woman worker, shall without her consent, be allowed to work in an establishment between 10 0' clock at night and 6 0'clock in the morning-sec 109.

**Special age limit for road transport work:** No person shall be employed as a driver in a road transport establishment unless he has attained the age of 21(twenty one) years sec 112 (1).

**Trade union of workers and employers:** Subject to the provisions of the chapter- all workers, without distinction whatsoever, shall have the right to form trade union primarily for the purpose of regulating the relations between workers and

employers or between workers and workers and, subject to the Constitution of the union concerned, to join the trade union of their own choosing sec.176 (a).

Moreover, according to the Labor Law, there must be a health centre in the establishment where five thousand or more workers serve. And if one hundred or more workers serve permanently in an establishment, they must be brought under insurance policy.

### **Celebration of the Day in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh observes the International Workers' Day (also historic May Day) every year with due honor and solemnity. Hon. President, Prime Minister, leader of the opposition issue separate messages on the occasion of May Day to the nation. They also extend greetings to all working people of the country. The Labor and Employment Ministry draws up different programs to observe the Day at the state level. Different workers' associations, unions, organizations, including private and public organizations and institutions arrange colorful rallies, processions, discussion-meetings, seminars, cultural programs, competitive games and sports. Bangladesh Televisions and Bangladesh Betar and other private sector television channels and radio stations put up special programs on the significance of the day. National dailies publish special supplements commemorating the importance of the Day. Educational institutions draw up various programs on the necessity of the International Worker's Day as well. Different important buildings, social clubs, large establishments and different streets islands of the capital are decorated with banners, festoons and placards. At night, important and grand buildings, posh and smart hotels, secretariat, high-street shopping centers, clubs etc are illuminated beautifully and brightly. The Day is a public holiday. So, the working people do not need to go to work and can enjoy the Day by participating in different cultural programs to their liking.

### **Conclusion**

The International Workers' Day is a hard earned outstanding success of workers' combined efforts. It is the outcome of long struggle and supreme sacrifice and great dedication of the working classes. This Day of course, be observed in full esteem in order to show due respect and regard to the working classes who are regarded as the backbone of development in every field of production of mills, factories, agricultural farms etc. Production is really attributed to the hard labor of workers. Here, their role is very significant. If they refuse to work, the production will be hampered and non-operational, and the impact will occur on country's economy which will breakdown in the long run. As a result, the whole nation will suffer development and progress. So, the government, industrialists, owners of business of the community should give priority to the rights, minimum fare wages, working hours and working conditions of the workplaces. It is good news that workers have the freedom of assembly, freedom of association and freedom of speech in Bangladesh. They can form trade unions and other associations to focus and protect their rights. However, this freedom should not be misused whatsoever. Both owners and workers should have good relations and understanding for the sake of more development, and better life and production. Neither party should cross the limits and go beyond principles and rules.

***Dr. Md. Matiur Rahman Khan, former Joint Secretary to the Government***



## Munshi Meherullah : The Great Spirit of Islam

**M. Mizanur Rahman**

Islam is the code of conduct in life provided one follows it in accordance with its moral principles. It has its spiritual power to exert humanity irrespective of different creeds and colors among human beings. Without any stint of doubt it acknowledges equality in all respect among mankind. Irrefutably Islam is the only religion on earth that distinguishes none of the human beings on any futile brag of aristocracy or earthly riches of any kind. It never allows violence but retaliates with the immeasurable acts of tolerance and wisdom. knowledge is the only weapon of islam to combat the enemy ignorance.

Munshi Meherullah (1861- 1907) was a great personality that took the core of Islam in his life to do away with all material evils to lead the simplest life maintaining Islamic norms all along. Only within the forty-six years of his life he could enlighten the people with the shining light of Islam all around him in the then Bengal as a great person propounding Islamic thoughts.

### **Life-sketch**

Munshi Meherullah was born on Monday the 26th December 1861(B.S.10th Pousch, 1268) in a village Ghope near Barobazar of Kaliganj police station, Jessore (now under Jhenaidha district) at the residence of his maternal uncle. His paternal home was at Chatiantola, about five miles away northwest from Jessore town. His father Munshi Wareshuddin was a religious-minded Muslim. When he was only six month old his mother brought him home at Chatiantola. His education started at the age of five in a local primary school (Pathsala). A few years later his father died. In spite of acute financial hardship his mother did not stop educating her son Meherullah. Later he stated that whatever he learnt in life his mother took care educating him until her death. At the age of fourteen he learnt Bengali, Arabic, Urdu, and Persian literature for consecutive six years from the experienced village teachers namely Moulvi Mosharuddin of Village Koyalkhali and Moulvi Mohammad Ismail of village Karachia. Meherullah had his optimum thirst for knowledge. He learnt Al-Koran and Hadith profusely. He read Gulista, Busta and Pandenama of Sheikh Saa'di and committed them to memory. At that time an Urdu weekly "Monsur Mohammadi" was published from Mysore that he

bought and read regularly. Thus studying all these religious books, periodicals, and newspapers he made the basis of his religious knowledge strong and profound.

However, Meherullah could not prosecute further studies at the educational institutes rather he had to cut short his student life in order to eke out livelihood overcoming poverty at such early age. He applied for the post of a clerk in the Jessore District Board. But the head of the District Board, an English District Magistrate asked him in the interview as saying, “You are a minor aged boy, you got no experience and as such you cannot do the job, we want an experienced person.” Meherullah promptly retorted with courage, “Excuse me sir, why can’t I do this job? Had you any early experience before you joined your post, sir? So when you could do your job, similarly I shall do my job also”. The interviewer became surprised but not annoyed. He said, “Yes, you can do.” Meherullah became the clerk of the Jessore District Board.



*Munshi Meherullah*

As a matter of fact, freedom-loving man like Munshi Meherullah could not continue his job in the District Board of Jessore any more. After sometimes, he left it and went to Khojar Hut where he started learning tailoring in a tailor-shop. And at leisure period he used to study Urdu and Persian from a learned teacher Munshi Taj Muhammad. He had profound zeal and earnestness to know Islam and its culture with unending inquisitiveness.

He opened a modern tailoring shop at Daratana, the heart of Jessore town. His dexterity in tailoring works and amiable behavior attracted all educated customers of culture and tastes. He became popular overnight at home and abroad. Most of the intellectuals of the town used to meet each other at his shop and discussed matters of their mutual interests. His shop became the meeting place of the intellectuals of Jessore town. The District Magistrates of those days used to patronize him and make dresses from his tailoring shop.

However, Munshi Meherullah thought deeply about the sufferings of the Muslims under British rule. Since 1757, after the tragic fall of Siraj-ud-dowla, Muslim community had to face very hard life on innumerable reasons that brought them misfortune. British rulers created many hurdles socially, economically and politically against the former rulers (Muslims) of the land. They biased the Muslims and took the Hindu in their confidence depressing and depriving the Muslim in all walks of social and economic development. Despairingly Muslims were persecuted by the British administrators and Hindu landlords (Zamindar) as the condition created by the British Raj. During this period of crisis for the Muslim

community along with intolerable poverty the Christian priests took the opportunity to convert poor Muslims into Christianity vilifying the religion of Islam by their false propaganda and publicity. A large number of them came from different parts of the European countries to convert poor and suffering people of this country into Christian religion alluring the poor of better life under the domain of Christianity.

One day in front of his tailor's shop at Daratana Munshi Meherullah observed that a Padre (Christian clergyman) delivered false and malicious lecture on Islam, damaging the sacred character of the Prophet Muhammad (SM), and asked the people to shun Islam and join the religion of Jesus Christ where human emancipation ensured. Being erudite personality and knowledgeable one he got pain at heart. He felt that was the way that clergymen talking senseless and frustrating the simple poor and suffering people towards converting them into Christianity. Then and there Meherullah took the mission to collect all types of their propaganda booklets and refute falsehood one after another and started delivering lecture on the magnanimity of Islam. Thus his doors and windows of truth against falsehood unveiled the machinations of the Christian eclesial



Postage stamp

missionaries in Bengal. To save his community from the evils of the Christian clergymen he made every ground fertile to sow seeds of the exact seasons in order to harvest the seasonal fruits. He learned Islam and put forward arguments irrefutable to that opposed him. He could understand that to argue about any religion one has to know the scriptures of others, the members of the Samitee unanimously endorsed the resolution that entrusted Meherullah with the propagation of Islam in Bengal and Assam. The Pir (saint) of Furfura Abu Baqr inspired Meherullah to execute his responsibility very courageously.

Meherullah started propagating the magnanimity of Islam all through his eloquent and sharp oratory throughout Bengal and Assam and defused the

illogical and malicious propaganda and publicity against Islam of the Christian Clergymen. Thus he could resist the conversion of the Muslims into Christianity and this conflict revealed dormant genius of Munshi Meherullah.

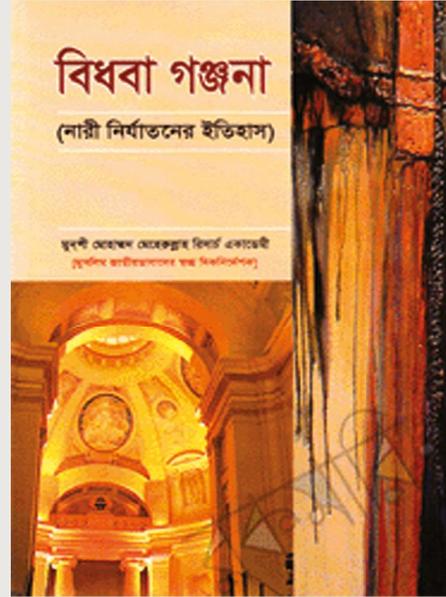
Most of the time, he argued about the religious matters with John Zamiruddin, HGR, the learned Christian missionary. John Zamiruddin, HGR was the converted Christian from Muslim. Meherullah could convince him about the righteousness of Islam and brought him back to Islam. In 1892 John Zamiruddin wrote an article in a Christian newspaper "Khristio Bandhab (friend of the Christian) "Asol Koran kothai? (Where is the real Koran?)". He tried to prove that there's no existence of the real Koran. anywhere. Against this write-up Munshi Meherullah wrote a long research-oriented article "Christian or Issay Dhoka Vanjan(refutation of the Christian trickery) " in Sudhakor newspaper continuously for a few months and again he wrote another article in response to John Zamiruddin "Asol Koran

sarbotra (The real Koran is everywhere).” Thus he defeated John Zamiruddin both in write-up and oratory. John Zamiruddin later joined him towards propagation of Islam. At that time other missionaries namely Padre Nikolas, Padre Aghornath Biswas, Reverend Alexander were also converted into Islam being defeated in the war of words to Munshi Meherullah. Zamiruddin being the Muslim wrote one hundred and eight book-lets on Islam and converted thirteen hundred non-Muslims into Islam in collaboration with Munshi Meherullah.

Munshi Meherullah moved forward with his mission of propagation of Islam vigorously. He came across a lot of Hindu and Christian priests, Purohit or Padre and convinced them about the righteousness of Islam. They accepted Islam as the true religion of mankind.

Munshi Meherullah stressed much more importance on mass education because he knew it well that without education and dissipation of knowledge the common people will be cheated by the nefarious bloodsucker landlords and their henchmen and other clever cheats. He established Madrasha at his village at Jessore. He advised the teachers to educate the children, boys and girls in Bengali medium. In those days religious teachers used to speak and practice Arabic, Urdu and Persian languages that cannot be the media of education of the Bengali People and as such he preferred Bengali medium. He translated Darud sarif into Bengali praising Hazrat Muhammad(SM) and put it to the assembled students to sing in chorus. His Bengali lyrics are laudable. He had the following publications in his lifetime.

