

# Bangladesh

April-June 2022

## Quarterly

*The Padma Bridge: Nation's Biggest Achievement after Liberation*

*Budget 2022-2023: Returning to the Path of Development*

*Festive Pahela Boishakh Greet  
Bangladesh As Bangla New Year's Day*

*Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr:  
Significance and Celebration in Bangladesh*



# Bangladesh

## QUARTERLY

Vol. 42, No. 4, April-June 2022, Baishakh-Ashar 1429



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivered concluding speech on Budget FY 2022-2023 in the parliament on 30th June 2022*



Department of Films and Publications  
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting  
Bangladesh

---

**Chief Editor**

S. M. Golam Kibria

**Senior Editor**

M. Quamruzzaman  
Senior DPIO

**Sub-Editor**

Hriday Kumar Barman  
Md. Mazharul Hoque

**Editorial Associate**

Md. Mamun Hossain  
Umma Halima

**Cover Design & Layout**

H. K. Barman

**Photographer**

Md. Nazim Uddin

**Cover picture**

Padma Bridge

---

**Published by****Department of Films and Publications**

Tathya Bhaban

112, Circuit House Road, Dhaka- 1000

Telephone : 88-02-8300697

Fax : 88-02-58310020

E-mail : bangladeshquarterly@yahoo.com  
bdqtrly2@gmail.com

Website : www.dfp.gov.bd

**Price :** Tk. 30

**Printed at**

S R Printing Press Ltd.

85/1 Naya Paltan , Dhaka- 1000



## Editorial

**T**he longest bridge of the country- the Padma Bridge- has been inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the eldest daughter of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on 25 June 2022. It is a multi-purpose road-rail bridge and the 25th longest bridge in the world. The construction works of the bridge was started on 24 November 2014 with full domestic funding and completed on 20 June 2022 at a total cost of US\$ 3.69 billion. The bridge is 6.15 km long and 18.10 m. wide. The Padma Bridge has set 7 world records and 7 national records in construction. The ever largest mega project of the country has finally come true.

Finance Minister placed a Tk. 6.78 trillion budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023 at the National Parliament on June 9, 2022. It is the country's 51st and ever largest budget. The budget is placed at the time when the global economy is passing through a critical situation mainly because of the slow economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic along with the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. The budget aims to attain a GDP growth rate of 7.5 percent.

The Bangla New Year and the holy month of Ramadan fall in this quarter. The Bangla New Year's Day is a common festival irrespective of religion while the Eid-ul-Fitr is one of the major festivals of the Muslim community.

The birth anniversaries of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore and National Poet of Bangladesh Kazi Nazrul Islam fall on 7 and 24 May respectively. The two poets have made outstanding contributions to Bengali literature and both have a great influence on the culture and in the thoughts of the Bengali nation.

Articles on the above subjects have been accommodated in this current issue. Besides, write-ups on agriculture, livestock, wildlife, World Health Day, and a book review and poems have been accommodated in the April-June issue.

# Contents

---



The Padma Bridge: Nation's  
Biggest Achievement after  
Liberation

*Yeakub Ali*

Page - 4



Budget 2022-2023: Returning to  
the Path of Development  
*Munshi Jalal Uddin*

Page-13



Festive Pahela Boishakh Greet  
Bangladesh As Bangla New  
Year's Day  
*M. Mizanur Rahman*

Page-21

---

Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr: Significance  
and Celebration in Bangladesh 26  
*Dr. Md. Matiur Rahman Khan*

Spiritualism in Tagore's Poetry 35  
*Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed*

Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam:  
A voice of revolt and inspiration 38  
*Md. Quddus Khan*

A story to overcome *Monga* sustainably 42  
*Dr. M. G. Neogi*

World Health Day 47  
*Umma Halima*

Development of Livestock in Bangladesh 51  
*Md. Abu Abdullah*

Otters of Bangladesh:  
At the Brink of Extinction 55  
*Professor Dr. A N M Aminoor Rahman*

Thoansh: A Book on Noakhailla Dialect 60  
*Reviewed by Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed*

