

# Bangladesh

January-March 2023

## Quarterly

Bangabandhu's '10th January speech':  
A beacon light for the State

Smart Bangladesh:  
Making Vision 2041 a Reality

Bangladesh is on the Move

# Bangladesh

## QUARTERLY

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*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivering speech at the function on the occasion of birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and National Children's Day at Tungipara on 17th March 2023*



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## Editorial

**I**n five decades of independence, Bangladesh has progressed much more than other South Asian countries in various social indicators. Besides, per capita income, GDP and annual growth have increased a lot compared to the past. Today, Bangladesh has joined the ranks of developing countries from underdeveloped countries. Under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the present government is working relentlessly to make the country a developed middle-income state.

26th March, the Independence and National Day of Bangladesh has been observed with due solemnity and fervour throughout the country and Bangladesh missions abroad. In the early hours on this day, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh in 1971. Other than Independence day, the First Quarter of the English Calendar year is marked with a number of significant days of Bangladesh history that include 10th January-the Home Coming Day of Bangabandhu, 21st February-the International Mother Language day, Historic 7th March, 17th March-National Children's Day and the Birth Anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. After the emergence of Bangladesh as an Independent State, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on his return on 10th January, 1972, delivered a historic speech at the then Race Course Maidan Dhaka. In this speech, he gave some directives to the nation to build a war-torn country.

On December 12, 2022, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has announced the master plan to make this country 'Smart Bangladesh' with a view to achieving goal of Vision 2041. It aims for empowering all citizens of Bangladesh through connectivity and ensuring smooth and sustainable digital solutions in personal and business life as well as decentralization of power to make a smart society.

Articles on the above subjects other than write-ups on wildlife, freedom fighters and poems have been accommodated in this current issue.

# Contents

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Bangabandhu's 10th January  
Speech: A beacon light for the  
State

*Md. Quddus Khan*

Page - 4



A Slice of Ekush in the Sky of Memory

*Abed Khan*

Page- 11



Bangladesh is on the Move

*Dr. Atiur Rahman*

Page- 23

---

Bangabandhu's Words Still Ring in  
My Ears: "You bring me 151 seats,  
I shall then show you" 16  
*Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, MP*

## POEM

Wings of Ekushey 20  
*Asad Mannan*

You Just Called Us 21  
*Mohammad Nurul Huda*

We love and sing of Bangladesh 22  
*M. Mizanur Rahman*

Smart Bangladesh: Making Vision 2041 a  
Reality 30  
*Md. Mamunur Rashid*

Lt Col ATM Haider, Bir Uttam: A  
legendary Freedom Fighter 36  
*Yeakub Ali*

Squirrels: Neglected Mammals of  
Bangladesh 41  
*Professor Dr. A N M Aminoor Rahman*

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting  
observed the historic 7th March 48  
*Tania Aktar*

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting  
celebrates 103rd Birthday of Bangabandhu 50  
*Nazim Uddin*

Development Chronology 52

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## Bangabandhu's 10th January Speech: A beacon light for the State

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Md. Quddus Khan

### Part-I: Introduction and Summary

After the emergence of Bangladesh as an Independent state in the world's Political Map, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on his return to the Independent State from Pakistani jail on 10th January, 1972, delivered a historic speech at Race Course Maidan (now Suhrawardy Udyan) Dhaka. It was his first speech in a public meeting, as the Head of the State of Independent Bangladesh. Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu's speech may be compared with Martin Luther King's speech, 'I have a dream' in which he ((King) told about his dream of 'civil rights' of the black people. In his speech, Bangabandhu also told about his dream of the newly independent Bangladesh and her people. His cherished dream of Bangladesh was truly independent and sovereign; free from all kinds of

hegemony; be it Indian, Pakistani or of any other country. A country where people will get all basic necessities of life (food, shelter) and achieve a decent, standard developed life. (Bangabandhu's Bhashon B.B. 21-22)

2. What were there in the '10th January 1972 speech of Bangabandhu. (see Bangabandhu's Bhashon B.B. 20-22) We think it is necessary to know the content of the speech, so that readers themselves can also make their own judgment about it. Secondly, we shall also give our own observation about it (speech).

- ❑ At the outset of his speech Bangabandhu remembered those valiant shaheed sons of the soil, who laid down their lives at the hands of Pakistan army during the nine months long liberation struggle to achieve Independence of Bangladesh and prayed for the salvation of their souls. He said that his dream of life had been fulfilled as Bangladesh had by then emerged as an independent sovereign state. He also saluted farmers, labourers, students, Freedom fighters and other people of Bangladesh who contributed to this national achievement.
- ❑ Pakistani soldiers had burned down our houses, killed our people and dishonored



*Bangabandhu confronts local and foreign journalists at Dhaka Airport, 10 January 1972*



*Bangladesh Armed Forces presented guard of honour to Bangabandhu upon his first arrival in independent Bangladesh at Dhaka airport on 10 January 1972*

our women in a barbaric way. He expected death in Pakistani jail at any moment but decided not to beg life from them to uphold the honour of Bangalee people.

- ❑ He dismissed poet Rabindranath's observation about Bangalees "*Shat koti shontaner hey mugdha janoni, rekheso Bangalee kore manush Koroni*" (Hey! Amazing mother of seven crore Bangalees, Alas! you have kept your sons as mere Bangalees, and could not make them worthy sons"). He said that Bangalees proved Rabindranath wrong. They also proved before the world that Bangalees are a brave nation, they are worthy sons, and could live a worthy life. They have shed their blood for independence, which could not go in vain.
- ❑ He expressed his sincere gratitude to India, the Soviet Union, the UK, France and people of America for extending their support to our liberation war. He specially thanked the premier of India Srimati Indira Gandhi, Indian govt. and people of India for hosting about one crore refugees, from Bangladesh, who fled from the county in fear of persecution by Pakistani soldiers.
- ❑ He reminded his audience of his historic 7th March speech in 1971 where he called for independence struggle and thanked people for achieving independence. But he urged them to maintain national unity at any cost, as he apprehended conspiracy was still going on to undo independence. He affirmed "Bangladesh has come to stay. None can undo it till a single Bangalee is alive."
- ❑ He said that many people of war ravaged Sonar Bangla were homeless, shelterless. In the name of humanity he appealed to the world Community to help his distressed people.
- ❑ He said that if people did not get shelter, food and youths did not get job our freedom would suffer and would remain unfulfilled. He advised all to do their own job properly. Asked people to start repairing war ravaged roads themselves. He also affirmed that all forms of corruption including bribery would not be allowed in the country.
- ❑ He referred to the safety of four hundred thousand Bangalees remaining in West Pakistan and non-Bangalees remaining in Bangladesh and said that non-



*After the homecoming of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, hundreds of thousands of people are taking their beloved leader to the Racecourse Ground (Suhrawardy Udyan), 10 January 1972*

Bangalees who committed crimes would be tried. He advised people not to take law in their own hands.

- ❑ Referring to his jailed life and case against him, he mentioned that he was awarded death sentence & a grave was dug beside his prison cell. He decided not to bow down before Pakistani military junta. He told them, “I am a Muslim. I know a Muslim dies only once... during Journey to gallows, I will say, I am a Bangalee, Bengal is my country, Bangla is my language, joy Bangla.”(B.B.P. 21)
- ❑ On the eve of his arrest on 25th March, 1971, he said that he refused to flee (as requested) leaving his seven crores people at peril. At this Mr. Tajuddin, and other colleagues started crying .(B.B. 21)
- ❑ He warned West Pakistani military Junta that they must not be sore at Bangladesh’s independence. They too would stay independent and also must not disturb our independence. They would have the same kind of relation with us as other nations would have with us. West Pakistani soldiers who had killed our innocent people must be tried he affirmed.
- ❑ He said, “Bangladesh is the 2nd largest Muslim populated state in the world. Our place is just after Indonesia (1st largest). In terms of Muslim population, place of India is third and that of Pakistan is 4th. But it is a irony of fate that Pakistani soldiers have killed Muslims of this country, dishonored our women- all in the name of Islam. I will not tolerate defamation of Islam. I want to say

in un-equivocal terms that our country will be democratic, secular and socialist one. Everybody including farmers, labourers, Hindus, Muslims and others will live in this Country in peace and happiness. (B.B. 22)

- ❑ He recalled his discussion about army withdrawal with Indian premier Indian Gandhi on his way back home from Pakistani Jail and said, “India will withdraw their soldiers from Bangladesh as and when I will want it. Already a large section of Indian army has been withdrawn from the soil of Bangladesh.” (B.B.P- 22)
- ❑ He also expressed his gratitude to Mrs. Gandhi for what she had done for him by pleading his release from Pakistan Jail, to almost all Heads of state of the world including General Yahiya Khan.
- ❑ He acknowledged the sufferings of one crore people who migrated to India for fear of Pakistani army persecution and rest of the people who remained in the Country and lived a fearful life. He also Saluted those who shed their blood in the liberation struggle including mukti bahini, students, farmers, laborers, EPR, Police, East Bengal Regiment and others. He also congratulated his colleagues who conducted liberation struggle (in his absence) and suffered a lot. He said, ‘you waged war at the call of your Mujib Bhai, you complied with his directives, snatched away in dependence’ (P- 22). In his emotion choked voice he said, ‘Only prayer of my life is to see that people of Bangladesh get food, shelter and achieve a decent, standard developed life!’ (B.B.- 22)
- ❑ He told his audience that on his release from Pakistani Jail, Pakistani leader Mr. Bhutto requested him (Mujib) to try to keep some sort of relaxed relation between the two countries (Bangladesh and Pakistan). In reply he told Bhutto that he could not say anything about it until he returned to his people. He then said, “Now (as I have returned to my people) I want to say to Mr. Bhutto, you remain in peace. Bangladesh has achieved independence. If anyone wants to undo it in that case Mujib will be the first to lay down his life to defend it (Independence)” (BBP- 22)
- ❑ Finally he [Mujib] appealed to the freedom loving nations of the world to recognize independent sovereign of state of Bangladesh immediately and help her (Bangladesh) to get membership of the United Nations (UN)” (B.B.P- 22).

## **Part-II-Observation**

3. So far we we have discussed at length, the 10th January 1972 Speech of Bangabandhu. Now we shall give our observations about it.

3.1 Bangabandhu’s 10th January Speech, 1972 is a beacon of light of the state (Bangladesh), in which he set the goal and objectives of the State (Bangladesh) as he dreamed of.

3.2 He dreamed of a Bangladesh which will be independent and sovereign free from all kinds of hegemony. There must not be any compromise on the Issue. He dismissed Pakistani leader Mr. Bhutto’s suggestion for some sort of relaxed relation (loose federation) with Pakistan and said you (West Pakistan) stay independent and also let us remain independent. On his way to Bangladesh, on release from Pakistani Jail, on 10th January, 1972 in his first encounter with Indian Premier Mrs. Gandhi in Delhi, he demanded of her that Indian army must be withdrawn from the soil of Bangladesh at the earliest to which she agreed instantly & said





*Bangabandhu attending a huge public rally for the first time in liberated Bangladesh at Dhaka Racecourse Ground, 10 January 1972*

it would happen as and when Mujib wanted it. Any illegal presence of troops he considered in the Country as inimical to sovereignty. For him (Mujib) frame of international relations must be based on sovereign equality.

3.3 Freedom of the Country will be fulfilled if people get Shelter, food and job, otherwise freedom will have no meaning. To make freedom meaningful all will have to work properly. He called on all to Shun bribe and all forms of corruption. He asked all to participate in rebuilding of the war torn country by taking part in reconstruction of war-ravaged roads etc.

3.4 He demanded of unity among us as a nation to thwart conspiracy; he scented against our independence. He warned his audience and said “Conspiracy has not ended yet (BBP 21) and affirmed that “Bangladesh has come to stay and no one can undo it, till a single Bangladesh is alive.” He asked us to forge National Unity as we have achieved independence through our national unity. (1970 General Election of Pakistan gave Bangalees opportunity to demonstrate their national unity, they voted for Awami league (AL) led by Sheikh Mujib. Won 167 seats out of 169 National Assembly (NA) seats of East Pakistan/300 NA seats of all Pakistan). The election result gave absolute mandate to Mujib to speak for Bangalees, which was recognized by the whole world and which through the course of history paved the way for creation of independent Bangladesh. Mujib’s strategy for achieving national unity through democratic process must remain as a lesson for us as a nation to face any challenge in the years to come.

3.5 He made it clear that Bangladesh will be a secular Country (BB p 22) To him secularism does not mean one to abandon his own religion or desist him from

loving or honouring his own religion. It simply means to him a belief which will teach him to honour others' religion like his own (religion). One who does not love and honour his own religion is unlikely to honour others' religion. To some sections of our intellectuals secularism means apathy to religion or religionlessness. Mujib loved his own religion and was equally respectful to others' religion. He said, "I am a Muslim." (P. 20) I will not tolerate defamation of Islam" (p. 22). He said, "Our Country will be secular, Hindus, Muslims and others will live in peace and happiness in this country." (A. 22) In fact, Mujib's secularism was non-communalism with respect for each other's religion including his own.

3.6 Bangladesh is known to the world as a Muslim Majority State, as India is known as a Hindu majority State. Referring to the structure and nature of the State Mujib said, "Bangladesh is the 2nd largest Muslim Populated State: (p. 22). It's next to Indonesia (1st largest). In terms of Muslim Population, India and Pakistan stand as third and fourth respectively." (p. 22) It may be mentioned here that 1970 general election of Pakistan, which Awami League fought and won under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman included 6-Point demands in its (AL) Election Manifesto. Point No I demand embodied the Lahore Resolution based federal unit structure for East Pakistan. No1 demand of 6-point demand says, "The Constitution should provide for a federation of Pakistan in its truest sense based on the Lahore resolution and the Parliamentary form of government with Supremacy of Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise." Therefore Mujib led Awami League got mandate in the 1970 General election of Pakistan for realization of 6-point demands which embodied the Lahore Resolution based state Structure. The Lahore resolution envisaged two 'independent States' based on Muslim Majority in the North-western (Later West Pakistan), and eastern zones (later East Pakistan) of India with adequate, mandatory safeguards for minorities. It reads , "That the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the north-Western and eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'independent states' in which the Constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign. That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the Constitution for the minorities in the units and in the regions... in Consultation with them." (*Ashomapto Atmo Jiboni*-P- 39). In fact, 1970 General Election of Pakistan gave mandate to Awami League to realise the Lahore Resolution based State Structure as embodied in demand No. I of the six- point demands. This mandate through the course of history, was responsible for creation of Independent Bangladesh state, where Muslims are numerically majority. In fact a Muslim Majorly state namely Bangladesh was created in the eastern zone of India as envisaged in the Lahore resonation which was embodied in the 6-point demands as election Manifesto of AL in 1970 general election of Pakistan. However, the mandate imposes responsibility on the majority to ensure constitutional safeguards for their minorities. The Muslim majority concept of state is based on the fact and reality hence nothing to do with Islamic state or Hindu state as some may like to impute. Any nationality or nation state in history must have their roots in any form of majority. A democratic society does not approve of minority to take the role of majority and vice-versa. The father of Political Science Aristotle very rightly observed in his book Politics, "Making of an equal into an unequal is injustice so making of an unequal into an equal is equally injustice."

3.7. Referring to the ideal nature of Bangladesh state, Mujib said, "I want to say in unequivocal terms that our country will be democratic secular and socialist one

(Country)". The kind of democracy that the 6-point demands envisaged was," A parliamentary form of Government with supremacy of Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise." The kind of socialism, which Mujib preferred is available in his Biography Ashomapto Atmojiboni (AA). He said, "I am not a Communist. But I believe in socialism and do not believe in Capitalism. I consider it (Capitalism) to be an instrument of oppression. So long there will exist capitalist producing economy, people of the world will not get rid of oppression" (AAP. 234). He was for democratic Socialism. He said, "But where there is socialism there is no democracy, But from the soil of Bangladesh I want to show that I shall establish socialism through, democracy". (AA. P. 61) In the previous para (3-5) we have already discussed his (Mujib's) concept of secularism.

3.8 Referring to the kind of life he (Mujib) wished for his people in independent Bangladesh, he said, 'Only prayer of my life is to see all of my people of Bangladesh get food, shelter and achieve a decent, standard developed life.' (B.B.P- 22)

3.9 He discovered a heroic nation in Bangalees through the lens of liberation war. So, he dismissed Tagore's observation that Bangalees had failed to become worthy sons of the soil. He said Bangalees were brave and strong enough to fight out their independence. They proved that they were worthy sons of the soil.