1. Khristio Dharmer Osarota- 1886 (Torpidity of Christian Religion)
2. Meherul Islam (The beauty of Islam)
3. Bidhoba Ganjona (Upbraiding of the Widow)
4. Hindu Dhormo Rohoswa O Deblila ( Hindu Religious Mystery and elegance of goddess)
5. Pandnama (Translation of Sheikh Sa'di' Pandnama in Bengali)
6. Slokmala (distich couplet)
7. Khristan- Muslim Torko Judho (War of arguments between the Christian and the Muslim)
8. Roddey Khristan O Dolilol Islam (Trashy Christianity and deeds of Islam )
9. Babu Ishan Chandra Mondol abong Charles Frencher Islam Grohon. (Acceptance of Islam by Babu Ishan Chandra Mondol and Charles French). So he read very deeply the Veda, Upanishad, Geeta, Bible, Tripitok and Granthasaheb. He came to know about different faults of religion studying “Tohfatul Muktadi”. He read three volumes of Solaiman Oarsy’s books, “Why I forsook my parent religion?” “Why I put my belief in Islam?” and “Where is the real truth?”. He also collected the books of Hafiz Neamatullah “Frustration of the Christian religion” and the writings of Padre



*Bidhoba Ganjona*

Ishan Chandra alias Munshi Muhammad Ehsanullah “There’s note of Hazrat Muhammad in Engel”. Meherullah took notes from these books and argued the Christian clergymen wherever they deliver their lectures maligning Islam. He fought them with his sharp but eloquent oratory full of logical arguments that none could refute him.

The District Magistrate of Jessore was transferred to Darjeeling. He requested Meherullah to open his shop at Darjeeling. Meherullah went there and opened a tailoring shop. He found Christian clergymen there also who were talking against Islam. It pained him because he was the protagonist of truth. He could not tolerate falsehood. He fought them well with his sharp oratory unveiling their malicious and false statements against Islam.

Meherullah could not stay longer at Darjeeling. He came home at Jessore. The condition of the Muslim of Bengal was most disappointing at that time. Muslims had already lagged far behind the non-Muslims in respect of progress in the field of education and procuring other amenities of life due to non-co-operation with the British Raj. Wahabi movement of the Muslim went in vain. Among the Alems (Muslim religious intellectuals) disputed contradictions with regard to Dar-ul Horob, Dar-ul-Aman and Dar-ul-Islam as well as between the Hanafi and Muhammadi sects stiff adverse interaction were at the zenith. Meanwhile due to extreme poverty and allurements of the Padres poor Muslims thronged by batches to be converted into Christianity that everything of the Muslims lost. But the religion of Islam was there at last that must be protected and as such Meherullah took the venture hoisting the standard of Islam marched forward as the torchbearer in that dark age of the Muslims of Bengal. He declared ‘Zehad’ (Religious war) against injustice, tyranny, ignorance and superstitions.

He went to Calcutta. Then only the media of publication for the Muslims was ‘Sudhakor’ edited by Sheikh Abdur Rahim. Meherullah met the editor of The ‘Sudhakor’ journal Sk. Abdur Rahim and the editor of ‘Meehir’ Munshi Reazuddin Mashadi and discussed all about the sufferings of the Muslims. In the meantime leading Muslim personalities like Khan Bahadur Badruddin Haidar and Khan Bahadur Muhammad Zakaria and others of Calcutta assembled in a conference at Calcutta Na-Khoda mosque and formed “Nikhil Bharat Islam Samitee (All India Islam propagation association)”

Munshi Meherullah appeared as the reformer and spokesman of righteousness in the history of Bengal. He was a great orator of his time. He could easily convince his listeners by his sweet and amiable talks with logical argument. His unblemished candid character and simplicity in life style attracted the people of all walks of populace. This great man died of pneumonia in 1907 at his Jessore residence. To remember him ever government named the Railway station at Churamonkathi, Jessore after his name as Meherullah Nagar. This is a place of pilgrimage each year for those who pay homage to this great soul. We pray almighty Allah for the salvation of his pious soul.

***The author of this article M. Mizanur Rahman is a poet, researcher, translator and essayist***



## Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Industry: Recent Advancements and Potentials

Naznin Sultana Niti

relaxation are two effective policies which barred foreign companies from selling imported pharmaceutical products in Bangladesh and permitted Bangladesh to reverse engineer patented generic drugs. TRIPS relaxations for Bangladesh along with other LDCs were extended until December 2032. Though, due to the recent graduation from LDC status the relaxation may change. But we can expect the relaxation will remain until UN announces its elevation to the status of a developing country in 2024. In 1982, the industry size was only BDT 1.7 billion which eventually grew ninety times by 2017. The Pharmaceutical industry of Bangladesh has been expanding locally and internationally. A number of firms got accreditation from the USA, UK, and Australia.

### **Historical Background**

Before Liberation, there was barely any pharmaceutical enterprise in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan). Though, during the 50s and 60s, a few local pharmaceutical companies started operations. Nevertheless, after several years of liberation, the government could not increase budgetary allocations for the improvement of the health sector, as the sector was prominently dominated by Multinational Companies, whereas, local companies were terribly suffering from proper infrastructure, modern equipment, and technology. Moreover, there was no

The Pharmaceutical Industry is one of the world's leading industries owed to worldwide revenues of around US\$ 2.8 trillion. In Bangladesh, with an evolutionary long history, the industry has become one of the most successful pharmaceutical manufacturing sectors amongst the growing nations. It is growing at our expected rate with the development of healthcare infrastructure and an increase of health awareness and the purchasing capacity of people. Being thriving in domestic market Bangladesh pharmaceuticals Industry is successfully exporting active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and a wide range of Pharmaceuticals products covering all major therapeutic class and dosage forms. Over the last few years, it has been experiencing exuberant growth. The Drug Control Ordinance 1982, WTO's agreement on TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights)



*Square pharmaceutical industry*

regulatory authority. At that time, most of the people had little access to the essential lifesaving medicines. According to the World Development Report published by world bank, in the early 1980s, Bangladesh ranked as the world's second poorest country, with average per capita income of US\$130,

and with about 95 million people in a land area of 144 000 square kilometers, giving it the highest population density in the world....a large portion of the Bangladesh population had limited access to modern drugs, with estimates varying from 30% of the population to 85%.<sup>3</sup> In 1981, the national market consisted of about US\$75 million in allopathic drugs, less than 0.1 % of the total world drug market. (Reich, 1994:130)

Then, from the 1980s, pharmaceutical sector started to improve. In the last two decades, it has grown at a considerable rate. After the promulgation of Drug Control Ordinance-1982, the development of the pharmaceutical industry has accelerated. As the local Pharmaceutical companies were the beneficiary of the NDP, they started to expand their business. Meanwhile, the MNCs sold their business shares to local companies. The drug policy had two important and immediate consequences. First, it eliminated the importation, sale, and production of drugs declared to be dangerous or useless. While groups differed in their assessment of the costs (and desirability) of removing so many drugs from the



*Beximco pharmaceuticals*

market, most groups agreed that the policy succeeded in achieving this goal to a large degree. Second, the policy reduced the cost of essential drugs within Bangladesh (with savings to consumers, government, and foreign exchange reserves) by decreasing import prices and the value of imported finished products (Reich, 1994:134). According to the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA), the market share of the locally produced drug was 175 crores in 1981 that increased to 325 crores by 1985.

**Table 1: Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Market Prior to 1982**

Government Spending	BDT 1,500 million per year
Number of brands in the market	3500
Number of manufacturers	177
Multinationals	8
Retail Pharmacists	16000
Number of Wholesalers	1300
Private Sector	90% available drugs
Government Utilize	10% available drugs

*Source: Bangladesh Pharmacy Council (BPC), Annual Report – 2009*

Since the promulgation of Drug Policy in 1982, the sector has grown from BDT 1730 million to more than BDT 113 bn (\$1.5 bn). In 2000, there were 173 active and licensed allopathic drug manufacturing units in the country, while the figure now stands at 300. There are two organizations, one governmental the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA), Under the Ministry of Health and family welfare. DGDA regulates all activities related import and export of raw materials and finished products, packaging materials, production, sale, pricing, license, registration etc. of all kinds of medicine including those of Ayurvedic, Unani, Herbal and Homeopathic system and one semi-Government. The pharmacy council of Bangladesh (PCB) regulates the practice of Pharmacy throughout Bangladesh control pharmacy practice in Bangladesh.

**Industry Overview: Advancements & Potentials**

There are, however, 1,495 wholesale drug license holders and about 37,700 retail drug license holders in Bangladesh. The overall size of the pharmaceutical market



*A pharmaceutical lab*



*Women workers in a pharmaceutical industry*

of Bangladesh is estimated to be approximate Tk. 113 bn. With an annual growth rate of about 11.37%, Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Industry is now self-sufficient in meeting the local demand and it is the largest white-collar intensive employment sector of the country employing around 115,000 workers. As indicated by IMS Health, annual pharmaceutical sales in the local market may reach BDT 160 billion within 2018. Bangladesh pharmaceutical market amounts to \$2.4bn in 2016 to \$2.6bn in 2017. By 2020 the market is estimated to be \$3,369bn. The rapid growth of pharmaceutical market accelerated since 1981 to 2015 which is estimated to grow around \$1,900.000 in 2017.

Pharmaceutical export is contributing significantly to the GDP of the country and every year the contribution is increasing at a greater pace. Since 2004, exports have increased multifold, with export destinations rising from 37 in 2004 to 127 in 2017. It has a large market in European countries. Bangladesh exported \$37.9 million (about Tk. 3.0 billion) worth of drugs in the fiscal year 2015-2016. According to Export Promotion Bureau, Bangladesh earned \$82.11 million, a 13.04% up, in the fiscal year 2015-2016, compared to 72.64 million a year ago. The sector has exceeded the export target by 2.64%. Pharmaceutical export grew around 25% in the last seven years. The amount stood at \$60.19 million in the first eight months of this fiscal year, registering a 9.94% rise compared to the same period a year ago. Bangladesh is exporting their pharmaceuticals products to 127 countries including Vietnam, Singapore, Myanmar, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Yemen, Oman, Thailand, and some countries of Central Asia and Africa. Due to the relaxations provided by TRIPS up to 2033 (after graduation from LDC

status in 2024, there will be a grace period of another 3 years when Bangladesh can enjoy all LDC-specific benefits. So there are approximately 10 years for the country to prepare itself to start the new journey), APIs can bring huge opportunities for exports. For, API (also known as Bulk Drugs), there is no stringent registration requirement and the promotional charges are also fairly nominal. The only crucial factor in this regard is the cost competitiveness. Bangladesh can export API to several countries if cost-effectiveness is ensured. But being restrained to synthesis stage only, Bangladesh has to rely on import of core compound, solvent, and other intermediates. Thus, the cost-effectiveness of local production can be a bit dependent on import costs. Alongside, these productions often also entail effluent treatment plant, requiring a high investment. Besides, economy of scale is yet to be achieved, and high investment requirement has troubled to achieve entrepreneurs' attention. However, developments are already taking place, with a number of firms' now manufacturing small amount of raw materials locally. In addition, the government has already completed the construction of API (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient) industrial park that will go into operation in 2018. Costs of APIs are estimated to decrease by about 20 percent if the API Park is launched. The Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients Park in Munshiganj, around 40 km from the capital will help the sector manufacture at an economy rate, with plans to establish around 40 API industries inside the park.

Bangladesh imports, every year a huge amount of both, finished products and raw materials from out of the country. More than 700 different types of finished products are being imported each year. Above 750 numbers of basic raw materials including packaging materials are being imported into Bangladesh for the use of the local pharmaceutical companies. Two categories of raw materials used and imported 1.Active ingredients/basic materials and 2.Excipients. Different organizations of Bangladesh are associated with the import of pharmaceuticals products and raw materials of pharmaceutical industries. Mostly, MNC's are engaged to import the pharmaceuticals products. More than 90% of 4.700 crores (TK) worth of raw materials are imported every year. The imported drugs mainly comprise of the cancer drugs, vaccines for viral diseases, hormones, etc. The machinery for pharmaceutical manufacturing also has to be imported while Indian



*Pharmaceutical items*

manufacturers can source the machinery nationally. It's a big cost disadvantage for Bangladeshi companies since leading manufacturers import most of their equipment from Europe or Japan, China, India etc. Moreover, R&D Activities, formulation, and market are three primary concerns for a strong API base. Our industry does not have R&D activities but we have a good domestic formulation industry and a moderate size domestic market.