Development Chronology 62

---



# The Padma Bridge: Nation's Biggest Achievement after Liberation

**Yeakub Ali**

**T**he long cherished Padma Bridge was inaugurated on 25 June 2022. Finally the dream has come true. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who thought about construction of a bridge on mighty river Padma for the first time more than a quarter century ago formally open the bridge to traffic. The bridge from Mawa of Munshiganj to Zajira of Shariatpur over the Padma River connects the southwest region with rest of the country directly. It has also connected the Mongla port, the second biggest seaport of the country, with the capital. The bridge can also act as a ground-breaking installation for regional connectivity and trade. The bridge, across the third largest river in the world in terms of mean average annual discharge, will usher in various economic opportunities.

The Padma Bridge is a multipurpose road-rail bridge. The two-level steel truss composite bridge is made with a mixture of steel and concrete. The main structure of the bridge, known as span, is made of steel, while the poles and vehicular pathways are of concrete. The length of the main bridge is 6.15 km. However, about four kilometers more bridges have already been built on both sides. This part is called viaduct. Vehicles including buses, trucks, minibuses, private cars,



*The Padma Bridge at the Mawa point in Munshiganj district*

motorcycles will run on the concrete slabs made on the top of steel spans and the train will run through the spans. In the top deck the road will be divided into four lanes. The lower deck the railway will carry both meter-gauge and broad-gauge trains. The bridge is the culmination of year long efforts and an impressive technological achievement. As per the survey of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 2009, initially some 24,000 vehicles will pass through the bridge. The number will increase every year and is estimated to reach more than 75,000 vehicles by 2050.

## Padma Bridge at a Glance

**Length:** 6.15 km

(main bridge: 6.15 km + viaduct: 3.15 km = 9.30 km)

**Width:** 18.18 m (upper deck 22 m wide concrete deck slab)

**Deck height:** 13.6 m

**Navigation clearance:** 18.3 m

**Viaduct:** Mawa end 1.47 km, Zajira End 1.67 km

**Total Road Viaduct:** 3.15 km

**Number of Pillars:** 42

**Number of span:** 41

**Length of each span:** 150 m

**Gross weight of 41 span:** 116,388 tons

**Number of piles:** steel piles 240, concrete pile 32

**Number of piles with each pillar:** 6-7 with length of 128 m

**Total amount of steel used:** 146,000 metric tons

**Utilities through the bridge:**

- 760mm dia Gas Transmission Line
- 150mm dia Fiber optical & Telephone duct
- 7 nos high voltage electric line platform in river over pile foundation at 2km downstream of main Bridge

**River Training work:** 14 km

**Construction work began:** 7 December 2014

**Construction work ended:** 22 June 2022

**Land acquired:** 918 hectare

**The shape of the bridge:** 'S'

**Lifespan of the bridge:** Over 100 years

**Earthquake tolerance level:** 9 on the Richter scale

**Approach road:** 12 Km

**Total cost:** Tk. 30,193.39 crore (equivalent to US\$ 3.70 billion approximately) including construction of infrastructure, river training works, construction of connecting roads, land acquisitions, rehabilitation and environment.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveils the inauguration plaque as she opens the Padma Bridge at the Mawa point in Munshiganj district on June 25*

The Padma Bridge has several unique features. It has set many world records, including national ones in construction- which are as follows:

#### **4 Super Scale World Records**

- Longest ranking pile of 3m diameter in the world: up to 125m long; buried depth of up to 122m
- Longest steel truss girder bridge in the world: 41 spans each of 150m and weighs 3,200 Ton (without concrete decks)
- Largest double curvature friction pendulum bearings (Capacity 98,725kN)
- Largest double contract for River Training Works (USD 1.1 billion)

#### **3 First time in the world**

- Enhancing the skin Friction of driven steel tubular piles by injecting grout through TAM ducts attached to the pile surface
- Enhancing Skin Friction of vertical RC bored piles by injecting grout through TAM ducts embedded within the outer zone of the pile
- 1st time roadway slab technology in the world: pre-casting and epoxy gluing deck slabs into 900m long modules