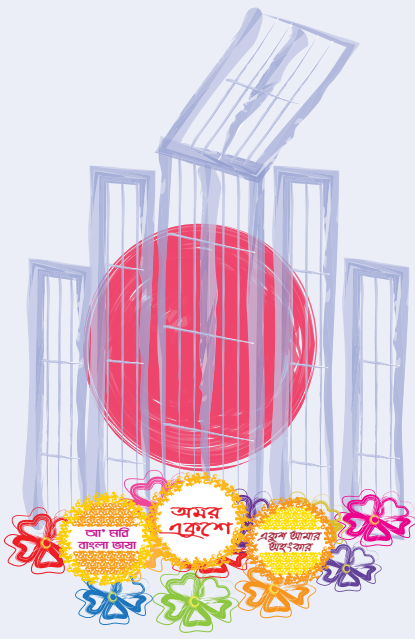
3.10 He was for rule of law. He asked people not to take law in their own hands, but asserted that Non-Bengalees who opposed our liberation war must be tried. He wanted United Nations to constitute an international tribunal to investigate into the mindless genocide committed by the Pakistan Army in Bangladesh.

3.11 He said that his dream of life has been fulfilled through the establishment of independent, sovereign state- Bengal of Gold. He prayed for the departed soul whose sacrifice made this achievement possible. He felt satisfied that they fought at his call, complied with his directives and snatched away Independence. He thanked his colleagues who conducted liberation struggle (in his absence). He also thanked Freedom fighters, Police, East Bengal Regiment and other sections of people who contributed to liberation struggle. Like many he did not want to take credit alone, he recognized every body's contribution He said, "Those who were killed by the barbarous Pakistan Army during the past nine months of liberation struggle. I pray for their departed souls (BB- 20). He used the terms liberation struggle throughout his speech and also mentioned about Freedom fighters and the war that took place at his call. He said 'You waged war at the call of your Mujib Bhai.' (BB p- 22) In fact by liberation struggle he also meant Muktiyhuddho- the Liberation war.

## **Conclusion**

Bangabandhu's 10th January, 1972 Speech is a beacon-light for the state (of Bangladesh). The speech referred us to his dream of Bangladesh and her people. The dream speaks of a sovereign independent Bangladesh free from all kinds of hegemony-be it Indian or Pakistani or of any other Country. It also tells us of a democratic, secular and socialistic Republic of Bangladesh, where people will have food, shelter and a decent standard developed life and a Bangladesh where Rule of Law will reign.

***The writer is a retired secretary to the Govt. of Bangladesh and a former Assistant Professor of Politics in Chattogram University***



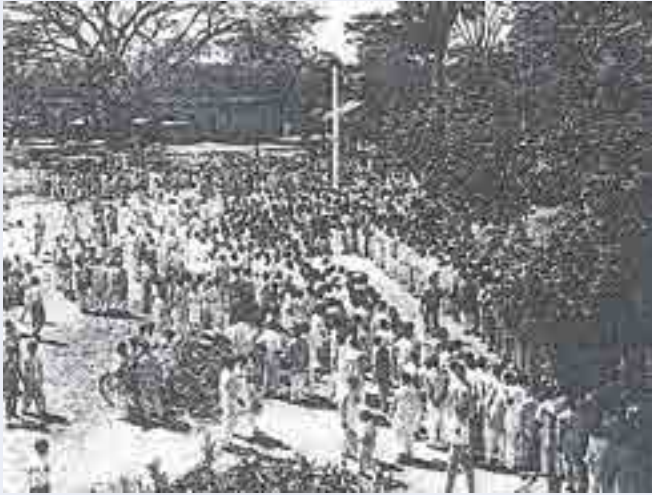
## A Slice of Ekush in the Sky of Memory

**Abed Khan**

via Gandaria with a prattling sound. That boy used to run with all his might towards the railway-line the moment he heard the whistle of train. Sometimes he looked on with amazement at the row of small train-windows. While looking at the people who were caught in those frames, the boy thought to himself that he would never see those people again. Sometimes, he used to sing by synchronising his voice with the sound of the engine: ‘Shall go to Dhaka, and devour humans; shall go to Dhaka, and devour humans’. It seemed to him that the train was moving with tremendous speed by uttering such vicious words. An eye that was set atop the engine’s front appeared like a one-eyed monster mentioned in the tale of Sindbad. There was a chimney on its neck, and black smoke of coal gushed out of it and flew in the opposite direction; the smoke then faded by spreading in all directions. Following the departure of the train, that boy used to touch the rail-line to gauge its temperature generated by friction. He put his ear on the line to listen to the train’s prattling sound for estimating its distance from the spot. He had so many games to play on the railway-line, such as, counting the number of lines he walked on; arranging pieces of rocks on the lines to test the accuracy of his hand in hitting; occasionally determining the train’s speed by holding a finger before his eyes! I heard that dead people used to be thrown out of the train’s doors during the riot of 1950s after they were cut to pieces. It was said that the skeletons of those people could be found in the jungles adjacent to the rail-lines. We had a ‘Jyatha-moshai’ (elder uncle) in our neighbourhood. The shop of Brajahari used to stand exactly opposite to our Number-25 Basubazar residence. I shall return to the

**O**NE  
Let me start this write-up with a childhood memory. It was many years ago, at the beginning of 1950s. I was then a child of about six or seven years. While dwelling on the topic, I should mention that I may not be able to identify the house of Number-25 Basubazar Lane if I look at it now. The picture that was originally ingrained in my heart does not resemble the Basubazar Lane of today. I have witnessed my childhood, adolescence and the incomparable affluence of a wild, lively youth from that house of Basubazar Lane.

If I close my eyes, I can still visualise myself roaming around in that neighbourhood during grey foggy days or in the middle of night. There was a railway line that ran beside the western boundary of ‘Shakti Oushadhaloy’ factory. The trains used to ply from Dhaka’s Phulbaria Station to Narayanganj



*Students' assembly at the historic Amtola of Dhaka University on 21st February 1952*

subject of Brajahari later on. Let me now dwell on Jyatha-moshai.

He had spherical spectacles on his eyes. His eyes seemed to be popping out from the other side through the heavy glasses; he had white prickly beards, a bald head, and almost empty row of teeth. His skin appeared to be hanging from his body; there were clear signs of poverty on the facial marks; he had a burnt physique and his dress (dhoti or loin-cloth) was

raised up to the knee. He used to make broom-sticks by cutting bamboo. Then those were tied with strings. I used to visit this Jyatha-moshai almost every noon. I used to go there by avoiding the mid-day naps and evading the eyes of elders in the house. He used to live in the outer room of the single-storey skeletal red house beside Brajahari's shop. Jyatha-moshai could tell stories accompanied by physical gestures. Sometimes the stories were of tigers, sometimes of ghosts, and sometimes of kings. How wonderfully he narrated the tales of Ramayana and Mahabharata! It seemed to me that I could see everything before my eyes: Rama was going for an exile of fourteen years, Dasharatha was becoming sick, Manthara was whispering into the ears of Kaikeyi. I could also visualise the game of Pasha played by Shokuni Mama, the chariot-ride of Arjuna, Sri Krishna Sarathi. This Jyatha-moshai also spoke about the rail-line: none should walk over this line alone at night! Those who died after being over-run by train, or those who died due to fatal accidents walked at night on those railway lines! I was quite thrilled when Jyatha-moshai narrated his tales.

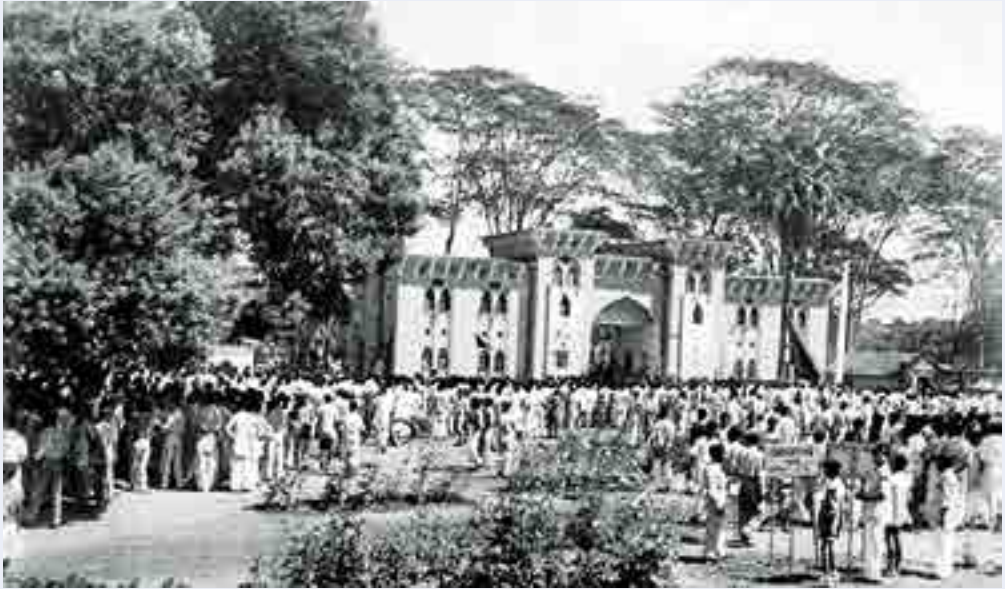
When the times reclined on the shoulder of evenings after crossing noon and afternoons, Jyatha-moshai appeared to me to be one of those who roamed at night on the railway line. My physique used to freeze out of fear, but I still went to him due to a strange attraction. Smilingly, he made me sit by his side whenever I went. There was arrangement for cooking on the back-side of that house. There were various types of boxes, bottles, tins, jars, and many other things at that place! Jyatha-moshai used to bring two 'Batasha' (sweets) for me from there. If there were no sweets, then he used to put at least some sugar on my palm. Then after talking about different things, he used to enter the kingdom of stories at some point. I shall return to the subject of Jyatha-moshai later on. Now it is the turn of Brajahari's shop.

May be Brajahari's shop did not have numerous commodities. But many goods were also available there. I was never concerned about all the items. My eyes used to focus only on the rows of jars in front. They contained lozenges, sweets, and

a type of Sandesh (sweetmeat made from posset). They tasted wonderful. While opening his shop in the morning, Brajahari used to scatter a basket of puffed rice on the road and rooftop of the shop, and called in a melodious voice – Come, come... Then a flock of crows would come down. The more the gathering of crows, the more would there be customers on the day. Brajahari's shop was inaugurated daily with such a weird belief. My childhood and adolescent days began by witnessing such scenes routinely on a daily basis.

Our home was dreadfully silent one morning in February. We were reading our textbooks as in every other day. Mother and aunts were sitting on the compound to slice vegetables for cooking. The males had gone out of the house. Father went to office, the brothers to their work. I was playing with the wheels of a cycle. What was the time then? Hardly 11 or 11.30 a.m.! The elders in the house were discussing during the previous night that something terrible might happen on the following day. Therefore, none should travel to town. But nobody heeded that warning after father had gone to office. News came towards 11.30 am. Shots were fired at the students on the university campus. Everybody's face went pale. People were worried about those who had gone out. There was no way one could know. Nobody told me about the firing; I was also not of that age. I was only guessing by looking at others' faces. I did not know who had passed on that information. I only saw the shadows of anxiety and sorrow on those faces. Mother told me: Don't do anything naughty, and don't venture outside the house. I was also cautioned that the police might take me away if I went out. There were thousands of questions in my mind: Why would the police take me away, why should they fire? How did the police look like? I was earlier told about the appearances of the police – they wore khaki half-pant and half-shirt; they had round and red eyes below thick and dense eyebrows; they had caps on the head, sticks in hand. Father used to say, the police would severely beat up those who were naughty. After that, I could easily be made to keep quiet by citing the peril of the police. But at that juncture, innumerable questions were being raised inside my head: Why did the police fire? Were the students doing anything naughty? All inhabitants of the house were conversing with a serious face, and I was trying to find answers to my questions by looking at their mouths.

Many people from the neighbourhood then arrived at our house in search of news. One of my maternal uncles (mama) suddenly came in. He was also carrying the news of firing. The vague words that were circulating around till then finally took a concrete shape. Getting tired, my mama sat down on the steps and sought a glass of water. There was excitement among the females in the household. Some brought water for him. Some brought sweets made of puffed rice on a plate. I was listening to them while driving a wheel on the compound. I could gather that the police were not allowing the students to come out on the roads. But the police opened fire when the students did not obey their order; some were even taken away. After this, the vehicles stopped plying on the roads; many people brought out processions. I was looking at the faces, and a strange pain was piling up inside me. Why should the police open fire? Won't the person shot get killed! Why should he die? While telling me a story a few days ago, one of my brothers told me that the students wanted to speak in Bangla, call their mothers 'ma'; the police were angry with them because of that. I asked myself: What should I do? I could not speak any other language; and could not call my mother in any other way. Without knowing the details, it seemed to me that the students were doing the right thing; but I was



*Students breaking 144 section during Language Movement at Dhaka University area on 21 February 1952*

not old enough then to judge what was right, or what was wrong. When my father was speaking about the firing incidents at noon on that day, the seven year-old restless child inside me was craving to do something immediately. But some pairs of alert eyes were guarding me. I could not fathom what I should do.

A tremendous restlessness was crushing me from inside. Suddenly I rushed out of the house by evading all eyes, crossed the boundary, and hit the road. Then I ran through the alleyway of Basubazar and reached the road-crossing. There, the rickshaw driver Shukur Mia was sitting in front of the Pathshala (school) of Pundit Jaggeshwar. He was waiting for a passenger while sitting on his seat – putting one foot over the other. Without allowing him any time, I immediately punctured the tyre of the rickshaw’s right wheel. Shukur Mia gave out a cry. By that time, my mama, one of my cousins and a few other people arrived on the scene. They carried me home by lifting me up on their hands. There was a black rectangular paper on my mama’s chest. On it was written, ‘We want state language Bangla’. Before my very eyes, that black paper suddenly started to grow in size, became huge, and then covered the entire sky – the whole world. And those words on that paper began to dance before my eyes by becoming incredibly powerful. I then covered my eyes with my two hands. Remaining captive in mama’s hands and oscillating on his lap, I was moving towards that small-sized prison of sorts at Number-25 Basubazar Lane.

## **TWO**

I am divulging a small piece of information here. I got it from the repository of my affectionate junior Mujtaba Soud. I express my indebtedness to him for this. The incident was of 1971, when the Pakistani invading forces had swooped on the innocent Bangali Nation with ultra-modern lethal weapons in the darkness of night.

The shooting of a Hindi cinema was in progress at Mumbai then. A few thousand watts of light had illuminated the studio. Some photographers were sitting with their fingers on the shutters of the cameras. The sound-recorder, director, and producer were waiting anxiously. They were in fact waiting breathlessly – when would she arrive? The heroine entered the studio soon afterwards. But she wore no make-up, her face was saddened, and her looks exhibited sorrow, resentment, and vulnerability. She muttered vaguely – ‘pack up’. She did not speak to anyone, but only searched for a journalist named Subrata Bandopadhyay. At that time, Mumbai boasted of top-class artistes from the Indian filmworld. The heroine was quite insistent. She informed everyone about the crackdown of the Pakistanis on the innocent-unarmed Bangalis. That heroine who was terribly upset by the news of that dark night, who called on the Indian artistes and technicians of film industry for halting the shooting of cinemas, who made a clarion call to stand by the disaster-struck Bangalis in the face of barbaric assault by the Pakistani forces coupled with most despicable brutality in history was none other than the legendary actress Waheeda Rehman. She was born in this month of February.

Not only Waheeda Rehman, none of the Indian artistes, writers, poets, litterateurs, drama artistes and painters were aloof from this. The whole of India roared out against the horrendous scorching of humanism on that night. The key linkage was their commitment to stand up against any kind of assault on languages and cultures.

Through the language movement of February, the whole of mankind was given a message: There is no alternative to resistance and unity for combating the evil force that acted against mother languages, cultural rights and heritages of humans, the ideals of a nation, and the flourishing of modern consciousness. It is not right to paint the language movement of 1952 as merely a day of protests. Deprivations, exploitations, repression, class conflicts over a long period push mankind to the threshold of eruption. The movement of 1952 was similarly an explosion that was consolidated bit by bit. If we look at the history of mankind, we can realize this truth – a system evolved over time, the empire and emperor arrived, humanity observed the bragging of the powerful. Many ups and downs, ascents and descents occurred over the canvas of time. But even then, the struggles of mankind have prevailed.

### **THREE**

Just as the play ‘Hamlet’ cannot be staged without the Prince of Denmark, similarly the history of language movement, or the search for the ethos of the Bangali nation, the long struggles, and the history of the Bangali nation’s honour cannot be retraced without mentioning the greatest Bangali of all time – Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, as that narrative would amount to a denial of history. His life implied the history of Bangalis, the emergence of a nation-state and its annals of struggles, the birth and flourishing of a national ethos on this globe. Therefore, we salute with reverence that massiveness where the amazement of a budding teenager while viewing the sky and the holistic journey of our language movement gets fully dissolved. Joy Bangla.

*The writer is editor of Dainik Jagoran, and chief editor of Dainik Kalbela*

**Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed**

*Courtesy : Press Information Department*





## **Bangabandhu's Words Still Ring in My Ears: 'You bring me 151 seats, I shall then show you'**

**Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, MP**

me 151 seats, I shall then show you.”