Given that socio-economic perspective, it is assumed that total demand for all kinds of medicines and healthcare products will grow in Bangladesh in the near future with the increase in the per capita income, literacy rate in the country and also due to increased concern about the health of a certain group of people in the urban areas. Simultaneously, with the increasing trend in the export of pharmaceuticals, the demand for raw materials will increase. However, taking into consideration of the past performance as well as introduction of new entrants in the sector, it is expected that the import will experience at an annual average growth rate of at least 10% in the next 4-5 years. While most of emerging and LMIC (lower-middle-income countries) drug markets are dominated by multinational Pharma companies, Bangladeshi Pharma companies have the capacity to penetrate these markets.

### **Conclusion**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has recently declared pharma as the product of the year for 2018 to help boosting the export to grab more global market share and expressed hope that the pharmaceutical sector, like readymade garments, would take Bangladesh to new heights of honour in the global arena within a very short time. To achieve the peak we have to find new markets, develop quality products, enhance productivity, branding and overall efficiency to sustain in the global competition. New technology should be developed to generate new kinds of medicines are added in the product line and it can be used in various establishments. Progress in Pharmaceutical industry means progress in economy. The progress of pharmaceutical industry depends on the progress of economic condition. If government develops policies to support this industry as well as to overcome its problems, this industry will flourish and its contribution to employment, other sectors of the economy and enhancement of export earnings from the present level of Tk. 5,000 million would accelerate substantially. Hopefully, within next few years, Pharmaceutical manufacturing industries of Bangladesh would evolve as a major 'generic player' in the world.

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## Assessment of Agricultural Seed Requirement

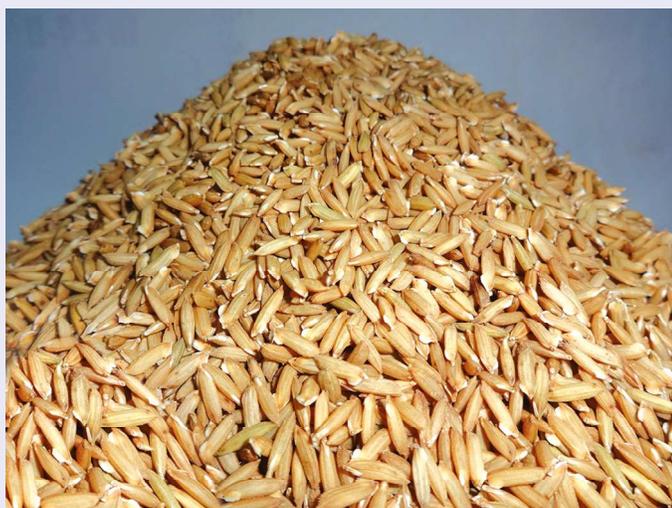
**Dr. Md. Shafayet Hossain**

**M**ore than 160 different crops are grown in Bangladesh. The yield of almost all crops is low as compared to that of other countries mostly due to lack of quality seed. Quality seed is considered as an important factor for increasing yield. It has been recognized that per unit yield of agricultural crops can be increased to the extent of 15-20% by using quality seeds of improved varieties or hybrids. But it is a matter of great concern that presently how much quality seeds are being used by the farmers or what is the marketable demand of seed in the country or the quantity of seeds supplied by the private sector is not yet clear or data based. Due to business policy a number of seed companies may reluctant to publish the quantity of seed handled by them which may create confusion.

Seed demand is the quantity that buyers are willing and able to purchase at a particular price. This is called effective demand and is not the same as the seed requirement. It is important to distinguish between the amounts of seed farmers will actually buy and how much they would like to buy or indeed how much the government would like them to buy. Seed demand forecasting is the process of making projections of demand for products by examining past and present performance levels, combined with an assessment of available products and markets. Seed demand estimation plays a very important role in management decision making both by the government and seed growers. Seed demand assessment is more complicated in estimating the demand of early generation seeds (Breeder, pre-basic,). Although the demand of certified seed is assessed before one year, it has been very difficult to get demands of early generation seed from seed producers which will be ready to user after three or four or five years.

In Bangladesh there is hardly any authentic statistics on using quality seed in the country. There is hardly any project or survey or findings done for having seed related statistics like the actual requirement of seed in the country, marketable demand and import from abroad, quantity of seed supplied by seed companies, seed replacement rate etc. So it is necessary to document the requirement and availability of quality seed and seed replacement rate in Bangladesh.

It is said that at present about 20% of the total required of seed of different crops is met up by the formal seed system and the remaining 80% comes from informal



Seed

system which includes farmers' saved seeds, are not of the required standard. These seeds are never being subjected to any quality test and seed production procedure. It may be mentioned that in case of Boro rice seed BADC alone supplies more than 60% and for wheat it is more than 40%. Approximately 99% of the requirement of pulses seed is fulfilled by the farmer seeds. The supply of potato seeds

by public sector is only 5%, the remaining 95% of the total requirement are met through private seed companies and farmers own seeds. Around 50% of the total seeds of different vegetables are supplied by different seed companies.

Generally agronomic requirement of seed is determined by multiplying seed rate of the crop with cultivable land under the same crop. If the statistics of cultivable land is not accurate then the determination of the requirement of seed will not be reliable. Cultivable land-related data provided by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics & Agricultural Information Service which is thought to be acceptable but in many cases controversy is there over the statistics of the two organizations. It is well known that cultivable land is decreasing at the rate of 1% per year. If the said figure is correct then the quantity of required seed supposed to be lower gradually with the decrease of cultivable land. Nowadays it is observed that cropping pattern is getting changes. With the changes, total cropped area has increased with the increase of double or triple cropped land although net cropped area has decreased. Failure in the assessment of seed requirement may cause financial loss to a seed company or seed producing farmers leading to negative impact on agriculture production. With the assessment of agronomic requirement marketable demand of seeds also need to be assessed. Sometimes it is found that huge quantity of seeds remains unsold due to its unplanned production. On the other hand crisis of seed is found in the market due to its high demand. It may be mentioned that in recent years a remarkable quantity of BADC seed was remained unsold. Other reasons may be there behind being unsold of seed.

As per Ministry of Agriculture the agronomic requirement of rice seeds was 274911 tons in 2016-17 of which 157154 tons were supplied by the formal sectors in the three rice growing seasons. Out of requirement of 28251 tons in Aus season only 14658 tons seed supplied by the formal sector; in Aman season supply was 35970 tons against the requirement of 139583 tons and in Boro season supply was 106526 tons while the requirement was 107077 tons. Requirement of wheat seed

was 53600 tons and the corresponding supply was 20110 tons. But in case of wheat seed, requirement and supply has been decreasing remarkably may be due to diversion of wheat area to other high value crops. Supply of maize seed was nearly equal to the requirement of about 6000 tons annually. The supply of maize seed is quite high mainly because of hybrid seeds which are imported by private sector seed companies. Only 1883 tons of vegetable seeds were supplied by the formal system against the requirement of 2266 tons per year. Although a very small quantity of pulse seed was supplied by BADC but sometimes the seed is remained unsold. The maximum quantity of pulse seed is used by farmers' own saved poor quality seed. Requirement of pulse seeds was 43136 tons of which 2794 tons were supplied by the formal sectors. Requirement of oil seeds was 15319 tons and the supply was only 2383 tons. About 1883 tons of vegetable seeds were supplied by the formal system, the requirement was 2266 tons. The supply of seed potato was 108654 tons against the requirement of 924525 tons. Out of the total supplied seed potato BADC provided 40000 tons. Many farmers buy jute seed, as this seed is difficult to preserve with their own initiative. The area of jute cultivation is decreasing, as its cultivation is not profitable in the context of emergence and increased popularity of synthetic fiber. As a result the requirement of jute seed might also be decreasing in the future.

Hybrids of maize have been made available by private sector seed merchants. Maize hybrid seed production has also been started by the private sector in a limited scale collecting parent lines from the multinational companies. The requirement of hybrid maize seed has gained its momentum due to the growth of poultry sector which is greatly contributing consumption of large quantities of maize grain as feed. The maize area has been increased many-fold because farmers are economically benefited by getting higher per unit yield due to use of hybrid maize

seed imported by private companies. Recently locally hybrid rice seed production has got momentum and around 68% of the total required quantity are supplied from the local production.

The Seed Replacement Rate (SRR) to be considered for assessment of seed requirement.



*Sapling*



*Seed bed*

Seed replacement rate is around 25-35% in rice which is higher (55%) in wheat. In case of maize, the seed replacement rate is maximum which is more than 99% as the farmers used to buy hybrid seeds of this crop from the seed companies. The seed replacement rate is steady in case of vegetables. 29-36% of the total requirement of seed is replaced by

the quality seeds supplied by the seed organization. The productivity in agriculture will increase many-fold if bad seeds are replaced by the good one. The farmers will be very encouraged and benefited by replacement of the bad seeds by the good ones. It may be mentioned here that, the seed replacement rate has increased greatly with the introduction of hybrid seeds particularly maize, vegetables and rice. The seed replacement rate is also considerably increased in jute and wheat mainly because of availability of quality seeds of improved varieties. Since the quality of farmer's saved seed is poor, the availability of quality seed will not only improve seed replacement rate but also help saving of seeds by using lower seed rate. The seed replacement rate of oilseeds like mustard, groundnut and soybean are considered to be much higher mainly because of making availability of quality seeds of these crops by public sector seed enterprise the BADC. The seed replacement rate of potato is also high due to supply of sufficient quantity of quality seed potato by both public and private sectors. Once the farmers get the seeds of high yielding variety from the seed organizations, they cultivate it, produce seed and store for reuse in the next season. Most of them rarely come for replacement of the seed stock until the yield potential of that variety declined remarkably. The advanced big farmers sometimes contact the seed organization for replacement of their seed stock by the good seeds or the seeds of new variety.

So it is important to quantify the exact figures of cultivable land under different crops, total requirement of seeds, marketable seeds, actual demand of BADC seed, seeds provided by seed companies including import, reasons of seeds for being unsold, constraints of using quality seeds etc. To assess the requirement of seeds and to find out the problems on using quality seeds a project to be taken necessarily under the guidance of Ministry of Agriculture involving BADC, SCA, DAE, AIS and BSA (Bangladesh Seed Association). On completion of the project a full-fledged seed related national data bank to be developed having data from the project ready information.

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## **Gaur: Last Surviving Wild Cattle of Bangladesh**

**Professor Dr. A N M Aminoor Rahman**

Once they roamed from the northern sal forest to the sal forests of greater Mymensingh, Comilla and Noakhali, and evergreen hill forests of Sylhet, Chittagong, Chittagong hill tracts and even up to Teknaf. I read in a book that the last surviving member of these huge ruminant animals was killed by the Pakistani soldiers during the liberation war of 1971. Of course, experts have considerable disagreement with this information. However, some biologist believed that they might have been extirpated long time ago from the country due to increased poaching, habitat destruction and disease transmission from domestic cattle. Surprisingly, these very rare and huge animals are not extirpated and still surviving in the south-western mountains of Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh.



*Camera trap picture of a Gaur cow with its calf in Sangu-Matamuhuri Wildlife Sanctuary courtesy CCA*

The Creative Conservation Alliance (CCA), a non-government organization dedicated to ecological and cultural preservation within Bangladesh's last remaining wild places, is working in Sangu-Matamuhuri valley (A critical part of the international Indo-Burma Biodiversity Hotspot- the most threatened Biodiversity Hotspot in the world- these remaining forest offer a refuge of over 26 globally threatened wildlife species) of Banderban since 2011 for the improvement of the livelihood of local Mro tribal people as well as conservation of local wildlife and their habitats. The CCA is achieving conservation success through partnership with government and non-government stakeholders, provision of alternative income sources of the local communities, rigorous scientific research, and the sustainable protection of natural resources. While working with the Mro community, wildlife researcher Shahriar Cesar Rahman, the chief executive officer of CCA came to know about these huge ruminants those were known as 'Cherong' in Mro language. However, he never encountered these animals and there were no scientific evidence that they still exist. Later, they explored that area several times, and found footprints and dung of these animals in the forest floor. They also found skulls in the local village huts.