#### **7 First Time in Bangladesh**

- Super T Girder
- Use of Micro fine Cement
- Double Deck Bridge
- Modular Movement Joints
- Waterproofing on the Bridge Roadway Deck
- 7 full-fledged Resettlement Sites
- Longest Road cum Rail Bridge in Bangladesh



# 4 WORLD RECORDS



**STEEL TUBULAR PILE  
OF 3M DIAMETER  
DRIVEN TO A MAXIMUM  
DEPTH OF 122M-  
LONGEST DRIVEN PILE  
IN THE WORLD**

**LONGEST STEEL TRUSS  
GIRDER BRIDGE IN THE  
WORLD: STEEL WEIGHT OF  
EACH 150M SPAN 3,200T**



**LARGEST DOUBLE  
CURVATURE FRICTION  
PENDULUM BEARINGS  
IN THE WORLD**

**LARGEST SINGLE CONTRACT  
OF  
RIVER TRAINING WORKS**



No doubt that the Padma is the most turbulent river. It takes roughly two and half hours to cross the river by roro-ferry. But waiting hours for the serial to get on the ferry varies from two-three hours to seven-eight hours. During rush periods especially during Eid festivals, the passengers have to languish long hours at Mawa and Kaurakandighat for crowded boats or launches. Many emergency patients referred to hospitals in Dhaka berthed their last waiting for the ferry on the other side of Padma! Again, there is no end to the uncertainty if the weather becomes rough. Sometimes the ferry service remains closed for days. Amidst such uncertainty, trade and commerce simply cannot flourish. Besides these, crossing the river has always been strenuous and sometimes dangerous because of frequent incidence of boat or launch capsizes or ferry accidents in Padma. Here lies the importance of construction of bridge on the river Padma.

Before the inception of the construction work of the Jamuna bridge in the early 90s, no one thought about a bridge over the Padma. It was rather an audacious dream to tame the mighty river. A bridge across the Padma came in talks after beginning of construction of Bangabandhu Bridge. The idea gained momentum in 1997 when the construction of Bangabandhu Bridge over Jamuna River was nearing completion, ushering in new hope and optimism among people of the south-western region. Bangabandhu's eldest daughter Sheikh Hasina took the initiative to construct a bridge on the Padma. Pre-feasibility study was conducted in 1999. On 4 July 2001, the then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally laid the foundation stone for project. The government then approached the Japanese government for financial and technical assistance for a feasibility study, which was conducted by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) between 2003 and 2005. Following further studies, the government approved the Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project worth Tk 10,161 crore on August 20, 2007 to be built with donor assistance. On January 11 2011, the project was revised with the estimated cost raised to Tk 20,507 crore, mainly to incorporate a rail line into the bridge. After the World Bank and other donors had withdrawn from the project, in July 2012, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took a bold decision to go ahead with implementation of the project with the country's own funds.

Two Chinese companies -- China Major Bridge Engineering Company Ltd and Sinohydro Corporation Limited -- were appointed for two major works, the construction of bridge and river training. On 12 December 2015, Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the main construction work of the most challenging engineering project of the country, having one of the deepest foundations in the world.

There were many natural challenges in building the bridge. Engineers had to fight with strong currents and waves. The Padma carries a large volume of sediment, making its bed soft and tricky to build on. The most difficult part was river training and piling because of the strong river currents and erosion. The second major challenge was to drive in the piles which would carry the load from road and rail traffic as well as the weight of the bridge to the foundation. And the situation was further complicated in 2016 when differences emerged between the information obtained through geotechnical investigation in the design phase and that in the construction phase of piles of the bridge. The project authority had to change the design of the 22 bridge piers, causing a further delay.

The first span was installed in September 2017. By this time, the project costs went up to over Tk 30,000 crore. As the project progressed smoothly, then arrived the Covid-19 pandemic at the shores of Bangladesh. Yet the work continued,

albeit slowly due to a shortage of workers -- Chinese and local -- and poor supply of construction materials. The project gained pace after the end of the Covid-19-induced two-month shutdown and return of Chinese nationals. Then, again, the strong currents in the Padma started causing problems but the work again gathered momentum.