It may be mentioned that Moulana Farid was one of the best parliamentarians in the then assembly. Nobody failed to understand what Bangabandhu's words implied. We could realize from those utterances how profoundly the words self-determination and freedom remained embedded in his mind.

Bangabandhu had actually declared the country's independence through his 7 March speech. That became clear from his infallible words, “The struggle this time is for freedom, the struggle this time is for independence.” Those utterances at Motel Probal of Cox's Bazar, “You bring me 151 seats, then I shall show you”, and the articulation, “The struggle this time is for freedom, the struggle this time is for independence” were tied with the same thread. We found exceptional similarity between those two sentences. I could understand that Bangabandhu was hinting at independence; and independence was not possible without an armed people's war. After that speech, the whole population of the country became enthused with the new mantra of freedom.

The Shubhopur Bridge at Mirsarai was then the only route for transportation between Dhaka and Chattogram. I felt that the Pakistani troops would not be able to enter Chattogram if the Shubhopur Bridge could be blown up. We could then

**B**angabandhu came to Cox's Bazar towards the end of December 1969. I arranged a dinner in his honour at Hotel Saimon, which was owned by me. Many leaders were present at the event including M A Aziz, Zahur Ahmad Chowdhury, M A Hannan and Aatur Rahman Khan Kaiser of Chattogram as well as Dr. M A Mannan and Mirza Abu Mansur of Cox's Bazar. We all went to Motel Probal with him after the dinner. He was lying down on his bed, and we all were standing around him. He was talking about different subjects. At one stage of the discussion, Bangabandhu asked Advocate Noor Ahmad, “Noor Ahmad, will you be able to defeat Moulana Farid?” Noor Ahmad replied, “Honourable Bangabandhu, I shall certainly beat him if you pray for me.” Bangabandhu immediately said, “You bring



*Bangabandhu rushed to the distressed people after the devastating tidal bore that killed hundreds of thousands of people, 12 November 1970*

continue the war by keeping Chattogram free. But we would have to procure explosives for the purpose. I had some friends in Sylhet from whom explosives could be obtained. I needed to inform Bangabandhu about this plan of mine. I therefore met Bangabandhu at road-32 accompanied by Jane Alam Dobhash on 17 March morning. The day was Bangabandhu's birthday. The moment I informed Bangabandhu about my plan, he put his hand on my chest and said, "Bravo, you blow up the Shubhopur Bridge with half the collected explosives, and keep the remaining half in Dhaka."

After coming out of road-32, I went to my friends in Sylhet. But although my friends had explosives, the detonators could not be found. Consequently, I went back to Chattogram disheartened. A labourers' meeting was organized under the leadership of M A Hannan on 24 March afternoon at the port premises, so that arms could not be unloaded from the Pakistani ship 'Swat'. The Pakistani forces killed a number of workers on that day. We received report on 25 March that the Pakistani troops had started for Chattogram with 26 armoured vehicles from the Cumilla Cantonment. Without wasting any time, I headed towards Mirsarai. I reached the Shubhopur Bridge in the evening of 25 March. There were two guards on two sides of the bridge. They left when we asked them to go away. As I could not obtain any explosives for destroying the bridge, I collected huge quantities of Bitumen and Kerosene. After that, we set fire to the wooden part of the bridge by pouring Kerosene on the Bitumen. The wooden part of the bridge was completely burnt up by the huge fire. As a result, the bridge was almost destroyed and became unfit for vehicular movement. After the bridge's destruction, I swiftly headed for Chattogram.

I saw innumerable people across the highway on the way to Chattogram. I told



*The historic 'Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendro' (now Bangladesh Betar, Kalurghat, Chattogram)*

them, “You please create obstacles on the road through whatever means at your disposal including by cutting trees, so that the Pakistani troops cannot enter Chattogram.” On hearing me, the freedom-seeking people started to put up barricades on the road by cutting the roadside trees and putting their branches on the highway. I reached Baratakia towards 2 am after midnight. An employee of the Baratakia railway station told me that Bangabandhu had declared independence at 12 midnight via wireless. I reached Chattogram town towards dawn. Meanwhile, the 26 armoured vehicles from Cumilla Cantonment faced obstacles when they arrived at Shubhopur Bridge. The Pakistani troops had to spend lot of time for making the bridge fit for movement and for removing the trees and branches piled up on the highway. They reached Kumira in the evening of 26 March.

A fierce battle took place here between the Pakistani troops and the EPR forces accompanied by freedom-seeking people. This battle is well-known as the ‘Battle of Kumira’. Following this battle, the Pakistani troops entered Chattogram towards 28/29 March after removing barricades from Dhaka-Chattogram highway. As a result, Chattogram was free for a few days at the very beginning of liberation war and huge losses of lives and properties could be averted. I went to the Awami League office at Andarkilla in the morning of 26 March. I met Hannan Bhai, Aaur Rahman Khan Kaiser, the Chhatra League leaders Shahjahan Chowdhury and Rakhil Chandra Banik. We discussed the overall situation for a long time. Meanwhile, Zahur Ahmad Chowdhury had also received the declaration of independence by Bangabandhu in the morning. We decided to broadcast Bangabandhu’s declaration of independence over radio. We then sped towards the Kalurghat radio station from Agrabad on a jeep. We also took along a technician who was working at Bahaddarhat radio station. We reached Kalurghat radio station towards 2 pm noon. The Awami League leader M A Hannan read out Bangabandhu’s declaration over radio at about 2.15 pm noon.



*DC Hill, Chattogram*

The announcement by M A Hannan was repeatedly broadcast from the station. At this time, the public leader Aatur Rahman Khan Kaiser, the students' leader Rakhal Chandra Banik, Shahjahan Chowdhury and I were present. Meanwhile, arrangements were made for distributing Bangabandhu's declaration after making cyclostyle copies from the Jupiter House residence of Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu. A number of people including the peon of Awami League office Nurul Haque publicised and distributed the independence declaration through public announcements over microphone in Chattogram town. The residence of Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury was used as my control room up to 26 March. After that, our Nandan Kanan residence was used as the control room from 27 March.

The Pakistani forces took control of the DC Hill in the morning of 28 March. M A Hannan, M R Siddiqui, Zahur Ahmad Chowdhury, Aatur Rahman Khan Kaiser and I came out of my house and went to Kaiser's house at Chandanpura via Andarkilla. At one stage while holding discussions there, we heard a controversial statement by Major Zia on radio. A number of people among those present including M R Siddiqui reacted after hearing this statement. It was then decided to talk to Zia about the matter. We then went to the Kalurghat radio station swiftly. When we asked Major Zia about his controversial statement, he told us, "I could not appreciate the political context. You please give me a draft. I shall read out accordingly." M R Siddiqui then drafted Bangabandhu's declaration in English, and Ziaur Rahman read it out in the same manner. The announcement, "I Major Ziaur Rahman hereby declare the independence of Bangladesh on behalf of our great leader Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.....Joy Bangla" was then broadcast a number of times.

**Writer : Presidium Member, Bangladesh Awami League**

**Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed**

*Courtesy : Press Information Department*

# Wings of Ekushey

Asad Mannan

**W**e remain in wait for a whole year with so much emotion  
When shall Ekushey arrive – play that song for the nation?  
The song in which motherly affection speaks with river’s voice:  
In deep embrace with the beauty, fragrance, elixir of heart  
Inside the ethereal soul that exists in the depths of spirit  
Clusters of sound shall coalesce, chain of words will be freed:  
He who has no language is deaf and dumb,  
His eyes don’t differentiate between light and dark.

What magical mantra did the pledge of Ekushey have!  
The Bangali a nation of heroes, humanity shines in his blood  
Never bows down to the bragging of rogues and villains –  
Treading the path of Fifty-two – a river of blood in Seventy-one –  
Floated the boat of freedom like the vessel of Noah;  
Just as Rabindranath had filled his boat of gold  
With piles of golden rice, the words’ ambrosia of dreams –  
From state to state, from ages to this endless age –  
It echoes even now; and shall echo till eternity!  
The clouds thunder in sky, so many disasters ahead –  
“Where are the youths? Move ahead – the future beckons,  
This perilous storm must be crossed, the boat taken to shore!”  
Bangali! You have no other course open except the boat.

Twenty-first is no more a mere date now –  
It is our lamp of glory lit with the fire of blood;  
Crossing the hurdles of evil on the luminous chariot of this lamp  
The cuckoo is singing while flying with the wings of Ekushey:  
Ekush is the jewel on my head, Ekush is my necklace,  
Today I give this gift of Ekushey to the entire world.

**Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed**

*Courtesy : Press Information Department*



## You Just Called Us

**Mohammad Nurul Huda**

**Y**ou called us out with our homeland opening eyes like the lilies  
You called us out with Bangladesh smiling under the moving sun  
You called us out with the rivers, birds and animals set in motion  
You called us out with the heroes of Bengal rising up in fair intention  
You called us out with the sovereign Bengalis' pointing finger  
You called us out with the all-conquering outcry of 'Joy Bangla'.

You called us out with the battles fought in the war of freedom  
You called us out with the invaders' thighs shaking badly in fear  
You called us out with the country-fighters, the winning ghazis  
You called us out with the fighters willing for the people's war  
You called us out with public-fighters, the militias invincible  
You called us out with Scorpion soldiers, the everyday-winners

You called us out with the flag kept on flying red and green  
You called us out with the wheel of growth and parity turning  
You called us out with nationhood and the grassroots masses  
You called us out with the nation freed well into democracy  
You called us out with the people's war lasting long for months  
You called us out paving the way for living in national concord

You called us out with good days befalling upon the Bengalis  
You called us out with the pure-hearted Bengalis turned out free  
You called us out with all Bengalis' dwelling home liberated  
You called us out with the realm of liberty in the free world  
You called us out with the call of freeness along the universe  
The Bengalis are a free nation forcing the world to turn aback.

You called us out with the time, with which you do flow and run  
You are the Saviour, Father of the Nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

*Courtesy : Press Information Department*



# We love and sing of Bangladesh

M. Mizanur Rahman

We love and sing of Bangladesh.  
We sing of our golden Bangla.  
We sing of our national heroes-  
and the great freedom fighters.  
We sing of our great heroic people  
that fought the enemies to free our land  
and smilingly they laid down their most valuable lives.  
So our great people believe in ' freedom of life and land.

We sing of our great national leader-  
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman  
Who made the supreme sacrifice  
laying a victorious edifice  
of Bangladesh being its architect:  
That 's a great heroic Bangladeshi Bangali Nation.

We sing of our sweetest Banglabhasha.  
We sing of those heroes  
who laid down their precious lives  
for upholding Banglabhasha as the state language.

We sing of life and love.  
We love our motherland as much as  
we love our mother.

As to liberate our motherland we heroically fought  
Likewise with dignity we must keep our heads ever aloft

We sing of a harmonious world of peace,  
We would like to live nice without vice,  
That's why we sing of love and friendship.  
And we like to sing of life under the same sun  
And under the same sky  
in which we breathe and live.

We live under the sky of Bangladesh  
We breathe in the air of Bangladesh  
We sing of our flowers, fruits and food grains.  
We sing of natural flora and fauna of Bangladesh.

We love and sing of Bangladesh...  
We love and sing of Bangladesh...  
We love and sing of Bangladesh...



## Bangladesh is on the Move

Dr. Atiur Rahman

**B**angladesh has been on the move for over a decade, defying all global and local challenges, always demonstrating its inherent inner strengths. Its gains in the economic arena have been particularly eye-catching. Being deeply globalized, Bangladesh could not fully avoid the pandemic's fallouts. When the Bangladesh economy began to come out of pandemic-related hiatus, like most others, it also fell into the challenges created by the sudden Russia-Ukraine war. The war further affected the disrupted supply chains due to the pandemic complications. The food, fuel, and fertilizer prices went up due to such disruptions from the warring countries in the wake of massive economic sanctions imposed on Russia by the Western powers. The persistent tightening of the monetary policy by the Fed made further appreciation of the USD, which accounts for more than forty percent of global trade. The other central banks followed suit in tightening their monetary policies as well. So, the countries like Bangladesh were forced



*Padma Bridge- the longest road & rail bridge of Bangladesh*





*Metro Rail in the Dhaka City*

to pay more for their imports, creating a huge trade imbalance for themselves. There was an immediate impact on the current account balance leading to both steady depletion of their foreign exchange reserves and devaluation of the domestic currencies against the US dollar. The result has been high inflation and enhanced foreign debt repayment burden. With large exposure to the global economy, Bangladesh also had to face the pressure of the external economic imbalance. However, Bangladesh was fortunate enough to gain valuable lessons from the 2008-09 global financial crisis, for which it has been faring better than many of its peers in coping with the ongoing global economic crisis. During that crisis, Bangladesh followed a cautious economic strategy of inclusive development, investing in agriculture, export-earning manufacturing units, and low-skilled remitters. The focus was more on creating additional values in its real economy. The developmental central banking following a well-crafted financial inclusion strategy complemented the national economic recovery from the global financial crisis and helped facilitate this value creation. Bangladesh's government and the central bank continued to follow their inclusive fiscal and monetary policies to make their development strategy sustainable until today. That experience of inclusive and sustainable development strategy proved invaluable in shaping our response to the global economic slowdown created by the pandemic and the mindless war in Europe. We have continued our inclusive development strategy, investing more in agriculture, export, and remittance augmenting activities and enhancing social protection support for low-income groups.

That Bangladesh has benefited from this response strategy is reflected in its gains from increased agricultural production, with nearly 43% growth in apparel exports

(during January-September 2022) to the European market and modest growth in remittance earnings. The remittance figure from July to December 2022 will likely go up to 10.25 billion USD. The last November's export earnings were more than five billion USD. All this clearly indicates that the export earnings at the end of the current fiscal year will surely surpass sixty billion USD milestones. Thanks to the flexible exchange rate and the existing cash incentive, the remittance too will be more than twenty billion USD with a positive (though modest) growth rate. With some tightening of imports of luxury and non-essential products, allowing market-based flexibility in the exchange rate, and an austerity policy on public spending, Bangladesh will surely come out of the woods and demonstrate its macroeconomic resilience leading to the desired stability. The trust in the banking sector, deliberately put in question by a group of vested quarters, is regaining steadily, and the rate of growth of bank deposits has also been increasing. The total debt as a percentage of GDP remains healthy (about 38%), with low-cost and long-term public foreign borrowing remaining below 15%, indicating Bangladesh's strength in debt management. The yearly repayment of debt installments remains low, around two billion USD, and may increase marginally in the coming years. The net foreign exchange reserve situation remains healthy, with a capacity to pay around five months' import bills. Undoubtedly, Bangladesh remains a high-risk-free country for foreign investment, as indicated by the IMF and other international development institutions. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the net inflow of FDIs went up to 3.44 billion USD during the 2021-22 fiscal year compared to 913 million USD in 2009-10. The positive response of the IMF, WB, and ADB for enhanced budget and climate-friendly support to weather the ongoing global economic crisis also explains their high confidence level in Bangladesh's macroeconomic management capacity. Also, their estimates of the



*Elevated expressway*

| Remittance Flow (FY 2021-2022) |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Month                          | US\$ (billion) |
| July 2021                      | 1.87           |
| August 2021                    | 1.81           |
| September 2021                 | 1.73           |
| October 2021                   | 1.65           |
| November 2021                  | 1.55           |
| December 2021                  | 1.63           |
| January 2022                   | 1.70           |
| February 2022                  | 1.49           |
| March 2022                     | 1.86           |
| April 2022                     | 2.01           |
| May 2022                       | 1.89           |
| June 2022                      | 1.84           |

Source: Bangladesh Bank

economic growth rate in this fiscal year align very well with the revised target of Bangladesh’s 6.5% GDP growth rate. This will still be a healthy growth rate in a turbulent world.

All this has been made possible by the prolonged macroeconomic stability benefitting from the stronger inclusive and sustainable growth emanating from productive sectors like agriculture, export, and remittance. Therefore, we need to remain focused on the sources of our sustainable growth since 2009, when Bangladesh opted for a paradigm shift of more broad-based growth and human development. The current leadership’s vision for more self-reliant and inclusive development proved highly strategic in an uncertain global economy. The reliance on a higher level of domestic demand and consumption focusing on agriculture, MSMEs, remittance, and export-oriented manufacturing has been providing desired food security, employment, and demand for domestic industrial units leading to a faster decline in poverty and greater growth of human development indicators. In particular, the robust stimulus packages (nearly 6% of GDP) designed to respond to the pandemic-related slowdown of the economy by investing in agriculture, MSMEs, and export-oriented industries, in addition to higher social protection for the low-income groups engaged in the formal sector plus the generous public spending to procure well-rated COVID-vaccines speaks a volume about the strategic vision of the enlightened leadership in Bangladesh. Indeed, the heroic leadership provided by the Premier from the front deserves to



*Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel, Chattogram- the only under water road tunnel of Bangladesh*

be specially highlighted while talking about speedy recovery from the pandemic without undermining the sustained economic activities during the crisis period.