In 2015, they distributed few camera traps and GPS device to local Mro community members and trained them how to use these devices. Finally, photographs of a Cherong cow with its calf were captured one night with the camera trap. Since 2015 till date through the camera trap at least photographs of 15 individual Cherong in different areas of Sangu-Matamuhuri valley were captured. According to local Mro people there could be 50-60 Cherong in that area. Although sightings of these animals were reported sometimes from different areas of the country (especially, Durgapur of Netrokona, Zinaigati of Sherpur and bordering forests of Choddogram of Comilla), in the early 1980s which might have crossed the country from bordering India. Some experts believed that they



A sub-adult Gaur inside Sangu-Matamuhuri Wildlife Sanctuary  
courtesy CCA

might have also crossed the country from Mizoram and Tripura of India. However, none were seen in Pablakhali wildlife sanctuary of Rangamati hill tracts since the early 1970s. Therefore, they were considered as extirpated from the country. These recent camera trap photographs not only confirmed their existence in Bangladesh, but photographs of bull, cow, calf and sub-adult Cherongs also indicates that they breed in that area and are resident species. Reports of their existence were also

known from Kassalong reserve forest of Rangamati a few years ago.

The incidences of these extremely rare Chorong that I just told is the Gaur, the only surviving wild cattle of Bangladesh. The species is now considered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as critically endangered in Bangladesh and vulnerable in the rest of the world on the IUCN Red List. Gaur is the tallest and largest wild cattle that belongs to the order Cetartiodactyla and family Bovidae which scientifically named as *Bos gaurus*. A number of subspecies of Gaur have been described, but currently only three



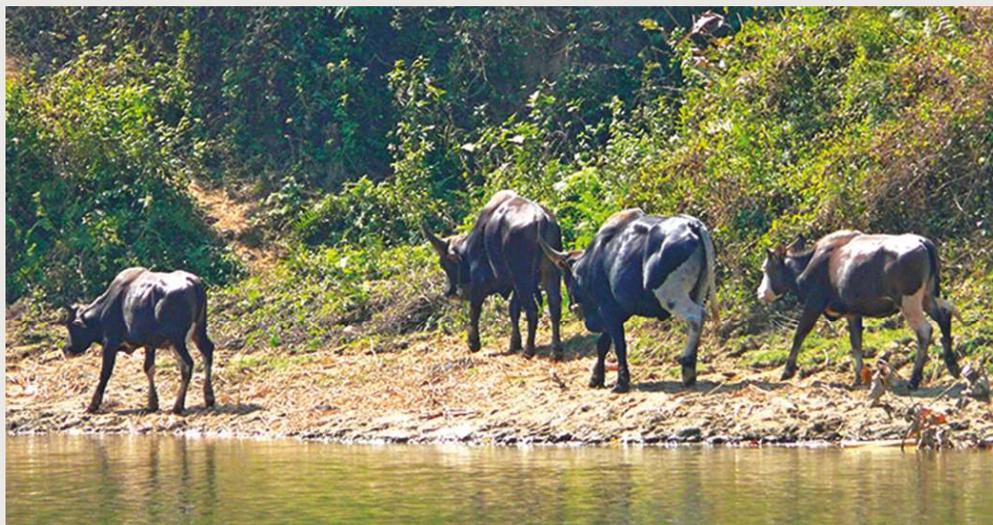
*An adult Gaur inside Sangu-Matamuhuri Wildlife Sanctuary  
courtesy CCA*

subspecies are recognized namely *Bos gaurus gaurus* occurs in Bangladesh, India and Southern Nepal; *B. g. laosensis* ranges in Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Southern China; and *B. g. hubbacki* in Thailand and Malaysia. However, further research is required to precisely determine the taxonomy of this species. Gaur is known as Indian bison by the Europeans although the species has little resemblance with bison except for the hump. Rather the species resembles American bison of the Prairie region if looked at from a distance. The Malayan Gaur is known as Seladang, and the Burmese one is called Pyoung. According to the trusted sources, there was a second wild cattle roaming on the south-eastern mountains of Bangladesh named Banteng (*Bos banteng* or *Bos javanicus*) that extirpated from the country some 60-70 years ago. Another Gaur-like or similar looking tamed cattle known as the Gayal is reared in different areas of Chittagong and Chittagong hill tracts. Because of this tamed cattle Gayal people became little bit confused with the term 'wild cattle'. In India Gayal is known as Mythun or Mithan.

Some authors consider the Gayal as the domesticated form of Gaur, while others treat them as a separate species *Bos frontalis*, because Gaur cannot be tamed. Although some authors consider them as the natural species, others disagree as descriptions of the Gayal came from the domesticated form. Again some authors considered them as the domesticated descendant of some extinct wild cattle or crossbreed between Gaur and domestic cattle of Chittagong hill tracts. In majority

of the cases, as Gayal are offspring of domesticated hill cattle, therefore, even though physically they resemble Gaur but behaviourally they are quite different, very gentle. According to other sources, some Gayal might have escaped and lost in the forest, and lost contact with humans and became habituated with the forested environment, therefore, might adapted behaviour like Gaur. Previously, there were disputes among scientist whether the Gayal is a wild cattle species and whether origin of Gaur and Gayal is same? The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (2003) ruled that the name for this wild species is not invalid by virtue of being antedated by the name based on the domestic form. Therefore, IUCN considers the wild species of Gaur under *Bos gaurus*, while referring to the domestic form Mythun, Mithan or Gayal as *Bos frontalis*.

Gaur is one of the most attractive cattle species in the world from the view of size, structure, beauty and rarity. By most standards of measurements, Gaur is the largest living wild bovid today. Only elephants, rhinos, the hippopotamus and the giraffe consistently grow heavier. However, the shorter-legged, bulkier wild water buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*) is similar in average body mass, if not maximum weight. The head-and-body length of this strong and massively built bodied gaur is 250-330 centimeter (cm) with a 70-105 cm long tail, and is 165-220 cm high at the shoulder, averaging about 168 cm in cows and 188 cm in bulls. Bulls are about one-fourth larger and heavier than cows. Body weight ranges from 600-1,000 kilogram (kg) in bulls and 440-700 kg in cows. They have a distinct ridge running from the shoulders to the middle of the back; the shoulders may be as much as 12 cm higher than the rump. The neck, throat and dewlap are shorter compared to Gayal. Both sexes have horns, which are 60-115 cm in length. The horns grow from the sides of the head, curving upwards. Between the horns is a high convex ridge on the forehead. The horns of bull grow out and up and have thick basal diameters. On the other hand, the horns of cow are more slender and upright, with more inward curvature, and the frontal ridge is scarcely perceptible. In calf and sub-adults the horns are smooth and polished. In old bulls they are rugged and



*Gayal in natural environment at BLRI station, Naikkhanchory, Bandarban*



*Gayal family at Bangladesh National Zoo, Mirpur, Dhaka*

dented at the base. The tip of the horn is black. Yellow hair at the base of the horns contrasts with adult dark body colour. The ears are very large and the tail is shorter than in the typical oxen, reaching only to the hocks. The hair is short, fine and glossy. The hooves are narrow and pointed. New-born Gaur calf is light golden-yellow which soon changes to fawn, then to light brown, and so to coffee or reddish brown, the colour of young bulls and cows. Old bulls are jet black and their bodies are almost hairless. Upper part of the head, from above the eyes to the nape of the neck, is, however, ashy grey, or occasionally dirty white. The muzzle is paler, and the lower part of the legs are pure white or tan.

On the other hand, Gayal are strong and beautiful like Gaur. They look similar to Gaur from a distance. Although they have similar structure, they are different from Gaur by having shorter legs. Unlike Gaur, Gayal has less prominent dorsal hump which only extend up to one-third of the back. The head is also shorter and the horns grow straight upward. The dewlap of Gayal is larger than Gaur and therefore, they look more like bison and hence called Chittagong bison. Body colour is more or less similar with Gaur. Unlike Gaur white stoking of their legs seldom extend up to the knee. Although, they are strong and hard-hearted like Gaur, they are never used for ploughing.

Gaur historically occurred throughout mainland South and Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, China, Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia, Myanmar, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal. Today, the species is seriously fragmented within its range, and regionally extinct in Sri Lanka. They are largely confined to evergreen forests or semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests, but also occur in deciduous forest areas at the periphery of their range. But in Bangladesh they are only found in the mixed evergreen hill forest of Kassalong Reserve Forest of Rangamati and Sangu-Matamuhuri Wildlife Sanctuary of Banderban. Gaur habitat is characterized by large, relatively undisturbed forest tracts, hilly terrain below an altitude of 1,500-1,800 meter. Home range size varies according to sex, season, locality and herd size which is larger during wet than in dry season. These terrestrial animals are primarily nocturnal, active mainly at dawn and dusk. During the day they stay hidden in forest or high grasses to ruminate. They live in herd of 3-40 individuals. Herds usually contain one adult

bull, several cows and juveniles. Other bulls may form bachelor herds, or if advanced in age, become solitary. The oldest cow leads the herd to foraging locations and the dominant bulls play a defensive role. Gaur are by nature shy and timid animals. Massive size and an acute sense of smell is their defence. They produce a distinct smell which probably repels the insects.

Gaur are both grazers and browsers; they browse more than other species of wild cattle. They are reportedly eating mostly young green grasses but also leaves, fruit, twigs, and bark of various woody species, as well as coarse dry grasses, and bamboo. It seems that they are able to maintain good health on relatively low quality feed. At least 180-190 species of plants have been recorded in their diet. Although, water availability throughout the year is particularly important for drinking, they do not seem to bathe or wallow. Mineral licks and mineral rich



*Gayal cow at Bangabandhu Safari Park, Dula Hazra, Cox's Bazar*

springs are important requirements for them. Gaur may debark trees due to shortages of preferred food. When alarmed they make a whistling snort, and a low, cow-like moo. Bulls have two additional calls. The first is the herd call, which halts the herd and brings it together. The second is a roaring that can last for hours during mating periods.

Gaur cows are polyestrous and reproduction can occur at any time of the year, but most commonly during December to June. During the breeding season, unattached bulls wander widely in search of receptive females. No serious fighting

between bulls has been recorded, with size being the major factor in determining dominance. Bulls make a mating call of clear, resonant tones which may carry for more than 1.66 km. The estrous cycle of cow is 3 weeks long, and estrus lasts for 1-4 days. Gestating cows leave the herd during parturition. After 270-280 days of gestation cows give birth usually one calf (or occasionally two). New born calf weigh about 23 kg. Calves are typically weaned after 7-12 months. Cows have a calving interval of 12-15 months between births. Female calf become sexually mature at 2-3 years of age. In the wild, Gaur can survive 8-10 years, but longevity in captivity ranges from 24-30 years.

The current global population of Gaur is estimated to be 13,000-30,000 individuals, with a dramatic decline nearly all across its range due to unprecedented growth of human population in South-East Asia. Decline factors include poaching, habitat alteration and destruction, competition for food resources and disease transmission, especially rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease, from domestic cattle. Although conservation and management plans for Gaur are implemented in many countries but this has not yet been implemented in Bangladesh. Long-term survival and conservation of these wild ruminants depend on the availability of preferred plant species for food. Hence, protection of the historically preferred habitats used by Gaur is a significant factor in conservation biology. Therefore, measures should be taken to protect them and their habitats as soon as possible in the south-eastern hill forest of Bangladesh.