A total of 42 pillars have been placed in the main river. However, there are many more poles at both ends to connect the road. The bridge is 9.8 km long and connects with the road on both sides. Spans have been placed 18 meters above the water level. The length of each span is 150 meters requiring a total of 41 spans. Experts say, if the length of the span is more than 100 m, steel is used in the structure instead of concrete. The weight of the bridge is less due to the steel structure. As a result, it is tolerable in earthquakes. Experts are of the view that earthquake with a magnitude of 9 on the Richter scale will not damage the bridge.

Piling was the most challenging and crucial part of the bridge. It took three years and seven months to complete the boring work of all the piles into the pillars. The boring work of the first pile started in December, 2015 in pillar numbers 6 and 7 at the Mawa end. On an average, each pile has been driven 120 meters deep into the earth. In the main bridge, i.e. in the river, a number of 264 three-meter dia steel pipes have been installed. They weighed about 1 lakh 82 thousand tons. The pillars are supporting 41 steel spans. These spans are made with steel plates in a factory in Hebei Province in northeastern China. The spans contain 1 lakh 26 thousand tons of steel plates. Most powerful pile hammer of the world was used during piling of the structure. The hammer was brought from Germany. Three types of bearing have been used for ensuring proper flexibility. Fraction pendulum bearings have been placed to protect the structure from earthquake. The largest one weighs about 25 tons. One set of bearings is capable of carrying a load of about 10,000 tons. 96 sets of such bearings have been installed on the bridge. With these bearings, the earthquake protection system will protect the bridge from an earthquake of about 8 magnitude on the Richter scale. Another type of bearing has been used to keep the various parts of the structure connected. There are 3,556 such bearings. 26 sets of bearing have been used in expansion joints for contraction and expansion under heat and pressure.

A special type of cement called microfine or ultra-fine cement is used to enable the soil to carry more weight on the upper part of the piling of the Padma Bridge. Two thousand tons of such cement brought from Singapore has been used. More than 9,000 tons of railway girders (stringers) came from Luxembourg. The polymer used for laying the drainage pipes came from Australia. The pipe is 39 thousand meters. And 249 tons of polymers have been used. A layer of two millimeters of waterproofing, known as a waterproof membrane, is laid over the concrete path. 560 tons of waterproofing materials came from the United Kingdom. The aluminum for the railing next to the bridge also came from the United Kingdom. Five hundred thousand tons of 5-20 mm stones used in the project came from India and UAE. Some aluminum has also been brought from the UAE. During the construction, steel spans have been installed on the bridge with the help of floating cranes. The lifespan of the bridge will be more than 100 years.

The bridge will enhance connectivity and deepen multi-modal transport linkages. 30 million people of 21 districts of three divisions will directly be benefited from the bridge. These districts are : Khulna, Bagerhat, Jashore, Satkhira, Narail, Kushtia, Meherpur, Chuadanga, Jhenaidah and Magura of Khulna division;

Barishal, Pirojpur, Bhola, Patuakhali, Barguna and Jhalokati of Barishal division and Gopalganj, Faridpur, Madaripur, Shariatpur and Rajbari of Dhaka division. This bridge will substantially reduce the growing traffic pressure on Paturia Ghat and Jamunabridge. For the first time, the direct road connectivity of Shariatpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj and Faridpur few other districts with the capital city is going to be established. The road distance from Dhaka to nearly all major destinations in the southwest region will be reduced adequately, bringing tremendous savings in the time and costs of passenger and commodity movement, vehicle operation and maintenance costs and reducing wasteful burning of fossil fuels. The distance from Dhaka to Barisal will be reduced by roughly 100 kilometers. The distance from Dhaka to Barisal via Aricha is 242 kilometers. The road distance of Barishal from Dhaka via Padma bridge will be 156 kilometers only. The distance from Dhaka to Khulna via Jhenaidah-Jessore is 292 kilometers. The distance between these two major division cities via Padma bridge will be 246 kilometers. The Dhaka-Khulna travel time is around 12 hours and 45 minutes through Mawa Ferry Ghat. Over the Padma Bridge, the journey will take around four hours only. One will be able to reach in Dhaka in three hours from Barisal, two hours from Faridpur and four and a half hours from Jessore. The Padma Bridge will reduce travel time between Dhaka and Mongla port, which is shorter in distance than the Chattogram port from Dhaka – Chattogram's 264 kilometres against Dhaka-Mongla's 170 kilometres. Greater movement of freight between Dhaka - Mongla port will also reduce the congestion at the Chattogram port. The bridge will also provide direct links between two major seaports of the country and will be an integral part of the Asian Highway One and Trans-Asian railway network systems (Sylhet-Kanchpur-Dhaka-Mawa-Jashore-Benapole, connecting Kolkata to the eastern part of India on the eastern side of Bangladesh).