The emphasis on providing more than adequate public investment in agriculture and MSMEs indicates the passionate commitment of the leadership to keeping the bottom of the social pyramid ever stronger with adequate food security and employment, particularly self-employment through enhanced support to small entrepreneurs, including farmers adding more value to the farm sector. The educated youths have been taking advantage of this public investment support, including robust refinance from the central bank of Bangladesh, and contributing hugely to enhancing modern and diversified agriculture. Not surprisingly, agricultural crop production has increased more than four-fold during the last fifty years. In addition, there have been phenomenal growths in fish, poultry, livestock, and vegetable production, thanks to the continued budgetary support for research, innovation, and extension activities in the rural economy. The rural economy of Bangladesh has also been benefiting hugely from deeper road connectivity, rural electricity, and digital infrastructural support from the government. The support for the start-ups by the government and the central bank in one form or another utilizing ICT Division and development banks like Bangladesh Karma Sangsthan Bank and Ansar-VDP Bank has created several entrepreneurs providing huge employment to other youths. The role of the National Skills Development Authority in providing necessary support for the needed skills and entrepreneurial development also needs to be noted. The related non-farm sector has also grown extensively during this period, with about sixty percent of the rural income originating from this sector. The scholarship and other support for primary and secondary education have not only been providing supplies of low-skilled human resources to the vibrant export-oriented industrial units and the remittance-earning sector but also empowering the women with a higher level of income and cultural upliftment



*Payra 1320 MW Thermal Power Plant, Patuakhali*

through the opportunities of working together. The vibrant entrepreneurship development in both the farm and non-farm sectors has also been facilitated by the focused attention of the central bank of Bangladesh on financial inclusion. The phenomenal growth in bank accounts, including mobile financial services, agent, and internet banking, supported by a strong digital payment system providing an automatic clearing house, electronic fund transfer, real-time gross settlement, and national payment switch in interoperable unified payment interface(‘binimoy’) have taken Bangladesh economy to a new height.

The impact of all these innovations has been simply stunning on the overall economic gains of the country. The total GDP has increased more than four and a half-fold to USD 465 billion since 2008-09. The export earnings have increased more than three-fold to USD 52 billion during this period. The remittance earnings more than doubled. The economy’s resilience has also increased simultaneously, as reflected in savings-GDP improving from 25% to 31%. The share of investment to GDP increased from 26% to 32%. The credit to GDP remains buoyant at 41% even during this difficult time.

So far, Bangladesh has consolidated its macroeconomic stability supported by the broad-based inclusive growth process. This has been a great source of its economic resilience, recording more than double the economic growth of the developing economies at the height of the covid crisis. Now is the time for its quantum jump. Standing on the stronger base created during the first phase of economic consolidation, Bangladesh is now poised for a quantum jump to double-digit growth. Besides dynamic agriculture, MSMEs, and service sectors, the vibrant private sector, including low and high-skilled manufacturing units, will lead this journey toward achieving our cherished goal. This will certainly make Bangladesh smarter and more digital. The private sector can, however, thrive only if there

is no infrastructural deficit and a lack of an appropriate business environment. Here comes the government, which, too, ought to be entrepreneurial. Bangladesh, fortunately, has been witnessing this role of the state as reflected in about sustained 10% plus budgetary allocation for the transport and communication infrastructure. Most of the mega projects belong to this category. The allocation is more than 12% in the current fiscal year. This budgetary allocation is destined to facilitate not only the local private sector development but will also help accelerate regional and sub-regional connectivity. The recently launched Padma bridge is a testimony to this economic development. The transport-related infrastructures like Padma bridge, Kalna bridge, elevated expressways, metro-rail, Bangabandhu tunnel under the Karnafuli, and deep sea and bay ports will take the trade and business services to an additional 33% of the population. The handling capacities of the ports will also improve substantially. The transport-related infrastructures will alone directly add 1.2 percent to the GDP growth. The multiplier effects could be even more if we can use the existing capacity of our domestic shipping services more strategically.

That Bangladesh is on the same growth trajectory as that of South-East Asian countries like Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia can be gauged from its growth in per capita income. In 1980-90, these countries had an average per capita income of USD 2,400. This average figure was pushed up to USD 4,000 in a decade. Bangladesh's per capita income is now USD 2,800. This can easily be pushed up to USD 4,000 in five years. This could be as early as 2026 if we can sustain our inclusive development strategy with robust gains in consumption. Around the time when the South-East Asian countries lifted their average per capita income from USD 2,400 to USD 4,000, consumption increased by 12%. Bangladesh can increase its average consumption by 10% to 12% by 2026.

Cashing on such potential, the Boston Consultancy Group, in a recent study, has projected that Bangladesh will have a trillion USD economy by 2030 if its growth rate can be pushed up to 10%. Even with a 5% growth trajectory, it can become the same in 2040. I think Bangladesh will become a trillion-dollar economy well before 2035 if there is an end to this mindless war in Ukraine. The group has estimated that the high-income group population will reach 3.4 million by 2025 from 1.9 million in 2020. These are people with perhaps 5,000 USD plus per capita income. The growth in their income will mean a bigger market for tech-savvy and brand-savvy products and services. The Special Economic Zones, nearly completed, will attract more FDIs to cater to their demands. This dream project presupposes continuity and consistency in visionary and supportive well-coordinated economic policies that have been abundant during the last 12-13 years. Suppose we can continue to put our trust in the legacy of committed leadership, reaping its strength from the fountain of inspiration of Bangabandhu's dream project of Sonar Bangla, which has already been delivering the desired services and focusing on our homegrown, innovative, and indigenous inclusive development, Bangladesh will surely progress towards its prosperous and smarter trajectory. Indeed, leadership matters.

***The author is a noted economist and former Governor of Bangladesh Bank***

*Courtesy : Press Information Department*



## Smart Bangladesh: Making Vision 2041 a Reality

**Md. Mamunur Rashid**

people of Bangladesh with the help of smart technology will increase their living standard from present position to higher standard of living. It can be ensured by higher income so as to decrease the inequality of the society & become developed Bangladesh in coming days.

### **From a dream to a reality**

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had the dream of a 'Golden Bangladesh', a poverty and hunger free Bangladesh, and a prosperous country with a high living standard. To fulfil the dream of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the government has prepared and published vision 2041 plan to make the dream to a reality.

### **Vision 2041**

General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission under the ministry of planning of Bangladesh on March 2020 has published the vision 2041 master plan titled 'Making Vision 2041 a Reality- Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021-2041'. The plan includes only guidelines and strategic directions. Four consecutive five year plans i.e. 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th five year plan will be prepared where detail strategies action will be elaborately discussed. The 'Vision 2041' aims to end absolute poverty and to elevate the country lower middle income into higher middle-income status by 2031 and a prosperous high income country

To achieve the goal of Vision 2041, the government has taken initiative to make the Country 'Smart Bangladesh'. On December 12, 2022 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has announced the master plan of 'Smart Bangladesh'. The targeted socio economic standing of 2041 will be achieved following this master plan. Smart Bangladesh will ensure sustainable digital solutions to all citizens and to all business of Bangladesh regardless of their socio-economic background. It stands on the 4 pillars of Smart Citizens, Smart Government, Smart Economy and Smart Society.

### **Definition**

Smart Bangladesh refers to that government mechanism where

by 2041 on the platinum jubilee celebration of the independence of Bangladesh. The government aims to eradicate extreme poverty by 2031 and achieve zero poverty by 2041.

### **From ‘Digital Bangladesh’ to ‘Smart Bangladesh’**

The previous action plan of this government was to achieve ‘Vision 2021’ and its branding name was ‘Digital Bangladesh’. ‘Vision 2021’ was the first ever initiative of making a long term action plan titled ‘Bangladesh Perspective Plan 2010-2021’ aimed to transforming Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021, to attaining high growth, reducing poverty and inequality, improving human resources and environmental responses through 6th and 7th Five Year Plans. The government had achieved an average GDP growth rate of 7%, attained most of the MDGs and elevated from low income country to lower middle income status. The government has adopted ‘Vision 2041’ in line with the ‘Vision 2021’.

### **Branding of Smart Bangladesh**

All the ministries of Bangladesh have started to branding ‘Smart Bangladesh’ to achieve the objects of Vision 2041 in all of its activities. a2i (Access to Information) of Bangladesh has institutionalized the concept of Smart Bangladesh and expressed action plan to achieve it.

### **Key Features of Vision 2041**

- ❑ Bangladesh will experience an accelerated pace of change and every sector will have to cope up with rapid conformational shifts;
- ❑ Equitable distribution of the benefits of rapid growth for all, especially the poor and the vulnerable;
- ❑ A developed country by 2041 with expected income over USD 12,500 in today’s price;
- ❑ Zero poverty by 2041;

### **Growth and Poverty targets by 2041**

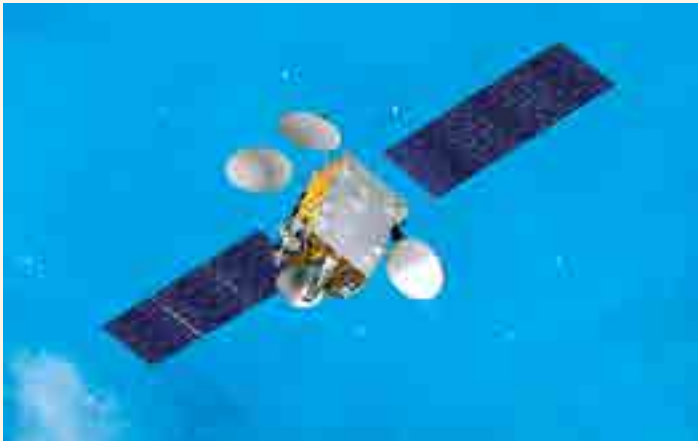
| <b>Indicator</b>    | <b>Benchmark Year 2021</b> | <b>Target by 2031</b> | <b>Target by 2041</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Real GDP Growth (%) | 8.2                        | 9.0                   | 9.9                   |
| Extreme Poverty (%) | 9.4                        | 2.3                   | <1.0                  |
| Poverty (%)         | 18.8                       | 7.0                   | <3.0                  |

- ❑ Increase of export earnings of USD 300 billion by 2041;
- ❑ Average life expectancy of 80 years; and
- ❑ Decentralization of economic and administrative power.

### **Adaptive National System**

Adaptive national system will require among the stakeholders with same tune of digital system. Final outcome will come if shared coordination of synchronized multi





*Bangabandhu Satellite-1*

sectoral programs are taken. Three important aspects are to be prioritized—knowledge-based economy, innovative nation and inclusive digital society. Government shall have to play the leading role to implement the national adaptive system. With the aim of building smart Bangladesh, all the

district administration in collaboration with a2i have organized digital innovation fair in every districts.

### **Use of smart technology**

The government will ensure maximum use of technology including artificial intelligence, internet of things, virtual reality, augmented reality, robotics, big-data, block chain, drone technology, 3D printing, freelancing, work from home and so on.

### **Smart broadcasting**

Bangabandhu Satellite-1 has brought revolutionary change in broadcasting sector. Unused frequencies of that satellite are sold to other countries and Bangladesh is getting revenue from it. Bangabandhu Satellite-2 is expected to launch soon aiming to materialize the target of Smart Bangladesh.

### **Smart telecommunication system**

During the cyclone ‘Sitrang’ last year, government was able to resume the telecommunication system immediately after cyclone in Sylhet, Sunamganj and Netrokona districts due to availability of updated telecommunication system. Third submarine cable will be set up by 2024 and the bandwidth capacity will increase to 13,200 GBPS. Bangladesh is currently earning 4.81 million US Dollars every year by leasing bandwidth to other countries which will significantly increase by 2024. High speed network has been provided to every union through optical fibre cable. 8600 numbers of post offices have been turned into digital ones. Internet tariff system ‘one country, one rate’ has been introduced.

### **Bridging the Digital Bangladesh with Golden Bangladesh**

Smart Bangladesh is about bridging the digital Bangladesh with the expected ‘golden Bangladesh’ by introducing and ensuring sustainable digital solutions where all citizens regardless of their socio-economic background and all businesses regardless of their portfolio will be benefited. Smart Bangladesh will stand upon the 4 pillars i.e. Smart Citizens, Smart Government, Smart Economy and Smart



*Mygov- Government services at one address*

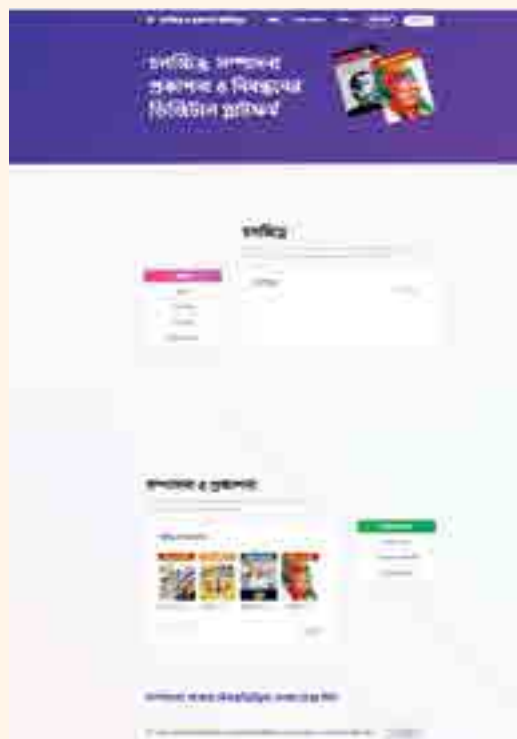
Society. The mission of Smart Bangladesh is about a futuristic Bangladesh, where 5G or the latest network will be connected, 100% smartphones in daily life, 100% high-speed internet, cashless society and so on. Smart Bangladesh is the present major step towards realizing Bangabandhu's dream of Sonar Bangla.

### **Smart Citizens**

Empowering all citizens of Bangladesh through connectivity and ensuring smooth and sustainable digital solutions in personal and business life. Access to information will empower the citizens' in achieving its potential as well as in achieving the national goal of vision 2041. There is no alternative to use ultra-modern technology in coming days and government is committed to make smart nation.

### **Smart Government**

Digitization in every aspects of government services through information technology will facilitate both the service providers (government) and service receivers (citizens). Paperless office and automation of service are the



*Digital platform of Department of Films and Publications*



*ATM Booth of a state-owned Bank*

key features. Government will emphasize more on personalized services like education, health and public security. Simplified and sustainable digital solutions will bring more revenue. City and village can not be differentiated in terms of getting services. Village will be center point of Development in Smart

Bangladesh. The government will provide all modern facilities of a city to villages. The government has already taken initiatives to make every service digital .

### **Smart Society**

Decentralization of power by ensuring democratization in making smart local government will facilitate in making smart society. Smart society is the essence in making a developed Bangladesh. Tolerance, ethics and values enriched society with digital literacy will achieve the goal of vision 2041.

### **Smart Economy**

Economy being the prime source of revenue attracts the highest significance of government to accelerate the revenue to ensure the high income country by 2041. Only ICT sector's economy will rise to USD 50 billion and more than 50 unicorn startups made locally are expected to be dominant. Cashless digital financial service will ensure financial well being of a business. A2i's ekshop and iLab initiatives are the two examples making the road inspiring for others. Investment in digital goods and export of digital goods will be inspired to achieve Vision 2041.

### **www.mygov.bd: The website providing all service information from one point**

The website [www.mygov.bd](http://www.mygov.bd) has brought all the offices/services of government under one platform. It has ensured Aspire to inovate and facilitated citizens to access digital solutions from any place of the country. Attaching online payment system has made it simplified and ensured speedy service to its stakeholders. It allows citizens to look for service applications and information regarding services and informs the end point of a service. Digital centers across the country ensure digital connectivity around the country. Users without internet by calling to



*People receiving services from ATM Booth of pvt. bank*



*Debit & Credit cards of different banks*

333 of the National Service Access Helpline also can get government services.

### **4IR Challenges**

Automation and artificial intelligence are the major changes the whole world is going to experience in coming years. At one side it threatens the job sector and on the other hand it gives opportunity to bring a competitive

market where excellence will get the highest attraction. Garments sector job market is at the risk of automation. Exploring the new opportunities will divert the challenge from risk to create new opportunities. In order to use the opportunity of 4th Industrial Revolution, we should focus on creating skilled human resource. Three things should be prioritized- development of industry through innovation of advanced technology, creation of trained workforce and environmental protection.

### **Small and Medium Enterprise and online banking**

Digital identity of a person or business can be used to understand the category of financial need of that person or business. eKYC (Know Your Customer) is widely used by Bangladesh Bank and other banks by which at anytime from anywhere of the world a banker can check the details of a customer. In the same way, trade license can be electronically registered to know the business and all categories of business of Bangladesh.