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## Trees of low-lying areas needed for environment and economic benefit

A.T.M. Nurul Islam

Now, the emerging lesson is that we must attach importance and care to bring these areas under tree cover in order to sustain environment and for economic benefit. FAO suggests that any country should have 25% of its land under vegetation: But our demarcated forest land is limited to only 15% and tree cover stands only on 9%-10% land. So, we may choose the suitable species for the low-lying areas with a view to bringing more areas under vegetation. Among many of these, the following species may be planted.

**Kalakoroi** : A large deciduous tree with spreading crown. The tree thrives on a variety of soils. It prefers moist condition and grows well on any soil. It can stand periodic flooding and tolerate water stagnation for several days. Wood is generally



*Koroi tree*

**B**angladesh is a small country having a land mass of about 14.4 million hectares of which 2.2 million hectares are under forests. The forests areas amount to 15% of the total land. However, only 0.93 million hectare is under tree cover (Islam and etal) The forests areas are distributed in the eastern and south eastern hills, central terraces and in the south western mangroves. The village forests composed of woodlot and other multipurpose fast growing trees, bamboos, canes, shrubs etc. are estimated to be 0.27 million hectare. Besides, these the vast area of the country is lack of forests and 80% of it is flood plain. On an average 25% land are flood prone in a normal hydrological year and this may increase upto 39% when there is huge rainfall in and beyond the country.

brown to dark brown in colour. The wood is used for building construction, furniture, agricultural implements, transport bodies, railway sleepers, construction of bridges etc. young leaves are good fodder. It is easily propagated by seeds.

**Sadakoroi** : It is a tall handsome and sub deciduous tree. It grows well on alluvial soils and moist places. It is light demanding and drought Tolerant. It can tolerate inundation for several days. It can be raised from seeds

and grows readily from cuttings. Wood is light brown to golden brown or dark brown with darker streaks and moderately hard. It is used for house posts, agricultural implements, furniture, construction of bridges etc. leaf is a medium fodder to cattle.

**Kadam:-** A large deciduous tree with cylindrical stem and horizontal branches. It prefers moist, loamy soils, grows in swampy ground it is propagated by seeds. Wood is moderately hard and heavy. It is an excellent tea box wood. leaves are to some extent fodder for cattle. Fruts are eaten by cattle and by birds.



*Kadam apperars in the rainy season*

**Hijal :** It is a small to medium sized tree. It grows normally on the banks of water edge, moist places and on swamps. Generally propagated through seeds. Wood is used for boat building, cabinet making and other purposes leaves are used as cattle fodder. Tender leaves are edible.

**Oriam :** It is a large tree usually with spreading crown. Generally grows on moist soils and swamps. Stands moderate shade and water logging. Generally propagated by seeds. Wood is durable particularly under water and are used for bridge, building construction and other purposes. It is a good fuel wood.



*Chalta, an indegenous fruit*

**Chalta :** An evergreen tree of about 10-20 m. tall, stem often buttressed at the base with spreading crown. Generally planted in homesteads. It thrives best in damp situation. The

plant is propagated through seeds. Wood is moderately heavy and hard. The fleshy sepals surrounding the fruit have a pleasant acid taste and are eaten either raw or cooked.



Local variety of Olive

**Jalpai (Olive) :** An evergreen tree of about 10-18 m tall and cultivated around the homesteads. The tree can stand periodic flooding. Propagation may be done by seeds. Wood can be used to a limited extent as a box wood and panels. The fruit is cooked with pulse etc and pickled.



Shimul, a cotton tree

**Simul :** A medium sized deciduous tree, covered with conical prickles. It can be conveniently propagated by branch cutting and also through seeds. Wood is soft and light. Roots are believed to possess medicinal properties. Fibers attached to seeds are used for filling pillow and cushion. Timber is used for match box making, picture and slate frames etc. leaves together with twigs and flowers are used as fodder.

**Jarul :** A large deciduous tree. It grows in swamps and in marshy places. It is also planted in road sides. Propagated by seeds. Wood is used in buildings, planking, beam, posts, doors, ship buildings, boat making, agricultural implements and rain way sleepers etc.

**Rain tree :** It is a medium sized to large size tree with a spreading crown and thrives in a wide variety of soils and water edge. It is easily propagated from both seeds and cuttings. The tree is fast growing and can tolerate prolonged stagnation. Timber is used for making furniture and other carpentry works. It is a good fuel crop. The young pods are eaten by cattle.

**Arjun:** A medium to large sized deciduous tree and grows well in alluvial soils. It propagates easily through seed. The species can successfully be raised by means of stumps. Wood is used for making carts and agricultural implements Bark is used for medicinal purposes. Leaf is used in rural areas to control silkworm. Dry powdered bark is used in heart disease.



*Jarul tree*



*Arjun tree*

**Jogyya dumur** : A large deciduous tree and generally found in the plain land. Thrives well in moist soils and water edge. It can stand periodic flooding. Propagated by seeds and it can be lopped. The wood is light and soft. Fruits are edible and cooked as vegetables. Fruits have also medicinal value. Wood is used as fuel. Leaves and fruits are used as cattle fodder.



*Dumur (fig) tree*

**Jam (Black berry)** : A large evergreen tree. It is found in a variety of situation but most preferably in moist places. It can stand prolonged stagnation. It can easily be propagated by seeds and stumps. Fruits are edible and eaten by diabolic patient. Leaves are often used as fodder. Timber is hard and used for carpentry works.

These trees sequester carbon di oxide along with other Green House Gases to a good extent and thereby may conserve environment sustainable. This vegetation has environmental, economic and medicinal importance. They are good wood for furniture, fuel, construction of bridges, ships boats etc. The vegetation shelters birds, insects and wild animals and these elements have positive contribution to environment.



*Kalojam: Local variety of black berry*

So, for the sake of environment and economy, we should cultivate trees in a massive way in the low-lying areas. Therefore, with greater time, affluence and mobility more and more people may involve themselves in a wider scale for planting trees in the low-lying areas of Bangladesh. So, the sooner we do this, the better for us.

**A.T.M. Nurul Islam,**  
*Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Dhaka*

## Major National Events

April-June

2 April 2018

**Stand by people with autism: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 2 described people with autism as an integral part of society, calling upon all to stand by them to uncover their hidden talents.

‘Don’t neglect people with autism ... they are an integral part of our society, she told the inaugural function of the 11th World Autism Awareness Day at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka.

The Prime Minister mentioned that they had numerous talents which were absent among many people with sound health. ‘We’ll have to create the scope so that their talents can flourish, she added.

The ministry of social affairs arranged the function with social affairs minister Rashed Khan Menon in the chair.

The premier said that Saima Wazed received the recognition of Autism Champion of South Asia from the World Health Organisation for her special contributions to autism awareness and public health.

Referring to a resolution adopted in the United Nation General Assembly unanimously, she said that Saima had a very strong and active role in this regard.

She said that Saima had brightened Bangladesh’s image in the international arena as the president of an international jury board and as a member of the World Health Organisation’s expert advisory panel on mental health. *Source: The New Age*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina awarded the autistic children as a recognition of their merit in different fields in a programme marking World Autism Awareness Day at Bangabandhu International Convention Centre in the capital on April 2*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visiting a stall at the 6th National SME Fair 2018 after inaugurating it at BCIC in the capital on April 4

**4 April 2018**

**Govt to set up SME advisory centres in all dists, upazilas: PM**

The government will establish Small & Medium Enterprise (SME) advisory centres in all districts and Upazillas to provide one-stop service to the entrepreneurs.

This was disclosed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 4 in a written speech while inaugurating the five-day 6th National SME Fair at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city.

The Prime Minister said as a driving force of global economy, SMEs are very important for a developing country like Bangladesh for economic development, industrialisation, generation of employment and poverty eradication.

SME Foundation and Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) jointly arranged the fair.

The PM said Bangladesh is now the 44th biggest economy in the world. "At present, our per capita income is USD 1752. The amount of foreign exchange reserves has crossed US\$ 33 billion. The GDP growth increased to 7.65 per cent."

She said Bangladesh is now exporting 750 products to 199 countries and the export target has been set at US\$ 41 billion for the current fiscal year. "The export earnings will reach US\$ 60 billion by 2021." *Source: The Financial Express*

**5 April 2018**

**Spread true teachings of Islam**

Describing Islam as a religion of peace, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 5 stressed the need for real teaching of Islam in the country.

"We want Bangladesh to be built with a non-communal spirit. The people of all

faiths will practise their own religious rituals properly. This is the principle of Islam,” she said.

The Prime Minister was inaugurating construction works of nine model mosques and Islamic cultural centres in different places of the country through a videoconference from her official residence Ganobhaban in Dhaka.

The nine mosques and centres are being constructed under a project titled “Establishment of a total of 560 Model Mosques and Islamic Cultural Centers in each District and Upazila”.

“We want the image of our holy religion to be upheld. Islam is a religion of peace. We want the peace to prevail,” she said, adding that the dignity of Islam is being defamed by killing innocent people and carrying out militant and terrorist acts in the name of the holy religion.

The Prime Minister reiterated that there will be no place for militancy, terrorism and drug on Bangladesh soil. “We want everyone here to live in peace and have socio-economic progress.” *Source: The Daily Star*

**9 April 2018**

### **PM hopeful of solving Teesta issue with India**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on April 9 she was hopeful of solving the pending Teesta water sharing issue with India as Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Keshav Gokhale paid a courtesy call on her.

"We've resolved many problems. Now one problem remains to be resolved is Teesta issue," Premier's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim quoted her as saying while briefing reporters after the meeting at the PM's Jatiya Sangsad Office.

According to Karim, Gokhale, on the other hand, said Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to fulfill all the commitments with Bangladesh. "We're monitoring all the projects with Bangladesh," the Indian foreign secretary said.

The top bureaucrat of India's foreign ministry simultaneously conveyed the Bangladesh premier of New Delhi's allout efforts to stand by Dhaka in resolving the Rohingya crisis.

He said India would continue to urge Myanmar to take back its nationals from Bangladesh.

According to Karim the premier sought mounting Indian pressure on Myanmar for Rohingya repatriation. *Source: The Financial Express*

**12 April 2018**

### **410 MW Bheramara Power Plant inaugurated**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina renewed on April 12 her call to the countrymen to be economical in using electricity.

She also said consumers are getting electricity at a very lower price due to government subsidy in this sector.

"You'll have to be economical in using electricity ... we want that the people to use it properly," PM said

"It needs huge money to produce power, but we don't charge the actual price of its generation from consumers; we give subsidy," she said.



*Bheramara 410 MW combined cycle power plant inaugurated on April 12*

The Prime Minister said this while inaugurating the 410 megawatt capacity combined cycle power plant at Bheramara in Kushtia and hundred per cent electrification in 15 upazilas through a videoconference from her official residence Ganobhaban. *Source: The Financial Express*

**14 April 2018**

**Nation celebrates Pahela Boishakh**

Pahela Boishakh, the first day of Bangla calendar, was celebrated amid traditional festivities and enthusiasm across the country on April 14.



*'Mangal Shovajatra', organised by Institute of Fine Arts welcoming Bangla New Year 1425, in the capital on April 14*

The festivities began at dawn with the artistes from Chhayanaut welcoming the day with Tagore's famous song 'Esho hey Boishakh, esho, esho (come O Boishakh, come)' under the banyan tree at the Ramna Park.

People of all walks of life gathered at different popular spots since the dawn in the

city and elsewhere across the country to welcome the Bangla New Year, 1425.

The day was a public holiday.

Thousands of people, especially the youths wearing traditional dresses, thronged traditional venues at different parts of the capital, including Ramna Park, Suhrawardy Udyan, Central Shaheed Minar, Dhaka University, Shahbagh, Dhanmondi Lake, Hatirjheel and different other spots to celebrate the day.

Traders and shopkeepers across the country opened 'Halkhata' (new book of accounts) and entertained customers and visitors with sweets on the first day of the New Year as part of the tradition and culture.

Students of the Institute of Fine Arts of Dhaka University brought out '*Mangal Shobhajatra*' (procession of good wishes) around 10 am as part of the festival.