Because of the bridge, goods from Benapole and Bhomra land ports and Mongla and Payra sea ports will easily be transported to Dhaka and other major cities of the country. Economists are of the view that the ports of Mongla and Payra have the potential to create heavy industry in the southwestern part of Bangladesh. A number of cement factories have already been set up around the Mongla port and export-oriented industries, including garments and small scale industries, are emerging in the region. The port facilities in one hand and the smooth communication with the capital city on the other will have a positive impact on the economy and livelihood of the entire south-western region.

Fish from Khulna, Bagerhat, Gopalganj and Shariatpur; vegetables and flowers from Jashore; paddy and betel leaf from Barisal; mango, litchi and other fruits and poultry products from Satkhira will smoothly be transported to Dhaka using Padma bridge. So far, many agricultural produces from the south-western region do not go beyond the region. No one ever thought of sending fish from greater Faridpur region to Dhaka market. But the beels and lowlands of Gopalganj, Shariatpur, Madaripur and Faridpur are famous for fresh water fish. All kinds of agricultural products of south-west region will have access in a quicker manner to their most desired markets in Dhaka as well as in Chattogram, Sylhet and other big divisional cities. Although the market is expanding across the country very fast, marketing of fresh flower is very challenging because of perishability. Once the bridge is open, avenues for export of fresh flowers will be opened. In fact, there will be a great dynamism in the agriculture sector in the south-western districts.

The Sundarbans and Kuakata beach are two major attractions for tourists. As a

tourist destination, the natural mangrove forest Sundarbans is most popular among the students and general tourists. Considering the hazards of communication especially crossing the river Padma, many tourists from the central and eastern part of the country would lose interest in traveling to the Sundarbans. But now, after construction of the bridge, Kuakata, Sundarbans, Khulna are not far off. The reality is that tourism is not limited to the urban population only. Now-a-days, by hiring a microbus, people in small groups from remote villages of central, eastern and northern part of the country now and then visit to Cox's Bazar, Chittogram or Sylhet. The Sundarbans and Kuakata beach will now be added to their list. People from the south-west region will also be interested in visiting the tourist wonders of Cox's Bazar, Jafflong-Ratargul of Sylhet and the haors of Kishoreganj and Sunamganj. And definitely, people from all over the country will rush to see with their own eyes the engineering landmark Padma Bridge at least once. The scintillating architectural lightings will illuminate the bridge at night. On special days, there will be special arrangement of lighting. Not only the people of surrounding area, but thousands of beauty-loving people will gather from all over the country. As a result, centering the Padma bridge, there will be a huge dynamism in the tourism sector.

A single Bangabandhu Bridge on the river Jamuna had changed the life of the whole northern region of Bangladesh. Communication became smooth and easy. Thousands of people had migrated to the capital city of Dhaka and other big cities for employment. Agricultural revolution took place in north Bengal. Monga perished from poverty-ridden Rangpur, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamarifor ever. Agricultural products of the region ranging from fruits, grains, vegetables and fish got suitable market access all over the country. The country's economy had gained momentum. The economists are of the view that the Padma Bridge is expected to contribute around 1.2 percent to the annual GDP growth, reduce poverty and increase economic activities of the people of the impoverished southwest region. Reports says the poverty reduction rate would increase by one percent in the southwest region and by 0.8 percent at the national level. The impact of the Padma Bridge will be manifold. It will remove the last great geographical barrier that divides our country. Because of the Padma and the Jamuna, the country used to be divided into disjointed parts. The first barrier was removed on 23 June of 1998 with opening of the Bangabandhu Bridge. Now, with the Padma Bridge, we are moving towards an integrated and well-connected economy moving into the twenty-first century.