*Shopping by credit card*

### **Smart Safety and Legal Framework**

Digitization will allow wide spread of data of the citizen and business of Bangladesh. Cyber Security threats protection technology should be given high priority from now on. Smart data security will be required and violation of data security needs to be protected by legal framework.

### **Conclusion**

The government should focus on the good side of smart transformation and avoid the scary side. We have to move in parallel with the developed countries to achieve our goal of Vision 2041. It is to be kept in mind that we have to be also ready to welcome 5th Industrial Revolution.

***Md. Mamunur Rashid, Freelance Writer***



## Lt Col ATM Haider, Bir Uttam: A legendary Freedom Fighter

### Yeakub Ali

Haider's father moved to East Pakistan and was posted to Pabna, later to Sirajganj and from there to Panchagarh sub-division. Impatient of harassing transfers one after another, in 1951, Haider's father resigned from the job and settled down in Kishoreganj, a sub-divisional town and took moktari as profession.

From his childhood Haider was very fond of military. His dream was to join the army- to do something heroic in life. Juvenile Haider remained obsessed with this thought. However, the family members did not like the whim of the boy because of insecurity of military career as casualties of military personnel in the wars were huge. After matriculating from Ramananda High School (presently Kishoreganj Government High School) in 1958 and passing ISc in 1961 from Gurudayal College, Haider appeared for the Air Force Recruitment Test, and was declared physically unfit as being underweight. It made him utterly frustrated, although the family breathed a sigh of great relief. But Haider was desperate to fulfil his dream in any way. He thought that joining the army would be easier if he could take the recruitment test from West Pakistan. He sought family permission for higher studies in West Pakistan. Seeing that the boy had come to his mind, the family granted permission. In 1961, Haider left for West Pakistan alone. He got admitted into Lahore Islamia College from where he passed B.Sc in 1963. After completing MSc part-1 in Statistics at Punjab University, he qualified for the 4th Pakistan

Lt. Col Abu Taher Mohammad Haider (Muktu Miah), Sector Commander of Sector 2 of Liberation War of Bangladesh, came from our neighbouring village. Sector 2 of Liberation War covered an extensive area of Bangladesh territory. It included Noakhali, Lakshmipur, Feni, Cumilla, Chandpur, Brahmanbaria, the entire Dhaka city, Narayanganj, Manikganj, Shariatpur and part of Madaripur. The total area of territory was 19,526 square kilometers.

Haider's ancestral home is in the village of Kandail under Karimganj Upazila of Kishoreganj district. His father, Mohammed Israel, a police official served different police stations in undivided India during British period. Haider was born in 1942 in Bhowanipore of Kolkata. The boy was the second of his five siblings. After partition in 1947,

Military Academy War Course in 1965. To prove his genuine linkage with West Pakistan and keep himself safe from discrimination as a Bangali, in the application form Haider put the name of a West Pakistani teacher of the University as his local guardian. When the police visited to their house in Kishoreganj for verification of antecedents of the candidate, his family came to know for the first time that Haider was joining the army!

Haider underwent training at Kakul Military Academy in Abbottabad. After six months of training, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Artillery Force in August 1965. He was posted to Multan Cantonment in Punjab. Smart looking and sharply intelligent Haider drew the attention of the seniors and was



nominated for Special Service Group (SSG) commando training. Out of 360, only two Bangali officers, including Haider, successfully completed the course. Being promoted as Captain in 1969, he was posted in a Commando Battalion in Cumilla Cantonment. Next year, in 1970, inspired by Haider, his younger sister Sitara Begum, joined the Army Medical Corps and took posting in Cumilla. Sitara graduated from Dhaka Medical College.

Political situation deteriorated centering the transfer of power to the elected representatives of the majority party after the general elections of 1970. Unrest also surfaced within the army. Suspicion and mistrust of each other grew among the Bangali and West Pakistani soldiers. The westerners resorted to trickery and deception. As part of the weakening measure, they started to deploy Bangali units of the East Bengal Regiment here and there across the country. At that time there were 8 East Bengal regiments: 3 in West Pakistan and 5 in East Pakistan: 1st Bengal at Jossore, 2nd Bengal at Joydevpur, 3rd Bengal at Syedpur, 4th Bengal at Cumilla and 8th Bengal at Chittagong.

In the early days of the tumultuous March, Captain Haider was sent to Dhaka. He was told that there were threats of infiltration of Indians in North Bengal and ultimately he would be deployed there. In Dhaka, Haider had to stay in the tent. There was no sign of being sent to North Bengal. Once he went out of tent to visit her sister's house at Motijheel. On his return, Haider was challenged at the check-point. The sepoys asked for pass code but he didn't have any. Finally, at gun point, he was allowed to return to his tent. In such a captive state, Haider and his Bangali colleagues spent their days in the tents. When Haider asked for salary, he was advised



*Dhaka Cantonment*

to go back to his workplace at Cumilla. On March 20, Haider returned to Cumilla Cantonment in an army truck and sensed that the situation inside the cantonment was grave. He felt something ominous was going to take place. He noticed that the Bangalis were being segregated. On 25 March while sitting in his superior's office, Haider guessed from the conversation of his West Pakistani colleagues that something terrible was

going to happen that very day. Inside the cantonment the West Pakistani soldiers were in position with guns ready to trigger. Haider did not dare even to return to the mess alone. He remained in his boss's chamber with the hope to return to his mess along with the boss. In the evening he returned in boss's jeep and decided to escape instantly by breaking the bathroom window. He took the pistol with him. By that time, the search for Haider had begun to disarm and arrest him. Crawling in the dark, crossing the thickets, uphill and downhill, Haider finally managed to get out of the Mainamati Cantonment and took shelter in a neighbouring village.

The next day Haider set out for Brahmanbaria on foot. It may be noted that since the beginning of March, a company led by Major Shafaat Jamil of Fourth East Bengal was deployed in Brahmanbaria to maintain law and order there. On March 27, Bengali soldiers revolted and captured all the West Pakistanis there. Major Khaled Musharraf who was sent to Shamsheernagar of Moulvibazar to guard the so-called infiltration of Naxalite there joined Shafaat Jamil's company and assumed the responsibility of the commanding officer. Fearing air raids, Khaled-Shafaat were forced to move their company towards the East Pakistan-India border. They built a base at Teliapara-estate near the border of Madhavpur in Habiganj. A small unit was left at Brahmanbaria to guide the scattered revolting soldiers. Haider reported to this unit. Hereached Teliapara on March 30 and reported to Major Khaled Musharraf. Knowing about the details of the commando, Khaled received Haider very warmly. They fought together throughout the War of Liberation. Close brotherly bond developed between the two. Miraculously this bond lasted till the last day of their lives.

Initially, Khaled Mosharraf gave Captain Haider the task of destroying Pakistani communication system with dynamite: blowing up of many bridges and culverts on the Cumilla-Dhaka, Cumilla-Sylhet, Cumilla-Chittagong road and railway lines. India's BSF supported Haider with manpower and explosives. Accompanied by two Indian commandos, On April 14, Haider visited his parents' house. His mission was to destroy a bridge and a railway bridge near Nandail on Kishoreganj-Mymensingh route to thwart the advance of the Pak Army towards Haider's home town Kishoreganj. They accomplished the task and went back to their posts.

Teliapara is said to be the first military headquarters of Bangladesh Liberation War. On April 4, in presence of Awami League MNA Colonel (Retd.) MAG Osmani, an important meeting was held at Teliapara Tea Garden Bungalow. The meeting was attended by Lt Col MA Rab, Maj CR Dutta, Maj Quazi Nuruzzaman, Lt Col SM Reza, Maj Ziaur Rahman, Maj KM Shafiullah, Maj Khaled Mosharraf, Maj Shafaat Jamil, Maj Mainul Hossain Chowdhury, and Maj Nurul Islam. BSF officials from the other side of the border also joined. Osmani discussed with the revolting army officers in details and decided the next course of action. On April 11, Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad announced from temporary Siliguri Radio Station that Bangladesh territory had been divided into 8 military zones. The rebel Bangali troops of the East Bengal Regiments were building resistance. But in the face of full scale attack of Pak Army, by April 30, they were forced to retreat into Indian territory. Thousands of refugees and asylum seekers were also entering India in masses. Till this time on behalf of the Government of India the BSF provided meager assistance to Bangali troops. From 30 April, the Indian Army came forward to help the Liberation War of Bangladesh. The training for those who wanted to join the Muktibahini started in May. On 19 May, the government-in-exile, by rearranging the military zones, divided the territory of Bangladesh into 11 sectors.

The headquarters of Sector 2 was initially established at Motinagar of West Tripura. Motinagar, a BSF base on the Cumilla border, is known as birthplace of Sector 2. Fearing the Pakistani attack, the sector headquarters was later moved to Melaghar further inside Tripura. This place is 50 km south of Agartala and just 10 km from the Cumilla border. The sector's regular forces were made up of Bangali troops from the 4th East Bengal Regiment and EPR members from Cumilla, Brahmanbaria and Feni posts. A total of 35 thousand guerilla members received training here. The crack platoon, urban guerillas who conducted quick operations in Dhaka were the freedom fighters of this sector. And Captain Haider was the guru of the guerillas. From the beginning of war till September 21 Maj Khaled Musharraf was the sector commander and ATM Haider was the deputy sector commander of Sector 2. Training for freedom fighters in other sectors was absolutely controlled by the Indian Army while in Sector 2, the scenario was different. Beside the Indian Army, Haider gave the freedom-seekers special training in his own way. Many of the young people who thronged the Motinagar-Melaghar were graduate-level students. The brilliant 'Student Company' was formed out of them. As a Deputy Sector Commander, Haider had to be busy with selecting boys for operations, training them up, making them practice day after day. He had to be on the move all the time to get food and weapons for thousands of freedom fighters. In June, the first group of guerrillas was sent to Dhaka.

His colleagues and disciple guerillas recounted that Haider was a well-mannered person. Although a senior army official, he never humiliated the civilians to the least. Rather, he showed proper respect to them. He attracted everyone rich and poor, educated and uneducated. As a result, the guerrillas felt comfortable under Haider's leadership. 'The body was like a bundle of muscle made of whips and steel springs. The mood was very cool', said a fellow soldier. Guerrillas considered him as elder brother, guardian and friend. They acquired many basic human qualities from Haider. Haider got his place in the cozy corner of the hearts of these young guerrilla fighters. Haider was promoted to the rank of Major during the war. When



Khaled Musharraf was appointed as the Force Commander of K Force, Major Haider was appointed as the Sector Commander for Sector 2. In October, Interim President Syed Nazrul Islam, Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad and other political leaders visited Sector 2 headquarters at Melaghar.

When the defeat of the Pakistanis in the war was confirmed, Major Haider along with Brigadier Sabeg Singh of India left Melaghar for Dhaka. They reached Dhaka in the morning of December 16. Haider and Sabeg Singh ordered the Allied and Liberation forces to maintain law and order in the city. Major Haider was present at the surrender ceremony at the race-course maidan. Niazi was taken to the surrender platform by General Arora and Major Haider. The next day, on December 17 Haider resumed the operation of radio station at Shahbag. He urged the freedom fighters to maintain law and order. He appealed to the people not to take the law into their own hands.

After the independence of the country, Haider returned to the barrack. He was awarded the title of Bir Uttam for his outstanding contribution in the Liberation War. In 1972 he was posted in Cumilla Cantonment with the task of forming 13 East Bengal. He was appointed as Commanding Officer. In 1974 he was promoted to the rank of Lt Colonel. ATM Haider was made the commanding officer of the Eighth Bengal in Chittagong. The next year he was transferred to Jessore. Before joining there, he was posted at Ruma Army Camp in Bandarban. He joined there on 21 October. After the assassination of Bangabandhu on August 15, the army was in turmoil. After receiving an urgent telegram from his father, Haider arrived in Dhaka on November 4 by a motorcycle as there was no other transport was found. At that time there was no government in the country. After completing personal work, Haider went to the cantonment to meet Khaled Musharraf, his boss during Liberation War. Earlier on November 3 there was a coup in the army led by Khaled Musharraf and he was then a Major General and Army Chief. Haider came out with Khaled Musharraf from Bangabhaban on the night of November 6 after receiving information about the counter-coup against Khaled in the army. Along with Khaled Musharraf, Colonel ATM Haider was killed in captivity in the morning of November 7.

A hero of our Liberation War Lt. Colonel Haider is lying in eternal sleep in front of their house at Sholakia in Kishoreganj. He was unmarried. He was only 33 at the time of his death. The surviving family members include his sister Captain Dr. Sitara Begum, Bir Pratik and a brother ATM Safder (Jitu Miah) who is also a freedom fighter. Sitaralives in US and brother Jitu Miah is settled in Kishoreganj town. Even though he is a legend in the liberation war and military history of Bangladesh, Haider is going into oblivion to the people of his home district. There is not much effort to protect the memory of this great hero. Kishoreganj Municipality has named the road in front of his house after Haider. I don't know how many times I visited the village of Kandail in my youth. I never heard his name. There is no discussion about this hero. How will the spirit of liberation war and patriotism be transmitted among the new generation? A sector commander is not born in every house. In December, the month of victory, we pay our deepest respects to the memory of this great hero.

***Yeakub Ali, Director (Admin & Finance), Department of Mass Communication, Dhaka***



## Squirrels: Neglected Mammals of Bangladesh

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

Red Silk Cotton tree! A medium-sized squirrel with orange belly and dark color is plucking the cotton fruit from the tree and picking the cotton from it nicely, skillfully and storing them on a branch. I was amazed at the intelligence of the little creature. It was hard to believe unless I see it with my own eyes. You might be interested to know why the squirrel picked the cotton. The reason behind this is that it will breed; and for making nest it need soft cotton to provide lining of the nest. Therefore, it was busy with picking cotton. Isn't that surprising?

The squirrels are spectacular creatures of nature. They are slender-bodied small mammals with very long bushy tails and are the members of the family Sciuridae, which includes small to medium-size rodents. The living squirrels are divided into five subfamilies, namely Sciurinae, Sciurillinae, Ratufinae, Callosciurinae and Xerinae, with about 58 genera and some 285 species. They occur in 3 groups, namely ground squirrels (including chipmunks, marmots and prairie dogs), flying squirrels and tree squirrels, which differ distinctly from each other in ecology and morphology. Squirrels of these 3 groups seem to have evolved distinct social structure and behaviour. They are amongst the most widespread of mammals, occupying every continent, but do not occur in Australia, Antarctica and Madagascar (except 2 introduced species). The earliest known fossilised squirrels date back from the Eocene epoch (41.3 million to 33.7 million years ago). The word *squirrel* came from the Anglo-Norman *esquirel* for the first time in 1327, which is from the Old French *escurel*, the reflex of a Latin word *sciurus*. It was taken from the Ancient Greek word *skiouros* means 'shadow-tailed', referring to the long bushy tail that many of its members possesses. In Bangla *squirrel* is commonly known as *kathbirali*.

As part of the annual study tour of 4th year Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) student of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, Gazipur, we came to Sajek, the famous Cloud Kingdom of Rangamati. We spent the whole day in the neighbourhood of Ruilui Para and had a wonderful traditional dinner with bamboo chicken. After a good sleep I woke up early the next morning, came out at the verandah of my cottage and found wonderful clouds at my eye level. Before breakfast, I went out for Konglak Para with everyone. While crossing a row of Indian Coral trees, suddenly I stopped to see different species of small birds taking nectar from the bright red flowers of the Coral trees. After taking some nice pictures of birds, as approached to the neighbourhood, I stopped to see an unprecedented scene in a

Worldwide squirrels are ranging in size from 10-14 centimetre (cm) and 10 gram (g) for tropical pygmy squirrels to the Bhutan giant flying squirrel at up to 1.27 metres (m) in total length and 7.5 kilogram (kg) marmots. Squirrels mostly have large eyes and keen sight with a remarkable capacity to judge distances between tree branches. In general, their fur is soft and silky, though much thicker in some species than others. In most squirrel species, the hind limbs are longer than the fore limbs, while all species have either 4 or 5 toes on each foot.

Squirrels live in almost every habitat, from tropical rainforest to semiarid desert, avoiding only the high polar regions and the driest deserts. They are mostly arboreal; predominantly herbivorous, subsisting on seeds and nuts, but many eats insects and even small vertebrates.