*Source: The Financial Express*

**17 April 2018**

### **Mujibnagar Day observed**

The nation on April 17 observed the historic Mujibnagar Day with a pledge to let the new generations know the real history of the Liberation War and make the people reap the benefits of democracy.

The day was observed through different programmes across the country highlighting significance of the memories of this day in 1971 when the nation witnessed the oath-taking of the country's first government.

On the occasion of the day, on behalf of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Awami League general secretary and road transport and bridges minister Obaidul Quader paid rich tributes to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing a wreath at his portrait in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi in the capital.

The government took elaborate programmes in Mujibnagar and capital Dhaka to mark the day. The programme began with the hoisting of the national flag at dawn atop the memorial monument at Mujibnagar. *Source: The New Age*

**17 April 2018**

### **Make women empowerment cornerstone of future society: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 17 underlined the need for building a future where world peace and women empowerment will remain the cornerstone to create a peaceful society free from poverty and discrimination.

'We want to build a future where world peace and



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses a plenary session of Commonwealth Women's Forum in London on April 17*

women empowerment remain the cornerstone to create a society free from poverty, discrimination and conflict,' she said while delivering her keynote speech at a discussion on 'Educate to empower: Making equitable and quality primary and secondary education a reality for girls across the Commonwealth'.

The Commonwealth Women's Forum organised the programme at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre.

The Prime Minister mentioned that education for all will remain Bangladesh's prime objective towards achieving the overarching policy visions of inclusive development with the guiding norm of sustainable development goals. 'We foresee a future where women and men work hand in hand for achieving human development.'

Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh's national plans and policies, including the 7th five-year plan, are geared towards that end.

She said ensuring quality education for girls and boys by 2030 is also the priority task and commitment of her government. *Source: The New Age*

**18 April 2018**

**PM for inclusive trade regime among C'wealth states**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina advocated on April 18 for open, transparent and inclusive trade regime among Commonwealth states to tap the potentials of 60 per cent young population of the countries.

"Sixty percent of the Commonwealth population is under the age of 30. Our



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took part in Asia Leaders Round Table at Guild Hall in London on April 18*

people are our biggest assets. The Association must be able to tap the huge pool of talents to drive intra-Commonwealth trade, investment and creative energy. For that we must pursue the objectives of increasing growth and creating jobs...we should ensure that the trade regime remains open, rules-based, transparent, inclusive and fair," she said.

The Prime Minister said this while addressing an event of the Commonwealth Business Forum at Guild Hall.

The event titled 'Asian Leaders Roundtable: Can Asia Keep Growing?' was moderated by Standard Chartered India CEO Zarin Daruwala.

The PM said now Intra-Commonwealth trade is estimated to stand at little more than US dollar 600 billion. The 53 Commonwealth members account for 16 per cent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), whereas 28 countries of the

European Union account for 19 per cent of the global GDP. *Source: The Financial Express*

**19 April 2018**

### **PM joins opening ceremony of 25th CHOGM in London**

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joined the heads of governments of Commonwealth nations as Queen Elizabeth-II opened their 25th summit welcoming the leaders to "my own home" at Buckingham Palace.

London hosts the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) for the first time in 20 years, a move seen as a chance for Britain to reconnect with its former colonies.

"Commonwealth is growing stronger year by year . . . I believe we'll secure a safer



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other Commonwealth leaders posing for photograph with Britain's Queen Elizabeth II at the formal opening of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) at Buckingham Palace in London on April 19*

and more prosperous and sustainable world for the future generation," the Queen said while declaring open the meet with its theme being "Towards a Common Future". *Source: The Financial Express*

**21 April 2018**

### **Sheikh Hasina on Time's list of 100 most influential people**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been included in the US-based Time Magazine's list of the world's 100 most influential people of 2018.

The international magazine put the Bangladesh premier on its annual high- status list of 100 most powerful people for her globally acclaimed humanitarian role under difficult circumstances in sheltering more than one million forcibly displaced Rohingya people who fled violence in their homeland in Myanmar.

The list, published online on April 19, also includes US President Donald Trump, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

The magazine also published an article on Sheikh Hasina acknowledging her unmatched humanitarian role in taking the challenges of sheltering Rohingyas without any fear.

"Bearing the legacy of her father, who led Bangladesh's Liberation War, Hasina has never been afraid of a fight," Meenakshi Ganguly, the South Asia director for Human Rights Watch, writes in the article.

Referring to the huge influx of Rohingyas that began last August to escape atrocities by the Myanmar army, Ganguly noted that as an impoverished country, Bangladesh had not welcomed massive influxes, but Sheikh Hasina accepted the humanitarian challenge and did not turn back the traumatised victims of ethnic cleansing.

Ganguly in the article also recalled Hasina's strong position against military regimes in 1990s and in 2008 to restore democracy in Bangladesh that also brought her the landslide victory in the following national election. *Source: The Financial Express*

**24 April 2018**

### **Md. Abdul Hamid takes oath as President for 2nd consecutive term**

President Md. Abdul Hamid took oath on April 24 as the head of state for the second consecutive term at a ceremony at Bangabhaban in the evening.

Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury administered his oath of office in the presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, among other dignitaries, at the Darbar Hall of Bangabhaban. The ceremony saw Md. Abdul Hamid signing the oath of office on the Darbar Hall's dais after he was sworn in while the cabinet secretary conducted the function.

A veteran politician and parliamentarian, Hamid appeared as the country's 21st President, 77 days after the Election Commission declared him elected to the



*President Md. Abdul Hamid taking oath for the second consecutive term administered by Speaker Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury at Bangabhaban in the capital on April 24*

presidency unopposed for the highest office. He was elected to parliament for seven times since the 1971 independence. Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, parliamentary opposition leader Raushan Ershad, cabinet members and premier's advisers, among others, witnessed the ceremony. *Source: The Financial Express*

**27 April 2018**

**PM receives Global Women's Leadership Award in Sydney**



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receiving the Global Women's Leadership Award at a ceremony in Sydney of Australia on April 27*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 27 called for mobilizing a new global alliance to promote women rights and empowerment as she was conferred with Global Women's Leadership Award for her outstanding contribution to their cause. "We have to forge a new alliance to support the women and uphold their rights. Together, we must act on our shared culture, tradition and values to benefit millions of women in need," she said while receiving the award at a Gala Dinner of the Global Summit of Women 2018.

Sheikh Hasina received the prestigious accolade from Global Summit of Women President Irene Natividad amid thunderous clapping of nearly 1500 women leaders from across the globe who joined the summit.

The US-based Global Summit of Women conferred the award on the Prime Minister for her outstanding contribution in women's education and entrepreneurship in Bangladesh.

A video documentary on the political life of Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh's economic progress and different steps taken by her government for women empowerment was screened earlier. *Source: The Financial Express*

**30 April 2018**

**BD wants China, Russia, India, Japan to help resolve Rohingya crisis: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on April 30 Bangladesh expects China, Russia, India and Japan to play a major role in resolving the Rohingya crisis.

"We expect China, Russia, India and Japan to play a major role in resolving the crisis," she said.



15-member UN Security Council delegation called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban in the capital on April 30

The Prime Minister said this while the visiting UNSC delegation, led by its President Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, met her at her official residence Ganobhaban.

The PM urged the international community to continue mounting strong pressure on the Myanmar government to take back their over one million Rohingya nationals from Bangladesh.

"Myanmar should act in accordance with the agreement they have signed with Bangladesh (regarding the repatriation of the Rohingyas)," she said.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the 45th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers on May 5

Sheikh Hasina appreciated the international community as they extended help and support to Bangladesh in this crisis.

She also put emphasis on implementation of the Kofi Annan Commission recommendations on the Rohingya issue. *Source: The Financial Express*

**5 May 2018**

### **Put pressure on Myanmar to take back Rohingya**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged on May 5 the OIC countries to put pressure on Myanmar to ensure safe and dignified return of the Rohingya.

"OIC (Organisation of

Islamic Cooperation) must continue to put pressure on Myanmar to ensure that Myanmar will repatriate the Rohingya who are their citizens with proper safety in line with the arrangement signed between Myanmar and Bangladesh."

Addressing the inaugural session of the 45th Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the OIC in Dhaka, the Prime Minister noted that Bangladesh gave shelter to the around 1.1 million Rohingya who were forced to leave their homeland in Myanmar, on humanitarian ground.

"We have opened both our conscience and border for the distressed humanity," Hasina said, adding that she realised the pain of the Rohingya who were forced to leave their homeland because she herself was forced to live in exile for six years after the assassination of her father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"I am requesting the OIC to stand firmly by Rohingyas so that their dignity and security can be ensured," she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

**6 May 2018**

### **PM for hundred per cent literacy to build poverty-free Bangladesh**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the government will ensure hundred per cent literacy to build poverty and hunger-free Bangladesh.

She said the country needs many golden sons in the coming days to build the 'Golden Bengal' of Bangabandhu.

The PM made the comments while addressing a function at her Ganobhaban residence in the city on May 6, marking publication of the SSC and equivalent examinations results of ten education boards.

The PM said peace and security at all levels of the society is the most important prerequisite to country's development.

She urged all to make their efforts to establish peace and security in the society saying one day Bangladesh will emerge as a developed country as its independence earned at the cost of huge blood cannot go in vein. *Source: The Financial Express*

**7 May 2018**

### **Cabinet approves anti-dowry law**

The Cabinet approved on May 7 the draft of 'The Dowry Prohibition Bill, 2018' incorporating a new provision of punishment for filing any false case.

The approval came at the cabinet meeting held at Prime Minister's Office with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiul Alam briefed reporters at the Secretariat after the meeting.

As per the new provision (Section-5) of the proposed draft law, the punishment for filing any false case will be maximum five years' imprisonment or maximum Tk 50,000 as fine or both, said the Cabinet Secretary.

He said another provision has been changed only to specify the amount of monetary punishment for demanding or giving dowry in the proposed law as no specific financial punishment is mentioned in the existing law.

According to the provision, he said, if any person demanding or giving dowry will

have to face maximum five years' imprisonment, which will not be less than one year's jail term or maximum Tk 50,000 as fine or both. *Source: The Financial Express*

**8 May 2018**

### **Double rail line to boost trade with Nepal and Bhutan**

The government will build a 217-kilometre double rail line from Khulna to Darshana with an aim to boost trade activities with Nepal and Bhutan using the Mongla port.

On May 8 meeting of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC), the Tk 3506 crore project for building the double rail line, alongside the existing single line, was approved. India will provide 77 percent of the total cost as loan.

The planning ministry proposal said the project aims to meet the demands of national, regional and international traffic by increasing transportability through Dhaka-Khulna and Khulna-Chilahati corridor of Bangladesh Railway, by removing existing limitations.

Following the meeting, Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said, after the Padma Bridge is completed, the rail line will be more important.

According to the planning ministry, after the rail line is set up through establishing rail connectivity with India, Nepal and Bhutan, the land-locked countries will have better access for trade.

At present, a 43 kilometre new rail line is being set up from Khulna to Mongla port with Indian soft loan, on completion of which direct rail connectivity with Mongla will be established with the neighbouring countries alongside local routes. *Source: The Daily Star*

**10 May 2018**

### **New era begins**

#### **Bangladesh's first satellite Bangabandhu-1 on its way to orbit**

The country's first communication satellite, Bangabandhu-1, is on its way to its orbital slot in space. With the launch of Bangabandhu-1, Bangladesh became the 57th country in the world and fourth in South Asia -- after India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka -- to have its own satellite in space.

The Falcon-9 rocket of SpaceX propelled the satellite into space at 2:14am Bangladesh time on May 10, from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

In a message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, "With this we entered a new era."

She thanked the satellite building and launching company, the governments and people of the US and France for their help. She also thanked Russia for renting its orbital slot to Bangladesh.

State owned Bangladesh Communication Satellite Company Ltd will operate the business of the Bangabandhu-1 and has already started the process of renting out capacity to Indonesia and the Philippines.