Squirrels mate either once or twice a year and, following a gestation period of 21-42 days, give birth to a number of offspring that varies according to species. The young are altricial, being born naked, toothless and blind. Many juvenile squirrels die in the first year of their life. In most species, the female alone looks after the young, which are weaned at 42-70 days and become sexually mature by the end of their first year. Adults can have a lifespan of 5-10 years in the wild, some can survive 10-20 years in captivity. Compared to the whole world only 9 species of squirrels are found in Bangladesh, namely Himalayan striped squirrel (or western striped squirrel), Pallas's squirrel, orange-bellied Himalayan squirrel, Irrawaddy squirrel, five-striped palm squirrel, black giant squirrel, particoloured flying squirrel, common giant flying squirrel (or red giant flying squirrel) and Hodgson's giant flying squirrel. Among them, Himalayan striped squirrel is considered as Critically Endangered in Bangladesh. The scientific classification or taxonomy of squirrels, for example, according to the Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS), is therefore:

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Rodentia

Suborder: Sciuromorpha

Family: Sciuridae

Genus: *Ratufa*

Species: *Ratufa bicolor* (black giant squirrel)

Of the 9 squirrels species of Bangladesh, present status, distribution, behavior, biological data etc. of 5, those I encountered in different areas in the country, are briefly discussed below:

**Pallas's Squirrel** (*Callosciurus erythraeus*): It is also known as the red-bellied tree squirrel whose Bangla name is lalche-buk kathbirali or kalo kathbirali. This uncommon and Least Concern species is found in mixed evergreen hill forests of northeast (Sylhet division) and southeast (Chittagong division) as well as north (deciduous forest of Gozni, Sherpur) regions. Globally, it is widely distributed in different countries of south Asia, China, Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan and Malaysia.

It is a medium-sized tree squirrel with a head to body length of 16-28 centimetre (cm), tail of 11-26 cm and weight of 310-460 grams (g). Both male and female are similar in size and appearance. The colour of the pelt varies between dark



*A Pallas's squirrel is plucking and storing cotton as bedding materials of the nest at Sajek*

brown, blackish-brown or black on the upper part of the body, depending on the subspecies. Throat to belly is orange to red. Tail is dark brown to blackish, but some individual has reddish tail tip. Legs are small; ears are small and long. Nose is short.

Pallas's squirrel is found in tropical and subtropical evergreen, deciduous broadleaf, and subalpine conifer woodlands. It is diurnal and arboreal, but occasionally come to the ground. Found alone or in

pairs. The species is primarily herbivores, and feeds on different types of fruits, leaves, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and barks of plants. Also eat small amounts of insects, and occasional bird eggs. Its call is harsh and vibrating chuk-chuk-chuk.

The species breeds throughout the year. Males make loud calls prior to, and after, mating. Usually make roughly rounded nest called drey on tree branches by aggregating leaves and small sticks, and use soft cotton as bedding materials. Nest has inner chamber with entry in one side. Gestation period lasts for 47-49 days, after which female give birth up to 2-5 offspring. The young leave the nest when 40-50 days old, and become sexually mature at one year of age. Lifespan is up to 17 years in captivity.

**Irrawaddy Squirrel** (*Callosciurus pygerythrus*): It is also known as hoary-bellied Himalayan squirrel. Bangla name is badami kathbirali, kota or chorkata.

It is very common and widely distributed, mainly in forests including the Sunderbans and well-wooded villages of Bangladesh. The species is considered as Least Concern by IUCN, Bangladesh. There is no other species of squirrel that lives in all forest ecosystem of the country except this one. Outside Bangladesh, it is also widely distributed in south Asia including India, Nepal and Bhutan, southern China as well as western and central Myanmar.



*An Irrawaddy Squirrel getting down from a tree in the Sunderbans*

It is a medium-sized squirrel with elongated body. The head to body length is 18.7-23 cm, tail is 11-22 cm and weight is 230-300 g. There is some variation in fur colour between different populations, but the upper parts are un-patterned brown to olive-brown, and the under parts are buff. It has eye-ring. Tail tip is brownish. Pale patches may be present on the hips.

Irrawaddy squirrel is an adaptable species that can thrive in a variety of forest types including deciduous broad-leaved woodland, coniferous evergreen forests, mixed agricultural areas, secondary growth forests, mangrove forests, parks and well-wooded villages. Population densities are higher in disturbed forest, when compared with intact forest. It is diurnal and arboreal, but occasionally come to the ground. Found alone or in pairs. Its diet includes a wide range of plant materials including barks, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, flowers and nectars as well as lichens. However, some may eat insects and small vertebrates. Its call is harsh and vibrating chuk-chuk-chuk.

The species breeds year-round and builds a huge and roughly rounded nest on tree tops with dry grass, leaves and twigs, and use soft cotton as bedding materials. Nest has inner chamber with entry in one side. Usually give birth to 3-4 offspring once in a year.

**Five-striped Palm Squirrel (*Funambulus pennantii*):** Also known as northern palm squirrel. Bangla name is panch dora kathbirali or dora kathbirali. This very common and Least Concern species is widely distributed in the west of Jamuna River, mainly in Khulna, Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions as well as in the Dhaka city. It is the only squirrel species of Bangladesh that does not live in forests. Outside Bangladesh, it is also found in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.

It is a smaller squirrel with a head to body length of 15 cm, tail of 15-17 cm and weight of 135-147 g. Hair of the back is dark reddish-brown. Five whitish stripes



*A five-striped palm squirrel at Rajshahi University campus, Rajshahi*



*A five-striped palm squirrel*



*Nest of five-striped palm squirrel on the bamboo tree at Poba, Rajshahi*

run from neck to the base of the tail. Under parts are whitish. Head and legs are light brown. Ears are also light brown, distinct and triangular.

The five-striped palm squirrel is a very adaptable species. It occurs in tropical and subtropical dry deciduous forests, montane forests, scrublands, plantations, grasslands, arable lands, well wooded villages, gardens, parks and urban areas. The species is diurnal, arboreal and terrestrial. Comes to ground more frequently than other species of squirrels of the country. It occurs in single or in pairs. Diet includes fruits, vegetables, nuts, bark of plants, date juice, small insects etc. It can cause damage to cultivated fruits like guava, sapota, mango, etc.

The species mainly breeds from July to October. Each time female mates with a different male. It makes a huge nest with small twigs on the canopies of tall trees. After 40-45 days of gestation female give birth to 1-5 offspring. Male and female matures respectively at 10 and 7-8 months of age. Lifespan in captivity is around 5 years.

### **Black Giant Squirrel**

*(Ratufa bicolor)*: It is also known as Malayan giant squirrel. Bangla name is boro kathbirali, brihot kathbirali or ram kota. The species is rare and Vulnerable in Bangladesh. The squirrel is only found in mixed evergreen forests of Rema-Kalenga wildlife sanctuary of Hobigonj as well as Adampur and Lawachora of Moulvibazar. Outside Bangladesh, the species is widely distributed in Bhutan, India, Nepal, Myanmar,



*A black giant squirrel at Rema-Kalenga wildlife sanctuary, Habiganj*



*A black giant squirrel at Rema-Kalenga wildlife sanctuary*

China, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia. Its global trend is decreasing.

It is the largest squirrel of Bangladesh with a head to body length of 39-42 cm, tail length of 60 cm and average weight of 2 kg. Upper parts are black, maroon-black or reddish-black with buff-coloured or whitish under parts. Bushy tail and large ears are black. Ears have hairy tufts.

The species is found in mixed evergreen forests and hilly areas of northeastern part of Bangladesh. It is diurnal and arboreal. It is very shy and fearful mammal that usually occurs singly and sometimes in pairs. Feeds on bark, leaves, fruits and seeds, and rarely insects. Call is loud and vibrating chudd-chudd-chudd.

Black giant squirrel breeds from March to September. It makes huge roughly rounded nests in trees by aggregating leaves and small sticks. Nest has inner chamber with entry in one side. After 32 days of gestation it delivers one offspring, but rarely twin. Give birth twice a year. Offspring matures in 3 years and can live up to 19 years in captivity.

**Particoloured Flying Squirrel (*Hylopetes alboniger*):** Its Bangla it is known as bichitro-ronga uronto kathbirali or choto uronto kathbirali. Although, it is rare and Endangered in Bangladesh, but is Least Concern in the world. It occurs in and around mixed evergreen forests, betel plantation and other well-vegetated areas of northeast and southeast Bangladesh. Beside the country, it is also found in Bhutan, India, Nepal, Myanmar, China, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Vietnam and Thailand. It is threatened by habitat loss and its global trend is decreasing.

It is a small-sized flying squirrel with skin fold between fore- and hindlimbs and between hindlimbs and base of the tail. Head to body length is 17.5-22.5 cm and tail is 18.7-20.2 cm and weight is 236-270 g. It has a white throat that extends to grey forward of the cheek below the eye and behind the ears to form a 'half-collar'. Ears are comparatively large and covered with minute black hairs on both sides. Upper parts are dark greyish-brown or brownish and under parts are white or buff. Tail is greyish to greyish-brown, paler at base, darker at tip. Feet are dark brown.

Juveniles have black upper parts and white underparts.

Particoloured flying squirrel lives in mixed evergreen montane, oak and rhododendron forests and plantations in the hills. This nocturnal and crepuscular species occurs single, in pairs or in small family groups. It is mainly arboreal and rarely comes to the ground. It glides from tree to tree.



*A particoloured flying squirrel with its baby at the Bonnyoprani Abhoyasram of Shitesh Ranjan Dev, Shreemongol, Moulvibazar*

Puts head under body while sleeping, forming a rounded shape. Feeds on fruits, nuts, shoots, buds and leaves. Very fond of ripe tamarind. Call at night with a high pitched voice.

Breeding occurs mainly from February to June. It makes its nest in tree holes and give birth to 2-3 young.

**Conclusion:** Compared to the whole world, only 9 species of squirrel species occurs in the country. Of them 3 species are considered as threatened by IUCN, Bangladesh, namely Himalayan striped squirrel (Critically Endangered), particoloured flying squirrel (Endangered), black giant squirrel (Vulnerable). Besides Hodgson's giant flying squirrel is considered as Near Threatened. As all the squirrel species found in Bangladesh are mainly frugivorous (eat fruits like especially guava, mango, cocconut etc), therefore, they are considered by the fruit gardener as pests. So, human-squirrel conflicts existed in the country. As a results, sometime they are captured and beaten to death. In practical, these wonderful and spectacular creatures are nowadays became one of the most neglected mammals in the country. Therefore, for the conservation of natural environment of Bangladesh we should give them a chance to survive.

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## Ministry of Information and Broadcasting observed the historic 7th March



*Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud MP delivering speech*

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting held a Photo and Book Exhibition at Suhrawardy Udyan in the morning, and in the afternoon a discussion meeting was held at Tathya Bhaban on the occasion of historic 7th March.

The photo and book exhibition on the life and struggle of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was jointly organised by Press Information Department and Department of Films and Publications. at Suhrawardy Udyan Principal Information Officer Md. Shahinoor Miah inaugurated the photo exhibition while Md. Nizamul Kabir, Director General of Mass Communication, Md. Zashim Uddin, Director General of Bangladesh Film Archive and Acting DG of DFP Mohammad Ali Sarker were also present among others.



*Officials of different departments attended the function on 7th March 2023*



*Book exhibition at Suhrawardy Udyan on the occasion of 7th March*

In the afternoon a film show on the life of Bangabandhu was screened followed by a discussion meeting. Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud MP attended the function as chief guest while Secretary of the Ministry Md. Humayun Kabir Khandaker presided over the meeting. Additional Secretary Md. Faruque Ahmed gave the welcoming speech and Director General of Press Institute of Bangladesh Mr. Zafar Wazed was the key note speaker of this programme. The speakers highlighted different aspects and significance of the historic 7th March.

Principal Information Officer Md. Shahinoor Miah, Md. Zashim Uddin, Director General of Bangladesh Film Archive, Md. Nizamul Kabir, Director General of Mass Communication, Faizul Haque, ADG of National Institute of Mass Communication, and M. Saifullah, Vice Chairman of Bangladesh Film Censor Board were also present among others.



*Photo exhibition at Suhrawardy Udyan*

*Report : Tania Akter*

## Ministry of Information and Broadcasting celebrates 103rd Birthday of Bangabandhu and National Children's Day



*Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud MP attended the discussion as chief guest on the occasion of 17th March at DFP auditorium*

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting held a discussion meeting on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and National Children's Day on 17th March at Tathya Bhaban.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud MP attended the function as the chief guest while Secretary of the Ministry Md. Humayun Kabir Khandaker presided over the meeting. The programme was also attended by Principal Information Officer Md. Shahinoor Miah and Director General of Press Institute of Bangladesh Mr. Zafor Wazed.



*Md. Humayun Kabir Khandaker, secretary of Information and Broadcasting Ministry addressing at the function*



*Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud MP delivering speech at the function*

The speakers discussed about the life and struggle of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

In the programme, Faizul Haque, Director General of National Institute of Mass Communication, Md. Nizamul Kabir, Director General of Mass Communication and M. Saifullah, Vice Chairman of Bangladesh Film Censor Board were also present among senior officials of the ministry and attached departments.



*Officials of different departments attended the function on 17th March 2023*

*Report : Nazim Uddin*

# Major National Events

January-March

1 January, 2023

### PM opens month-long Dhaka International Trade Fair

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 1, laid emphasis on expansion of domestic market and increasing purchasing power of people to make the local industry more effective.

‘Alongside the export, we have to put concentration on expansion of domestic market and increasing the purchasing power of people. It will make our industry more effective and production will be boosted,’ she said.

The premier made this remarks while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the month-long Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF)-2023 at Bangabandhu Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre at Purbachal on the city’s outskirts. The Ministry of Commerce and the Export Promotion Bureau jointly organised the trade fair.

The Prime Minister again put stress on finding new markets and products for diversifying the export basket of the country.

‘We are dependent on limited export items which need to be diversified. The more we will be able to diversify our products, the more we will find new markets and the more we can expand our business and incomes,’ she said.

While many countries are struggling to keep their economies afloat in the wake of

the pandemic and the Ukraine war, the Bangladesh economy is ‘still dynamic’, the prime minister said.

Traders from at least 12 countries, including India, Hong Kong, Turkey, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, Pakistan, Thailand and Nepal will exhibit their products at 17 pavilions, mini pavilions and stalls at the fair.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina goes round different stalls after inaugurating the 27th edition of the Dhaka International Trade Fair at the Bangabandhu Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre in Purbachal on January, 1*



*A police official is decorated with a badge by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 3*

The fair will be open daily to visitors from 10 am to 9 pm until January 31. *Source : The Financial Express*

**3 January, 2023**

**PM eyes world-class ‘Smart Police’ force**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina vowed on January 3 to transform Bangladesh’s primary law-enforcement agency into a world-class ‘Smart Police’ force, driven by knowledge, science and technology.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked the police personnel to continue their

service towards the people to sustain the public trust they have earned.

‘...serve the people keeping the humanitarian aspects in mind so that the trust and confidence among the mass people regarding the police force remain intact,’ she said.

The Prime Minister said this while inaugurating the Police Week-2023 at the capital’s Rajarbagh Police Lines.

The premier later handed over Bangladesh Police Medal (BPM) Bravery, President Police Medal (PPM) Bravery, BPM-Service and PPM-Service to 117 police officials for earning pride for the force by setting exemplary standard of bravery and commitment, endangering their lives in the past one year.

Of them, 17 have received the BPM-Bravery and 25 got the PPM-Bravery while 25 got BPM Service and 50 got the PPM-Service awards. *Source: The Financial Express*

**6 January, 2023**

**Our next goal is to build Smart Bangladesh : PM**

Focusing on the progress of the country under the AL-led governments since 2009, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on January, 6 the image of Bangladesh became brighter in the world arena in the last 14 years.

‘Today none treats Bangladesh



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the nation on January, 6 evening on state-owned Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar, marking the 4th anniversary of her current government*

as a country of floods, droughts and disasters. Bangladesh is now an emerging economy and a role model for development,' she said.

PM Hasina said Awami League has been in the charge of governing the country for 14 years in a row after the formation of government in 2009.

'Our country has progressed a lot. But we have to take it forward further. Achieving a developed and prosperous Bangladesh is our goal. After building Digital Bangladesh, our next goal is to build a Smart Bangladesh,' she said.

The premier was addressing the nation on January, 6 evening through state-owned Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar, marking the 4th anniversary of her current government formed on January 7, 2019 following the 11th national election held on December 30, 2018. *Source: The Financial Express*

**7 January, 2023**

### **PM inaugurated 27 development projects**

Prime Minister and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina reassured the countrymen on January, 7 that her party and government will always stand beside them in their sufferings, saying AL's only motto is to serve the people.

'We're always beside the people and our motto is to serve them. The Awami League government is doing everything whatever necessary to get the countrymen rid of sufferings,' she said.

The premier made the remarks in her introductory speech in the first joint meeting



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated 27 development projects at a programme in Tungipara on January, 7. She also laid the foundation stone of another project there. The projects are located in Gopalganj district*

of the AL's newly elected executive, advisory and national committee at its Tungipara Upazila office.

Earlier, Prime Minister opened 27 development projects and laid the foundation stone of another scheme as part of ensuring the overall development of Gopalganj. *Source: The Financial Express*

**12 January, 2023**

**PM receives title of IDF global ambassador for diabetes**



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January, 12 received the medal and citation of 'IDF Global Ambassador for Diabetes'*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January, 12 received the medal and citation of IDF Global Ambassador for Diabetes.

She has been offered the first-ever 'Honorary title of the Global Ambassador for Diabetes' in recognition of her role to ensure affordable access to health care for patients with diabetes and other non-communicable diseases during the opening ceremony of the IDF world diabetes congress held in Lisbon, Portugal on 5 December 2022.

The Prime Minister accepted the title during a call on by IDF president professor Akhtar Hussain on August 24, 2022 at Ganobhaban, Dhaka.

Bangladesh ambassador to Portugal accepted the title on her behalf. *Source: The New Age*

**16 January, 2023**

**PM inaugurates 50 model mosques in second phase**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January, 16 inaugurated 50 model mosques along with Islamic cultural centres in the second phase.

She inaugurated the mosques in different parts of the country joining virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

These model mosques includes separate places for aju (ablution) and namaj along with air-conditioned system.

Besides, there will be registration and training arrangements for haji pilgrims, Imam training centre, research centre and Islamic library, autism corner, rituals before burial, car parking facility, hifzakhana, pre-primary education and Quran learning arrangement, conference room for Islamic cultural activities and Islamic dawat, Islamic books sale centre, boarding facility for local and foreign guests along with the mosques.

Earlier, on June 10, 2021, PM Sheikh Hasina inaugurated 50 model mosques in the first phase, out of total 564, simultaneously across the country, aimed at spreading the true messages of Islam for removing misconceptions about religion.





*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates 50 model mosques in different parts of the country virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban on January, 16*

The purpose of the project is promotion of Islamic brotherhood and its values as well as disseminating the essence of Islam against extremism and militancy as the religion never supports those.

Under category A, some 69 four-storey mosques having the elevator facility and a floor space of 2,360.09 square metres each are being constructed in 64 districts and city corporation areas.

Under category B, 475 mosques are being built with a floor space of 1680.14 square metres each, while 16 mosques under C category in coastal areas will have a floor space of 2,052.12 square metres each. *Source: The Financial Express*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina holds a copy after unveiling the book titled 'Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman-er Sarkar: Desh Nirmaner Moulik Ruprekha' written by her Principal Secretary Mohammad Tofazzel Hossain Miah at her office in the city on January, 23*

**23 January, 2023**

**PM unveils new book on Bangabandhu and his government**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January, 23 unveiled a book written focusing on the government of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and its basic outlines of building a new Bangladesh.

PM's Principal Secretary M. Tofazzel Hossain Miah composed the book titled 'Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman-er Sarkar: Desh Nirmaner Moulik Ruprekha.'

The book highlighted a total of 47 issues related to the management of Bangabandhu's government, including the administration system, cabinet, budget, economy, foreign policy, planning, defence, infrastructure and communication, women's development, trade policy, legislation, civil service, education and human resources.

Sheikh Hasina wrote the preface of the book published by Pathak Shamabesh.

The book reflected the way Bangabandhu wanted to build Bangladesh, which would be research and guiding documents for the researchers, thinkers, economists, policy makers and political leaders who want to realize Bangabandhu's dream of building a Golden Bengal.

The book will be available at Pathak Shamabesh, Kataban, Dhaka. *Source: The Financial Express*

**24 January, 2023**

### **PM gives 25 point directives to DCs**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 24 directed the deputy commissioners to make all-out efforts to increase food production and exercise austerity in using electricity and public funds.

She also asked them to avoid less-important projects to face the current situation as well as to be devoted to building a 'Smart Bangladesh' by 2041.

The premier issued a 25-point directive while opening the three-day conference of deputy commissioners at Shapla Hall of her office in the city.

The PM asked the DCs to ensure that the people receive services in time from the government offices and acquire satisfaction of the service-seekers.

Talking about the development projects, the PM directed the DCs to undertake the essential and fruitful projects considering local aspects and their possible outcomes as well as to supervise the quality of project works. *Source: The Financial Express*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina along with divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners (DCs) poses for a photograph during the inaugural session of the three-day DC Conference- 2023 at the Prime Minister's Office in Dhaka on January, 24*

**25 January, 2023**

**Train every student as a scout to build Smart Bangladesh: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 25 asked the authorities concerned to take steps for imparting scout training to students in the country’s educational institutions to develop them as worthy citizens for building Smart Bangladesh.

‘You will have to take steps so that every student of all educational institutes would obtain scouting training. If so, I believe the worthy citizens would be developed in our country for building Sonar Bangla (golden Bengal) or smart Bangladesh,’ she said pointing at Bangladesh Scouts and the ministries related to education.

The premier said this at the concluding ceremony of the 32nd Asia-Pacific and 11th National Scout Jamboree at National Scout Training Center, Mouchak, Gazipur.

Bangladesh Scouts is hosting the 9-day regional and national scout jamboree from 19-27 January 2023. *Source: The Financial Express*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the concluding ceremony of the 32nd Asia-Pacific Scout Jamboree and 11th National Scout Jamboree 2023 at the National Scouts Training Centre at Mouchak in Gazipur on January, 25*

**26 January, 2023**

**Digital connectivity to be key to Smart Bangladesh: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on January 26 digital connectivity would be the key equipment to transform the country into a Smart Bangladesh.

‘Digital connectivity will be the key tool to build Smart Bangladesh. Smart citizens, smart economy, smart government and smart society will be built on the basis of digital connectivity,’ she said.

The premier said this in a video message aired at the inaugural ceremony of the Digital Bangladesh Fair-2023 at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka.

The Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications arranged the three-day fair aimed at showcasing the IT and ITES products and services in the country.

In her message, the Prime Minister also hoped that the digital goods would play a significant role in investments and exports.

‘Digital Bangladesh is now a reality. Our next target is to build Smart Bangladesh and Smart Nation. There is no alternative to using ultramodern technology to achieve the target of building Smart Bangladesh,’ she said.

*Source: The Financial Express*

**31 January 2023**

**PM asks Muslim Ummah to collectively stand beside Palestinians**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January, 31 asked the Muslim Ummah to collectively stand beside the Palestinians.

The premier made this call

when the ambassadors and high commissioners of seven OIC member states, who are stationed in Dhaka, paid a joint courtesy call on her at her office in the city.

Hasina said Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman supported Palestine and following this she herself has been standing beside the Palestinians.

‘Muslim Ummah should collectively stand by the Palestinians,’ she was quoted as saying.

They mentioned that some seven million Bangladeshi people are working



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaking in video message to inaugurate ‘Digital Bangladesh Fair-2023’ at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka on January, 26*



*Ambassadors and high commissioners of seven OIC member states paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city on January, 31*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the month-long Amar Ekushey Book Fair- 2023, the annual event of book lovers and publishers, on the premises of Bangla Academy in Dhaka on February, 1*

in the Middle East countries, making a huge contribution to the economies of the host countries. *Source: The Financial Express*

**1 February, 2023**

**PM opens Ekushey Book Fair 2023**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 1 blasted those who argue for an unelected government, saying that many conspiracies would be hatched to disturb the current stability in the country.

“Now there’ll be many sorts of conspiracy to spoil a stable environment. But I believe in the people and work for them. Our goal is to serve the country,” she said.

The premier said this while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the month-long Amar Ekushey Book Fair-2023, the annual event of booklovers and publishers, in the capital.

She opened the country’s biggest book fair, joining its inaugural ceremony in person on the Bangla Academy premise after a gap of three years induced by Covid-19 pandemic. *Source: The Financial Express*

**2 February, 2023**

**PM launches work on underground metro rail**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 2 launched the construction of the country’s first-ever underground metro rail, hailing it as another milestone in Bangladesh’s journey towards progress under her leadership.

‘Another milestone has been set up in the development journey of Bangladesh. We’ve opened the construction work of underground metro rail,’ she said.

The premier was addressing a civic rally arranged at Purbachal on the outskirts of Dhaka city to mark the historic inauguration of construction work of Mass Rapid Transit Line-1 (MRT-1), the country’s first-ever underground metro project.

She opened the construction work of the 31.241-km MRT Line-1, unveiling its inaugural plaque there in Rupganj under Narayanganj.

The MRT Line-1 having both underground and elevated facilities will be



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opens the construction work of the country's first-ever 31.241-km underground metro rail project, Mass Rapid Transit Line-1 (MRT-1), at a ceremony held at Purbachal in Narayanganj's Rugganj, on the outskirts of Dhaka, on February, 2

constructed at an estimated cost of Tk 525.61 billion by 2026. *Source: The Financial Express*

**5 February, 2023**

**Motivate people to pay tax: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 5 asked the National Board of Revenue to launch campaigns at the grassroots also for motivating the people to pay tax as the country's socio-economic condition has improved radically in the last 14 years.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the inaugural session of a two-day revenue conference, first of its kind in the country, at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka, on February, 5

‘If you carry out campaigns there (Upazila and Union levels) in a good manner, the people will spontaneously come forward (to pay tax). They (taxpayers) are now getting services. So, people will pay tax to avail the services,’ she said.

The premier said this while inaugurating the Revenue Conference 2023 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

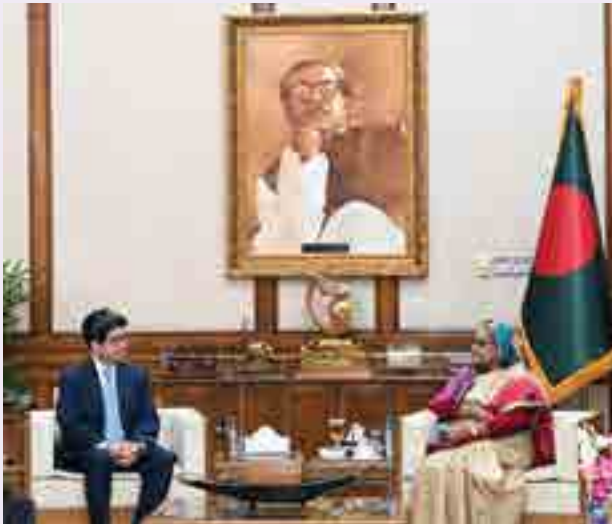
The National Board of Revenue (NBR) organised the two-day first such conference to develop the country’s revenue management system. *Source: The Financial Express*

**9 February, 2023**

### **Japan wants to invest in several sectors of BD**

Japan wants to invest in several sectors of Bangladesh, including the sugar industry, biomass power generation, and prepaid gas meter industry.

Governor of Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) Hayashi Nobumitsu expressed the interest when he paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the latter’s official residence Ganobhaban in Dhaka on February, 9.



*Governor of Japan Bank for International Cooperation Hayashi Nobumitsu paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Ganobhaban in the city on February, 9*

She said a prepaid gas meter factory can be built under a joint venture.

The Prime Minister said Japan is a trusted partner of Bangladesh, adding that the people of Japan have been standing by Bangladesh since the Liberation War in 1971.

‘I am extending gratitude to Japan on behalf of Bangladeshi people, as Japan is still extending cooperation to us,’ she said.

*Source: The Financial Express*

### **Railway to make massive change in city traffic by 2030: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 9 said

Dhaka-dwellers will witness different rail connectivity by 2030 to ease the traffic situation.

‘InshaAllah, a different scenario will be established in Dhaka city by 2030 through the rail communication,’ she said.

The premier said this while inaugurating train movement from Rooppur, Shashidal and Joydebpur railway stations on the newly installed 69.20km rail track under three projects of Bangladesh Railway.

The 11-km-long rail line for Rooppur has been constructed by the science and technology ministry at the cost of Tk 335 billion. *Source: The Financial Express*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 9 virtually inaugurates the simultaneous operation of trains on three newly built rail lines to ease the transportation of passengers and cargoes on the Rooppur, Shasidal and Joydebpur routes*

**12 February, 2023**

**43rd National Assembly 2023 of Ansar and VDP observed**



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina decorating an Ansar member with a medal for their outstanding contribution to their respective fields at the 43rd National Assembly-2023 of Bangladesh Ansar and VDP at the Ansar and VDP Academy in Shafipur, Gazipur, on February, 12*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 12 categorically said that the country will never look back in its journey to become a smart and golden Bangladesh.

‘Inshallah, this country will never look back again, Bangladesh is advancing and will advance more, this Bangladesh will be smart Bangladesh. We will make developed, prosperous and





*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina decorates a coast guard official with a badge at a programme marking the 28th founding anniversary of the Bangladesh Coast Guard at the city's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar on February, 13*

golden Bangladesh,' she said.

The Prime Minister said this while addressing the 43rd National Assembly-2023 of Bangladesh Ansar and VDP as the chief guest at the Ansar and VDP academy in Shafipur, Gazipur. *Source: The Financial Express*

**13 February, 2023**

**PM vows stronger Coast Guard to boost business, trade**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 13 said the government has adopted a plan to

increase the number of ships, equipment and manpower for Coast Guard as per the Vision 2030 and Vision 2041 modernisation plans for ensuring blue economy and security at sea.

She said that Coast Guard has been playing a special role in the economic development of the country by ensuring the proper use of marine resources in Bangladesh waters.

'We want our Coast Guard to be built as a developed and powerful force with knowledge of modern information technology,' she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

**14 February, 2023**

**PM seeks efforts to explore new RMG markets**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 14 asked all concerned to explore new markets for Bangladeshi garments with invention of newer items keeping pace with its ever-changing trend.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates six textile educational institutes in six districts marking the National Textiles Day- 2022 through a video conference from Ganobhaban on February, 14*

‘They, who are working with garments and their exports, will have to find new markets. Newer products will have to be produced keeping in mind that the choices vary with different countries,’ she said.

The premier was addressing as the chief guest a function marking the National Textiles Day-2022 and inauguration of six textile educational institutes in six districts, joining from her official Ganobhaban residence through a video conference.

The Ministry of Textiles and Jute organised the function at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in the capital city. *Source: The Financial Express*

**14 February, 2023**

### **Md. Shahabuddin set to become next President of Bangladesh**

Md Shahabuddin, who has been elected 22nd President of Bangladesh, paid a courtesy call on outgoing President Md. Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban on February, 14 evening.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, President’s spouse Rashida Khanam and PM’s younger sister Sheikh Rehana were present there, President’s press secretary Joyal Abedin said.



*Outgoing President Md. Abdul Hamid and first lady Rashida Khanam greet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President-elect Md Shahabuddin with a bouquet upon her arrival at Bangabhaban in Dhaka on February, 14. The premier’s younger sister, Sheikh Rehana, were present at the time*

Earlier on their arrival at Bangabhaban President Hamid and his wife welcomed the Prime Minister and President-elect Md Sahabuddin with a bouquet.

The President also separately presented another bouquet to the premier while PM Sheikh Hasina also gave a bouquet to President as Bangabhaban’s tradition.

During the meeting with Md. Abdul Hamid, the Prime Minister also informed the President about various state-level issues. *Source: The Financial Express*

**19 February, 2023**

### **Dhaka to be smart city: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 19 said her government would build Dhaka as a ‘Smart City’ as she opened the Kalshi Flyover and a six-lane road from ECB square to Kalshi to the traffic at Mirpur in the city.

“We will build Dhaka as a Smart City,” she said while addressing a public rally at



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the 2.34km Kalshi flyover and a 6-lane road in the capital's Mirpur area on February, 19

Kalshi Balur Math after opening the flyover and the road unveiling a plaque.

The Prime Minister said her government has taken plan keeping people's welfare in mind.

She said this 2.34km Kalshi flyover and 3.70 km widened and developed six-lane road from the ECB square would ease the communication in Mirpur, DOHS, Pallabi, Kalshi, Mahakhali, Manikdi, Matikata, Bhashantek, Banani, Uttara and the Airport. *Source: The Financial Express*

**20 February, 2023**

**Ekushey Padak-2023 distributed**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 20 denounced attempts to undermine



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and recipients of 'Ekushey Padak 2023', Bangladesh's second-highest civilian award, at a ceremony at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka on February, 20. The premier handed over this year's award to 19 eminent personalities and two organisations in recognition of their contributions to various fields.

the contribution of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to the historic Language Movement.

The premier said this after conferring the 'Ekushey Padak 2023' to 19 eminent personalities and two organizations in recognition of their contributions to the 1952 language movement, art, culture, journalism and journalism.

She handed over the Ekushey Padak, the country's second highest civilian award, at a ceremony at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka.

Among the award recipients, Khaleda Manzoor-e Khuda, freedom fighter AKM Shamsul Haque (posthumous), and Haji Mohammad Majibor Rahman received the award for their roles in the Language Movement.

Masud Ali Khan and Shimul Yusuf received the prestigious award for their contributions in acting, while Manoranjan Ghoshal, Gazi Abdul Hakim and Fazal-e-Khuda (posthumous) for music, Jayanto Chattopadhyay for recitation, Nawazish Ali Khan for Shilpakala (arts), and Kanak Chanpa Chakma for painting.