Bangabandhu-1, which costs Tk 2,765.66 crore, is expected to improve the Direct-to-Home (D2H) service, making people's access to worldwide TV entertainment easier. It will have 40 transponders -- 26 Ku band and 14 C band --



*Bangabandhu Satellite-1 was launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida on May 10*

and a number of them will be used for broadcasting TV channels.

The country's remote parts -- haors, hilly parts, coastal areas and deep-sea zones -- will get internet service from the satellite. It will also be helpful in distance learning and telemedicine services, said officials concerned. *Source: The Daily Star*

**10 May 2018**

### **Satellite to save, earn foreign currency**

Bangabandhu-1, the first satellite of Bangladesh scheduled to be launched after on May 10 midnight, is expected to save as well as earn foreign currency, said Sate Minister for ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak.

In a statement, Palak said Bangabandhu-1 is going to reduce Bangladeshi TV channels' dependence on satellites owned by foreign nations for their broadcasting services it will also help save valuable foreign currency. At present, Bangladesh spends Tk 14 million a year on renting foreign satellites.

The satellite is also expected to work as an alternative option for both data and telecommunication services, especially during emergency and natural disaster, according to the statement.

The satellite will be launched into orbit from the historical launch complex 39-A in Kennedy Space Centre; the one that was used to launch Apollo 11 to its mission to the Moon.

It has been built in Thales Alenia Space Facilities in France and was taken to Cape Canaveral launch pad in a special cargo plane after all the tests and reviews are completed. *Source: The Financial Express*

12 May 2018

### Satellite launch brings world respect : PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina says Bangladesh has earned the respect of the world by sending its first artificial satellite into orbit.

"We have received the highest respect of the world as an independent nation," she said at an event in the city on May 12 following the launch of the Bangabandhu satellite.

"The launch has been successful," Hasina said at an International Nurse's Day event in Mugda in the city, where she inaugurated the National Institute for Higher Education and Research in Nursing.

"Bangladesh now has a position among the stars."

Bangladesh is the 57th country in the world to reach orbit, she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

13 May 2018

### Army will be with people in running country

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed on May 13 the hope that the Army would be there with the mass people, whenever necessary, in running the country by the present government.

"This is my firm believe the Army will be there on the side of people whenever it will be needed for running the country by the present government...you have to keep in mind that this is our country and the people of this country are also ours," she said.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina going round the CMH Cancer Centre after inaugurating 27 projects of Bangladesh Army at the Dhaka Cantonment on May 13

The PM was addressing a programme arranged at Dhaka Cantonment marking the inauguration of 27 big and small development projects in various cantonments, including Dhaka and other areas of the country.

The Prime Minister also asked the Army to always



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina offered prayer after inauguration of National Institute for Higher Education and Research in Nursing in Mugda on May 12

remain alert to face any sort of threat from internal or external sources for protecting the country's sacred Constitution and its sovereignty.

She also highly praised Army's role in distribution of relief materials among Rohingyas, construction of shelter centres and providing medicare facilities to them and said their immense contributions have brightened the country's image abroad. *Source: The Financial Express*

**15 May 2018**

### **Help flourish inner potential of children**

President Md. Abdul Hamid on May 15 urged all including senior citizens, family, society and state to play a responsible role in ensuring rights of the children and help flourish their inner potential in a friendly environment.

“Build awareness on social and religious values simultaneously with their (children's) academic curriculum so that they remain free from superstitions and religious fanaticism,” he told the Jatiya Shishu Puroshkar Protijogita (National Children's Award Competition) 2018 at Bangladesh Shishu Academy Auditorium.

President also put emphasis on creating patriotism, moral values and sincerity in children and inspiring them to read more books, know about science, technology, arts, literature-culture and other extra-curricular activities.

Noting that physically-challenged children are a part and parcel of society, the president said, “Never consider them as the burden and help them return to the main stream of the society. Let them flourish their mental growth in all aspects.”

*Source: The Daily Star*



*President Md. Abdul Hamid hands over a medal to one of the winners of the National Children's Award Competition at the Bangladesh Shishu Academy on May 15*

15 May 2018

### **PM for inclusion of people with disabilities in development process**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged on May 15 the international community to put the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development and disaster risk management process.



"Bangladesh did it...we want all to do that," she said while inaugurating the three-day 2nd

*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visiting a stall at a fair organised on the occasion of 2nd International Conference on Disability and Disaster Risk Management after inaugurating it at the BICC in the capital on May 15*

international conference on Disability and Disaster Risk Management at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city.

The conference is aimed at giving policymakers, activists, experts, disabled persons and different stakeholders an opportunity to share progress and experiences on disability-inclusive implementation of the Sendai Framework.

Some 110 experts from 33 countries are attending the conference arranged by Disaster Management and Relief Ministry.

"We all are committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and its targets by 2030. We're implementing all the developmental activities, including disaster management for all people, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, excluded group like persons with disabilities," she said. *Source: Financial Express*

16 May 2018

### **PM asks police to provide proper service**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 16 urged the police force to provide proper service to people according to their expectation.

'We want to see that our people get proper service from police and for this we are determined to make a smart, professional and people-friendly police force,' she said.

The Prime Minister was addressing the passing-out parade of the 35th BCS batch of assistant superintendents of police (ASPs) at the Bangladesh Police Academy at Sarda.

She asked the new police officers for giving topmost priority to fundamental rights of the people, human rights and establishing rule of law while discharging their professional duties.

Mentioning various steps taken by her government for the development of Bangladesh Police force, the Prime Minister said some 46,000 posts were already

created against the government announcement of creating 50,000 posts. *Source: The NewAge*

**17 May 2018**

### **PM for Nuremberg trial system for war criminals**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid emphasis on May 17 on introducing Nuremberg trial system in the country where there will be no need for any witness against war criminals.

"There's no need for any witness for the trial of war criminals as documents are there. Justices in Nuremberg didn't take any witness, and that trial [process] is still there as the trial for war crimes in the World War II is going on. We can take that type of step in our country, too," she said.

The PM, also the chief of ruling Awami League, said this when the party leaders greeted her on the occasion of her Homecoming Day at her official residence Ganobhaban in the morning.

She said the witnesses to war crimes are facing attacks and torture. "I've received complaints of many such incidents and taken steps."

The Prime Minister said the attackers of witnesses will also be treated as war criminals. "They must face the same trial as war criminals...they must get the capital punishment," she said.

She urged Awami League leaders and activists to look after the witnesses to war crimes. "Make sure no one can torture them," she said.

After the country's independence, Hasina said, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman wanted to build the country and he got engaged in massive development work. *Source: The Financial Express*

**22 May 2018**

### **President for more investments to keep up industrial growth**

President Md. Abdul Hamid urged on May 22 all concerned to find new and potential sectors for investments to keep up the current pace of industrial growth.

"An excellent field for foreign investment has been created here to collect natural resources . . . I draw attention of the private entrepreneurs alongside the



*President Md. Abdul Hamid handing over a trophy to a recipient of 'President's Award for Industrial Development 2016' at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital on May 22*

government to take plan-wise initiatives in this regard," he said while giving away the President's Award for Industrial Development-2016 at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city.

President Hamid said there is no alternative to developing private sector to achieve the desired goal of industrialisation. "The pace of industrialisation will accelerate as much as the private sector becomes strong," he added.

About various government initiatives to achieve sustainable and environment friendly industrialisation, Abdul Hamid said the government is setting up 100 special economic zones with a target of creating jobs for 10 million people and also increasing the export volume to US\$ 40 billion.

"Our aim is to enhance the industrial sector's contribution to the GDP to 40 per cent by 2021 in line with the economic philosophy of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," the President said. *Source: Financial Express*

**23 May 2018**

### **Bhasanchar shelter to save Rohingyas from monsoon disaster, says PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on May 23 0.1 million of the displaced Rohingya people will be shifted to Bhasanchar Island in Noakhali soon for giving them shelter there until their repatriation.

The Prime Minister said this when UN Under Secretary General and Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Dr Natalia Kanem met her at her office.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

Sheikh Hasina said some 100,000 Rohingyas will be shifted to Bhashanchar soon as 6,000 people are working there to arrange accommodations for them in the island.

She said Bangladesh is a disaster-prone country and the upcoming monsoon may cause untold sufferings to the Rohingyas.

"So, measures are being taken for their temporary shelter in Bhashanchar. They'll stay there until their repatriation."

The PM said Bangladesh has given shelter to the Rohingya people who fled persecutions in Myanmar's Rakhine state on humanitarian grounds. Local host communities are also cooperating with the Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar, she said.

The Prime Minister informed Dr Natalia Kanem that 60 babies are born in Rohingya camps on average a day.

The UN Under Secretary General and UNFPA Executive Director highly praised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for giving shelter and support to the Rohingyas, and her government's successes in women empowerment in Bangladesh.

Dr Kanem said Bangladesh has gained extraordinary improvement in the maternal healthcare.

Appreciating Bangladesh's progress in poverty eradication, she said the UNFPA will continue to provide its assistance to the country.

The Prime Minister said the aim of her government is to develop the entire country, including the remote areas, by ensuring food security, healthcare and education for all. *Source: The Financial Express*

23 May 2018

### Cabinet body approves Gold Policy-2018

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved on May 23 the Gold Policy 2018, allowing the import of the precious metal into the country through legal routes.



Gold bars

"From now on we will import gold. In the past, no import of the metal had taken place. Rather, it was smuggled into the country," Finance Minister A M A Muhith told newsmen following a meeting of the committee held at Bangladesh Secretariat.

He also said one will have to take license from the central bank for importing gold.

Commerce Secretary Shubhashish Bose told newsmen after the meeting that the gold policy has kept the option of bonded facility. Under it, a trader will be able to import gold bars, and re-export the same as jewellery.

Such exporters will also be given cash incentives and land in the special economic zones (SEZs) for setting up factories, he added. *Source: The Financial Express*

25 May 2018

### Indo-Bangla ties transcend strategic relations: PM

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on May 25 the multi-faceted and multi-dimensional relationship between Bangladesh and India reached a new height in the last nine years.

"Our relationship is described as far beyond strategic relationship. Bangladesh-India bilateral relationship is often considered as a 'model of bilateral relations' for the rest of the world," she said.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina shaking hands with her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi after inaugurating the Bangladesh Bhaban at Visva-Bharati University in West Bengal on May 25

She was speaking at the inaugural ceremony of 'Bangladesh Bhavana' at Visva-Bharati University in Shantiniketan.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee also spoke on the occasion.

"Bangladesh Bhaban will be a centre of excellence where students will be able to study and conduct research on the glorious Liberation War of Bangladesh, the life and works of Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore," she said.

The PM said, "This (Bangladesh Bhaban) will enhance the cultural bond between Bangladesh and India as well. It'll play a significant role in increasing the cultural exchanges and the people-to-people contact between the two countries."

Library, auditorium, cafeteria, museum with digital features and archive, and other necessary amenities will be available at Bangladesh Bhaban to facilitate the researchers, she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

**26 May 2018**

### **Bangladesh being built with Nazrul's non-communal spirit**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on May 26 Bangladesh is being built imbued with the non-communal spirit of poet Kazi Nazrul Islam.

"Nazrul was motivated by non-communal spirit. So, we're building Bangladesh with this non-communal spirit. Such spirit is reflected in our principle and ideology where people, irrespective of their race and religion, will enjoy equal rights," she said.

"So, we hope you'll work with the same (non-communal) spirit," she said pointing at the fresh graduates at a special convocation ceremony of Kazi Nazrul University (KNU).

The PM was addressing the function after receiving DLitt degree from the university at Asansol in Paschim Bardhaman district.



*Honorary D Litt degree being conferred on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the special convocation of Kazi Nazrul University in Asansol, West Bengal on May 26*

She said non-communalism and humanity were reflected in verses and works of Kazi Nazrul Islam.

"I would like to request you to put humanity above everything in every sphere of life, not only in workplaces," she said.