Besides, Momtaz Uddin (posthumously) was given the award in the Liberation War category, Md Shah Alamgir (posthumously) in journalism, Dr Md Abdul Majid in research, Professor Dr Mazharul Islam (posthumously) in education, Saidul Haque in social service, Advocate Manjurul Islam (posthumously) and Akhter Uddin Mia (posthumously) in politics, and Dr Maniruzzaman in language and literature.

Bangladesh National Museum received the award in the category of education and Bidyanondo Foundation in social service. Each awardee received a gold medal, a certificate of honour, and a cheque worth Tk four lakh. *Source: The Financial Express*

**21 February, 2023**

### **Nation salutes language heroes**

People from all walks of life in bare feet started pouring into martyr's memorial



*President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina pay homage to Language Movement martyrs placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka early on February 21, marking Bhasha Shaheed Dibas and International Mother Language Day*

places across the country as the clock tick past early on February 21 to pay their rich tributes to those who made the supreme sacrifice in the Language Movement in 1952.

President Md. Abdul Hamid was the first to place a wreath at the altar of the Central Shaheed Minar on behalf of the nation followed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as the head of the government.

Aamar Ekushey, also known as Bhasha Shaheed Dibas or Language Martyrs' Day, has come to be observed as International Mother Language Day since February 2000 following a UNESCO announcement in November 1999.

State-run and private television and radio channels are airing special programmes on the occasion.

Newspapers published supplements highlighting the significance of the day.

The flags of all government, semi-government, autonomous and private organisations must be flown at half mast according to exact rules, colours and measurements.

President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have issued separate messages on the occasion, which is also observed as International Mother Language Day. *Source: The New Age*

**22 February, 2023**

**Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport is going to have Third Terminal soon**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 22 said that Bangladesh will be the aviation gateway and bridge between the East and the West in the future.

She said this while witnessing a presentation on the progress of the 'Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport Third Terminal Expansion' project' at her official residence Ganobhaban.

The premier highlighted the features of building the third terminal at the airport,



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina witnesses a presentation of a project, 'Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport Pedestrian Underpass', at Ganobhaban on February, 22*

expanding the runway and improving the Cox's Bazar International Airport to take the country towards prosperity by utilising the geographical advantages of Bangladesh,

'Cox's Bazar will become a gateway just as everyone now uses Dubai as a gateway for aircraft refuelling,' she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

**23 February, 2023**

### **Carry on efforts to boost farm production**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 23 asked agriculturists to carry on their efforts to increase food yield keeping in mind the adverse global circumstances and climate change.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina going round different stalls after inaugurating Bangabandhu-Pierre Elliot Trudeau Agricultural Technology Centre at BRRI in Gazipur on February, 23*

“In view of the (global) situation, we have to produce our crops,” she said, opening golden jubilee celebrations of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI).

She added that climate change phenomenon also required Bangladesh to produce new crop varieties alongside the traditional crops.

Sheikh Hasina inaugurated Bangabandhu-Pierre Elliot Trudeau Agricultural Technology Centre at BRRI in Gazipur coinciding with the BRRI golden jubilee celebrations. *Source: The Financial Express*

**24 February, 2023**

### **Bangladesh almost self-sufficient in cardiac care: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 24 said the country's health sector



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivers a video speech at the inaugural ceremony of the 3rd International Scientific Conference organised by the Bangladesh Cardiovascular Research Foundation at a city hotel on February, 24*

arranged by Bangladesh Cardiovascular Research Foundation (BCRF) in the city. She also opened the two-day conference being held at Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. *Source: The Financial Express*

**26 February, 2023**

**PM stresses stopping sale of antibiotics without prescription**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February, 26 stressed the need for restricting the sale of antibiotics without the prescription of any registered doctor.

‘Antibiotics are available everywhere in Bangladesh, and the sale of such antibiotics without a doctor’s prescription must be stopped,’ she said.

The PM said this while Director of Biology Department of Ineos Institute of Antimicrobial Research, Oxford University, United Kingdom, Prof. Timothy R Walsh called on her at her official residence Ganobhaban.



*Director of Biology Department of Ineos Institute of Antimicrobial Research, Oxford University, United Kingdom, Prof. Timothy R Walsh called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Ganobhaban in the city on February, 26*

has witnessed significant progress despite various limitations over the last 14 years.

‘Bangladesh is now almost self-sufficient in cardiac care. Bangladesh has the capacity to treat 95 to 98 per cent of cardiovascular diseases as skilled manpower, modern technology and equipment are available here in the country,’ she said.

The premier said this in a video message aired in the 3rd International Scientific Conference

He praised PM Hasina’s role as co-chair of the Global Leaders Group on AMR.

In the meeting, the PM highlighted the various steps taken by his government for the overall development of the health sector, including the establishment of specialised hospitals and institutes such as National Institute of Ophthalmology, Sheikh Russell Gastroenterology Hospital, Cardiovascular Institute, Cancer and Neuro Science Hospitals. *Source: The Financial Express*

**2 March, 2023**

**Govt to blend 4IR with labour-intensive industries: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March, 2 said the government wants to blend Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) with labour intensive industries aiming to create employment opportunities for a greater number of people in the country.

‘Technologies are changing every moment, now Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is knocking at the door. May be we will need less manpower, but we have to use technology, information technology. For that we need skilled manpower,’ she said.

The Prime Minister was distributing cheques of ‘Bangabandhu Science and Technology Fellowship,’ ‘National Science and Technology Fellowship’ and special research donations among teachers, scientists, researchers and students of different universities.

The Science and Technology Ministry arranged the ceremony at Osmani Memorial Auditorium. *Source: The Financial Express*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina distributes cheques of ‘Bangabandhu Science and Technology Fellowship’, ‘National Science and Technology Fellowship’ and special research donations among teachers, scientists, researchers, students of different universities and research institutes, at a ceremony at Osmani Memorial Auditorium on March, 2*





Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the Doha Investment Summit, titled ‘The Rise of Bengal Tiger: Potential of Trade and Investment in Bangladesh’, at The St Regis Doha on March, 6

**6 March, 2023**

### **Invest in Bangladesh’s energy sector**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March, 6 urged oil-rich Qatar to make investment in Bangladesh’s energy sector, especially in renewable energy.

‘We remain open to investment proposals in our infrastructures and logistics sectors. We believe there is scope for Qatari investment in the energy sector, including in renewable energy,’ she said.

The premier was addressing the Doha Investment Summit 2023.

Titled ‘The Rise of Bengal Tiger: Potentials of Trade and Investment in Bangladesh’ held at Grand Ballroom of The St. Regis Doha.

‘I also urge the non-resident Bangladeshis based in Qatar to invest in Bangladesh. We need your participation in our nation-building efforts,’ she said.

PM Hasina said that Bangladesh’s bilateral relations with Qatar should be readjusted based on a mutually beneficial economic partnership as there are immense untapped potentials.

She also requested Qatar to explore opportunities for increasing import of goods from Bangladesh.

She said that Bangladesh is now well on track to graduate from the UN LDC Group in 2026 which has been achieved by 168 million people through their hard work and commitment. *Source: The Financial Express*

**9 March, 2023**

### **PM for making life-oriented movies to change society**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March, 9 asked the filmmakers to produce life-oriented decent movies to keep the people away from wrongdoings and offenses in the society.

‘The life-oriented arts and cinemas attract the people much. The reason is that the people get the reflection of their own life from there. A cinema can change the life of a person or a society,’ she said.

The premier said this while distributing the National Film Awards 2021 to the 35



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina distributes National Film Awards for the year 2021 at a ceremony held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka on March, 9*

winners under different categories in recognition of their contributions to the film industry.

The award giving ceremony was held at Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC) in the city.

Hasina said cinema and drama have an impact everywhere. ‘Cinema and drama can enrich the thoughts and spirits of the people and keep the people away from unjust and offense,’ she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

**11 March, 2023**

### **Help Bangladesh transform**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon global businessmen and investors to invest in Bangladesh to join hands in making a smooth journey of transforming Bangladesh into a developed, prosperous and Smart Bangladesh by 2041.

‘You people [world business community] come. Bangladesh is always ready to welcome you here - invest in Bangladesh thinking it as your country,’ she said while inaugurating a three-day ‘Bangladesh Business Summit 2023’ at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka on March, 11.

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) organised the summit to commemorate its golden jubilee. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce and the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) are partnering the summit with the FBCCI.

The premier said 100 economic zones are being set up across the country and the



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses at the inauguration ceremony of the 'Bangladesh Business Summit 2023' at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre on March, 11*

government has offered lucrative advantages for foreign and local investments.

*Source: The Financial Express*

**14 March, 2023**

**PM seeks more supports from ADB for education, skills development and infrastructures**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March, 14 sought more cooperation from Asian Development Bank (ADB) for development of Bangladesh mainly in education, skills development and infrastructures.

She sought this support when a visiting delegation of ADB, led by its president Masatsugu Asakawa, paid a courtesy call on her at Hotel Intercontinental Dhaka.

During the meeting, Hasina said Bangladesh is prioritising education, skills development and infrastructures.

She sought more cooperation from the Manila-based bank in various projects mainly for education, skills development and infrastructures.

*Source: The Financial Express*

**15 March, 2023**

**Insulin to be added to free medicines list, says PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March, 15 announced that the government will provide free insulin to the diabetic patients of the



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses a programme at Hotel Intercontinental Dhaka on March 14, marking the celebration of 50 years of partnership between Bangladesh and Asia Development Bank (ADB)*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hands over a certificate to a student at the second Graduation Ceremony of Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Memorial KPJ Specialised Hospital and Nursing College in Gazipur's Kashimpur area on March, 15*

country through community clinics.

She said this while addressing the second graduation completion programme of Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Memorial KPJ Specialised Hospital & Nursing College.

‘We have decided that we will include insulin in the list of free medicines of the community clinics across the country for the diabetic patients,’ she said.

Currently, the government is providing 30 types of medicines free of cost through the community clinics.

‘We will give away insulin free of cost so that the diabetic patients could get relief,’ she added.

The Prime Minister called upon the country’s youth to get nursing education and training engage to provide nursing services on a large scale. *Source: The Financial Express*

**17 March, 2023**

### **Bangabandhu’s birth anniversary celebrated**

The nation celebrated on March, 17 the 103rd birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the National Children’s Day marking the occasion in a befitting manner.

On this day in 1920, Bangabandhu, the vivacious leader of the Bangalee nation, the architect of independent Bangladesh and the greatest Bangalee of all times, was born in a respectable Muslim family at Tungipara village of Gopalganj sub-division, now district.



*President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stand in solemn silence after placing wreaths at the mausoleum of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara in Gopalganj on March, 17 on the occasion of his 103rd birth anniversary and the National Children's Day*

He was the third among four daughters and two sons of his parents - Sheikh Lutfur Rahman and Saira Khatun.

Different political, social and cultural organisations and government bodies arranged different programmes marking the birth anniversary and the National Children's Day.

The programme included placing wreaths at Bangabandhu's portrait at Dhanmondi-32 in Dhaka and his mazar in Tungipara, Gopalganj, doa and milad mahfil, munajat, prayers, discussions, processions, cultural functions, voluntary blood donations, exhibition of documentaries, drawing competitions and distribution of foods among destitute and so on. *Source: The Financial Express*

**18 March, 2023**

### **Indo-Bangla Friendship Pipeline inaugurated**

A 131.57-kilometre cross-border 'Indo-Bangla Friendship Pipeline' was inaugurated on March, 18 as part of cooperation in the energy sector between the two neighbouring countries, through which Bangladesh will import petroleum products, especially diesel, from India.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi formally inaugurated the newly-built pipeline.

Hasina was connected from her official residence Ganobhaban while Modi was connected from his office in New Delhi.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the inauguration of 'India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline' is a milestone achievement in mutual cooperation for the development of the two friendly neighbours.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 'Indo-Bangla Friendship Pipeline' virtually on March, 18

'I believe that the friendship pipeline is a milestone achievement in cooperation for the development between the two friendly countries,' she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

**21 Mar, 2023**

### **ECNEC approves five revised projects**

The executive committee of National Economic council in a meeting on March, 21 approved nine projects with an overall cost of Tk 1,730 crore.

Of them, five are linked to revision which will require more time and an additional amount of over Tk 1,100 crore.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who presided over the meeting at the planning commission also approved the first revision to Sustainable Coastal and Marine Fisheries Project with an extra cost of Tk 588.67 crore, second revision to countrywide Mobile Library Project with an additional cost of Tk 37.47 crore and third revision to the project relating to installation of prepaid gas meter with an extra cost of Tk 174.39 crore.

'We are trying to get rid of this practice, but yet to be successful,' he said.

Earlier, he said that the Prime Minister reiterated that the project should not be limited to the construction of building only; manpower and other aspects should be taken into consideration by the project director.

The Prime Minister also said that the project director would be independent and his or her sole responsibility would be the project only. *Source : The New Age*

**22 March, 2023**

### **PM announces seven more districts, 159 upazilas homeless-free**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced on March, 22 seven more districts and 159 upazilas across the country as free from homeless and landless while handing over 39,365 more semi-pacca houses to the homeless people free of cost ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

"I have declared seven more districts and 159 upazilas as homeless and landless-free," she said while handing over the houses in the fourth phase of Ashrayan-2 project virtually from her official Ganobhaban residence in Dhaka.



The Prime Minister said she announced 159 upazilas including all the upazilas of seven districts -- Madaripur, Gazipur, Narsingdi, Joypurhat, Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj and Chuadanga, homeless and landless-free.

*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina declares 7 districts free from land and homeless and inaugurates the handover of houses and land to landless people virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban on March, 22*

She also said she had earlier announced 52 upazilas including all the upazilas of Panchagarh and

Magura districts homeless and landless-free.

Earlier, the Prime Minister handed over 63,999 houses in the first phase, 53,330 in second phase and 59,133 in third phase of the Ashrayan-2 project.

With Wednesday's distribution of 39365 more houses, the total number stood at 2,15,827 under the Ashrayan-2 Project. *Source : The Financial Express*

**23 March, 2023**

**Nine persons, one organisation get Independence Award**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on March, 23 her government considers power as a scope to serve the people, reiterating her steadfast commitment to building a developed, prosperous and Smart Bangladesh by 2041.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with recipients of the Independence Award- 2023, Bangladesh's highest civilian honour, at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium on March 23*

“We see the power as a scope to serve the people. It has been possible to make development as the democratic process continues by now since Awami League assumed office after winning 2008 general elections confronting many hurdles,” she said.

The premier was handing over ‘Swadhinata Purashkar-2023’ (Independence Award-2023), the highest national civil award, to nine distinguished persons and one organisation at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka in recognition of their outstanding contribution to their respective fields at national level.

The Cabinet Division earlier on March 9 announced the names of the Independence Award recipients. *Source : The Financial Express*

**26 March, 2023**

### **Independence Day celebrated**

The nation celebrated the 53rd Independence and National Day on March, 26 in a befitting manner, with a resolve to take the country forward imbued with the spirit of Liberation War.

On March 26, 1971, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared Bangladesh’s independence following the crackdown on unarmed Bangalees on the night of March 25 by the Pakistani occupation forces.

After the nine-month long Liberation War, with the supreme sacrifices of three million martyrs, Bangladesh achieved its cherished independence on December 16, 1971.

President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid tributes to the martyrs of Liberation War -- placing wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar morning.

On her return from the National Memorial, the Prime Minister paid homage to the Father of the Nation by placing a wreath at his portrait in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi 32 in Dhaka.



*President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid tributes to the martyrs of Liberation War -- placing wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar on March, 26*



Sheikh Hasina stayed at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum for some time.

President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages extending heartfelt greetings and warm felicitations to Bangladeshi citizens at home and abroad.

At sunrise, the national flag was flown over all government, semi-government, private, and autonomous buildings, and all significant buildings and establishments were illuminated. *Source : The Financial Express*

**29 March, 2023**

### **Digitised land management to protect ownership of land, says PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked on March, 29 the authorities concerned to transform land management into a digital one to put an end to the social and family problems regarding ownership of land and ensure hassle-free services.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the inaugural ceremony of the three-day National Land Conference at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre on March, 29*

‘Land-distribution system has to be digitalised to specify the ownership of land and thus the family and social problems over the issues would be solved,’ she said while inaugurating the country’s first-ever three-day National Land Conference at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC).

The conference (March 29-31) will focus on the role of the land ministry in building a smart Bangladesh and to find out the future challenges of digitization of land services.

One of the 7 initiatives is the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Monument and the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Guchchagram Complex.

The remaining 6 initiatives include Registration-Mutation Interconnection, Smart Land Map, Smart Land Records, Smart Land Pedia, Smart Land Service Centre, and Union Land Office.

Under the planned cooperatives system one portion of the harvest will go to the owners of the lands, one portion to the engaged labourers while one portion to the government. *Source : The Financial Express*

***Report Compilation: Mazharul Hoque, Mamun Hossain, Jewel Chandra Barman***



The southern end and surrounding area of Karnaphuli Tunnel, Chattogram



**Department of Films and Publications**

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Bangladesh