The Prime Minister said though the Bangla was parted, but the two great poets -- Nazrul and

Rabindranath -- were not divided. "They belong to the two Banglas (Bangladesh and West Bengal)."

She said Nazrul's spirit will remain for ages as source of inspiration for people to work for the welfare of the human being.

Talking about this region, Hasina said, "In case of all development plans, we are not thinking for only Bangladesh rather this subcontinent. We want to make this subcontinent a developed and prosperous one freeing it from poverty and hunger."

*Source: The Financial Express*

**29 May 2018**

### **Enhance technical expertise to compete**

President Md. Abdul Hamid on May 29 laid emphasis on enhancing IT and technical expertise of Bangladeshi peacekeepers to compete with peacekeepers from other countries.

He made the remarks at a programme marking the International Day of UN Peacekeepers at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre here with the theme '70 Years of Service and Sacrifice'.

'It's important to increase technological and technical skills of peacekeepers in UN mission alongside the development of information and communication technology. The Bangladeshi peacekeepers will also have to take advanced training to prove their leading role in the competition with other peacekeepers in the world,' the President said. *Source: The New Age*

**31 May 2018**

### **PM for enhanced BD-Thai cooperation in agriculture**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 31 sought enhanced cooperation between Bangladesh and Thailand in the agricultural sector.

Sheikh Hasina made the call when visiting Thai Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn met her at her office.

The Prime Minister informed the Thai princess of the "One House One Farm Project" and micro-savings model of Bangladesh. Thailand also has a programme similar to the "One House One Farm Project", the Thai princess mentioned.

About Bangladesh's success in the agricultural sector, Hasina said Bangladeshi scientists have developed salinity-, flood- and drought-tolerant crops, aiming to boost food production in the country.



*Visiting Thai Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the latter's office in Dhaka on May 31*

She informed the Thai princess that Bangladesh has become self-sufficient in freshwater fish and is producing huge amount of meat every year.

The Prime Minister showed interest in boosting cooperation between the two countries on mango cultivation, as Thailand is famous for producing the popular fruit round the year.

The Thai princess said her country has given Bangladesh "Vetiver grass" which is long and thick in size, to plant these in coastal areas and on river slopes, to prevent erosion.

She said Thailand is importing Bangladeshi litchi, which is very popular among Thai people. *Source: The Daily Star*

**3 June 2018**

### **Create a social movement against drugs: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June 3 laid emphasis on creating a social movement against drugs as the one that had been undertaken against extremism.

The Prime Minister was speaking at a videoconference arranged to inaugurate four amphibian dredgers, Munshiganj-Gazaria ferry terminal and service, four container carrier vessels and two mini-utility ferries from her official residence Ganobhaban in the capital.

'They'll build themselves in a planned way, they'll build a prosperous life, and that's our aim. That's why the government wants to eliminate terrorism and extremism from the country and root out drug abuse as well. So, there's a need to create a social movement...everyone should remain alert,' she said.

The PM urged all the guardians, teachers, imams and religious clerics to remain vigil.

The government wants to build the country beautifully where the future of every child will be brighter and all will be able to flourish their talents and devote themselves to nation-building activities. *Source: The New Age*

**3 June 2018**

### **Continuity of govt will ensure prosperity: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the nation will prosper if the ruling party maintains power and works sincerely.

She made the remark before inaugurating the Sheikh Hasina Dharla Bridge over the Dharla river at Kurigram's Phulbari Upazila.

"We have proved that a country can be enriched if the government has continuity and sincerity."

Hasina inaugurated the bridge through a video conference from the Ganabhaban early on June 3.

"I hope the people of Kurigram, Lalmonirhat and Rangpur will receive the bridge as an Eid gift from me," said Hasina.

"The connectivity of this area will be developed due to the bridge. It will extend the scope of business and make lives easier. The government is working for the further development of northern Bangladesh."

"Once upon a time, Monga was a serious problem in the north, but it has been resolved. At present, the land can be cultivated twice in one year. Food and

vegetable production has also increased." *Source: The Financial Express*

**5 June 2018**

### **Keep up pressure on Myanmar**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June 5 reiterated her call to the international community to continue pressure on Myanmar for the repatriation of Rohingyas from Bangladesh.

She made the call when visiting President and CEO of International Rescue Committee (IRC) David Miliband met her at her Jatiya Sangsad office.

The premier said Myanmar will have to take back the Rohingyas and the international community needs to keep up the pressure, PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told reporters after the meeting.

David Miliband, a British Labour Party politician, said his team arrived in Bangladesh to see the condition of Rohingyas.

Praising Bangladesh, he said opening the border to the Rohingyas is a significant humanitarian gesture and it is a good signal to the international community.

Miliband said they will continue their assistance and recruit 100 staff from Bangladesh.

He, however, suggested decongestion of Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar.

The PM said the government is preparing a safe place in Noakhali's Bhasanchar to shift the Rohingyas there. She said the government is providing healthcare services to the displaced people.

She also said locals are suffering and the environment is being affected due to the influx. *Source: The Daily Star*

**7 June 2018**

### **Budget for FY 2018-19 placed**

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, on June 7, in keeping with the past trend, placed even a bigger budget for fiscal year (FY) 2018-19 that appears benign, in terms of tax proposals, and selective in its business-friendly approach.

The proposed budget, however, has not tried to address a few key challenges, particularly coming from the banking sector and the capital market.

All -- budgetary receipts, expenditure and fiscal deficit -- in proportion to gross domestic product (GDP), in the first nine months of the outgoing fiscal, were much below their projections made in the original as well as revised budgets for the outgoing fiscal.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a meeting with International Rescue Committee President and CEO David Miliband at her Jatiya Sangsad office on June 5*

The total revenue receipts in FY 2017-18 were projected to be 13 per cent of the GDP in the original budget and 11.6 per cent in the revised budget. The actual receipts in nine months were equivalent to 7.2 per cent of GDP.

Social infrastructure got 27.34 per cent of the entire budgetary resources and nearly a quarter of the allocation has been earmarked for human resource development.

The physical infrastructure is set to receive 31 per cent of the total allocation of the next budget.

Mr. Muhith, who has placed a record 10 budgets in a row as the finance minister, spoke in an emotion-choked voice while concluding his budget speech in the Jatiya Sangsad (National Parliament). *Source: The Financial Express*

**9 June 2018**

### **Implement Paris accord in full**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stressed the need for full implementation of the Paris Agreement as Bangladesh needs greater support for climate change adaptation.

"Full implementation of the Paris Agreement is crucial for Bangladesh. We need greater support for climate change adaptation," she said at an intervention on climate issues at the G7 Outreach Leaders' Summit at Manoir Richelieu Hotel in La Malbaie on June 9.

The Prime Minister said available climate financing has to be augmented and facilitated for Bangladesh. The countries like Bangladesh also need support to capacity building, technology development and transfer in areas like agriculture, public health and disaster management.

She appreciated Canada's commitment to support the poor and most vulnerable countries to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change, commending Canada's pledge to contribute \$2.65 billion over the next five years to help the developing countries to tackle the climate change issue and \$300 million to the Green Climate Fund (GCF).



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took part in the G7 Outreach Leaders Meeting in Quebec on June 9*

PM also sought both financial and technological assistance from G7 countries to tackle global effects of climate change.

*Source: The Daily Star*

**10 June 2018**

### **Tigresses clinch maiden Asia Cup T20 title**

Six-time defending champions India suffered a three-wicket defeat

against Bangladesh in the final of the Women's Asia Cup Twenty20 cricket tournament at the Kinrara Academy Oval in Kuala Lumpur on June 10.

After India scored 112/9, Bangladesh managed to get over the line in the final ball of their innings. Bangladesh were in control for the major part of the match.

Even after Nigar Sultana (27 off 24) got out in the second ball of the 16th over, when Bangladesh were 83/4, Rumana Ahmed (23 off 22) did well to bring down the required runs to 13 off the last two overs.

In the penultimate over, Deepti Sharma gave away only four runs, keeping India in the match. In the first three balls of the final over, delivered by Harmanpreet, Bangladesh got six runs, including a boundary from Rumana.

Harmanpreet made it a pulsating affair by removing Sanjida Islam (7) and Rumana -- a victim of run-out, in the fourth and fifth deliveries. Rumana was stopped from reaching for her second run in the penultimate delivery, meaning Bangladesh needed two runs from the last ball.

Jahanara Alam scampered for two runs off the final ball to seal Bangladesh's first title in the continental championship which had seen India winning every title since its inception in 2004.

Bangladesh had earlier in the week defeated India by seven wickets -- which was their first win over the sub-continental giants in any format.

In the final, having elected to field, Bangladeshi bowlers justified their captain Salma Khatun's decision as they reduced India to 32/4 in the first nine overs.

*Source: The Financial Express*

## **26 June 2018**

### **ECNEC approves 14 projects**

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on June 26 approved 14 projects, at a total cost of 16,147 crore taka.

The biggest of the projects involves building 560 model mosques in district and upazila towns across the country, spending Tk 8,722 crore from its own resources as the promised funds for the project from Saudi Arabia are not available yet.

Ecneec held a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair at the NEC auditorium of the planning ministry.

The government also approved 13 more projects at a cost of Tk 7,425 crore, which include foreign funds of Tk 2,839 crore.



*Players of the Bangladesh Women Cricket Team rejoicing after defeating India by three wickets to win the ACC Women's T20 Asia Cup 2018 in Kuala Lumpur on June 10*

One of the projects is for collecting new engines and compartments for Bangladesh Railway, at a cost of Tk 3,602 crore, of which the Asian Development Bank (ADB) will finance Tk 2,839 crore.

Under the project, 40 broad gauge (BG) diesel engines, 75 meter gauge (MG) and 50 BG luggage vans, 400 MG and 300 BG bogey-covered wagons, and 180 MG and 120 BG bogey open wagons will be purchased.

Ecneec also approved a Tk 173-crore project for modernisation of three mills under Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC). The three mills are UMC Jute Mills in Narsingdi, Jessore Jute Industry Ltd in Noapara of Jessore and Gulfra Habib Ltd in Sitakunda of Chittagong. *Source: The Daily Star*

**27 June 2018**

### **GDP growth to hit 7.78pc this fiscal: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told Parliament that the outgoing fiscal year will see a 7.78 per cent GDP growth.

"...7.78 per cent GDP growth has been projected in the current fiscal year (2017-'18), which is the highest in the country's history," she said on June 27.

The Prime Minister said this while replying to a tabled question.

The PM said the size of the country's GDP was only \$72 billion in 2005-'06 fiscal year, which has increased to \$ 274 billion in the 2017-'18 fiscal year.

The target has been set in the 7th Five-year Plan to attain an average 7.4 per cent GDP growth annually.

The GDP growth will increase to 8.0 per cent in 2020, she expressed the hope.

She said the per capita income was only US\$ 543 in 2006, which currently stands at US\$ 1,752.

The poverty rate has now decreased to 22 per cent from 41.5 per cent in the 2005-'06 fiscal year, Hasina added.

The Prime Minister said the export volume was only US\$ 10.5 billion in 2006, which now stands at US\$ 34.8 billion. *Source: The Financial Express*

**27 June 2018**

### **Life expectancy rises to 72 years in Bangladesh**

Average life expectancy increased to 72 years in Bangladesh in 2017, up by six months from the previous year, according to the latest vital statistics survey. In 2016, the average human lifespan was 71.6 years in the country.

Life expectancy has increased on an average by 0.32 years each year over the past five years which is 1.6 years' increase in overall life expectancy.

For females, life expectancy increased to 73.5 years in 2017 from 72.9 years in the previous year.

For males, life expectancy increased to 70.6 years from 70.3 years during the period.

The results of the survey titled 'Bangladesh Sample Vital Statistics 2017' conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) were revealed at BBS auditorium in the city on June 27. *Source: The Financial Express*

***Report Compilation: Tahmina Begum, Mazharul Hoque, Md. Mamun Hossain***

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St. Martin's, the only coral island of Bangladesh



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