The Padma Bridge is not a bridge rather it is our confidence. 'The bridge belongs to the people of Bangladesh. It encapsulates our passion, creativity, courage, endurance and perseverance,' as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stressed in her speech at the inaugural ceremony of Padma Bridge at Mawa on 25 June 2022. This Bridge is not a pile of brick and cement rather it is a symbol of Bangladesh's pride, honor and ability. Voice of America quoted the Daily Star in a report, as saying in a commentary that the 'Padma Bridge marks the most public and direct defiance of a multilateral organization like the World Bank and through it, of donor practice in general. Many countries make their own bridges and with their own resources' but building this bridge is a significant step for Bangladesh, because it breaks down forever our image of a country dependent on handouts.'

***The writer is Senior Deputy Principal Information Officer (Press & Ministerial Publicity) of Press Information Department***



# Budget 2022-2023: Returning to the Path of Development

**Munshi Jalal Uddin**

growth rate of GDP is attained, the GDP size in the next fiscal year would be Taka 44,49,959 crore. Considering the high trend of inflation and constant devaluation of Taka against US dollar, the import of luxurious items are being discouraged to lessen pressure on the foreign currency reserves. Besides, to give respite from the heat of high inflation trend, the government is focusing on reining in inflation through increasing subsidies.

The Taka 6.78 trillion budget is around 15.3 percent of GDP, while the original budget of the outgoing fiscal year of Taka 6.03 trillion was around 17.5 percent of GDP. The FY23 budget is Taka 744 billion higher than the outgoing budget.

The budget for the fiscal year 2022-23 has been passed in the National Parliament on 30th June.

## **Revenue collection plan**

To meet the demand of the budget, the government has set an overall revenue collection target of Taka 4,33,000 crore which would be 9.8 percent of GDP. Out of this figure, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) will be given the task of mobilizing Taka 3,70,000 crore. The budget also sets a target of attaining non-NBR revenue of Taka 18,000 crore and non-tax revenue of Taka 45,000 crore. These targets of that of the outgoing fiscal year were Taka 3,30,000 crore, Taka 16,000 crore and Taka 43,000 crore respectively.

The budget sets a budget deficit target of 5.5 percent of GDP or Taka 2,45,064 crore which is estimated at Taka 30,383 crore higher than the original budget deficit of Taka 2,14,681 crore in the outgoing fiscal year. To meet the deficit financing, the government has raised its target of borrowing from the domestic sources with Taka 1,46,335 crore of which Taka 1,06,334 crore will come from the banking sector, Taka 35,000 crore from the savings certificates and the rest of

**F**inance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal placed a Taka 6.78 trillion budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023 (FY23) at Jatiya Sangsad on 9 June 2022. This is country's 51st budget and the 23rd of the Awami League government in five terms. This is also the fourth national budget placed by Mustafa Kamal.

The budget for FY23 is placed at the time when the global economy is passing through a volatile situation mainly because of the slow economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic along with the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

The budget aims to attain a GDP growth rate of 7.5 percent based on the positive trend of economic recovery from the pandemic while it also eyes to contain inflation at 5.6 percent. If the 7.5 percent



*President Md. Abdul Hamid witnesses the 2022-23 Budget sessions in parliament on June 9*

Taka 5,001 crore from other sources. Besides, the government is also eyeing to get Taka 95,458 crore from the foreign sources as loans and grants.

Out of the total budget size, the government has earmarked Taka 4,11,406 crore as operating cost including Taka 76,412 crore as the salaries and allowances of the public servants, Taka 73,175 crore as the interests of the domestic loans and Taka 7,200 crore as the interests of the foreign loans.

Despite various challenges, the government has set an Annual Development Programme (ADP) outlay of Taka 2,46,066 crore which was Taka 2,25,324 crore in the outgoing fiscal year. The government has earmarked Taka 82,745 crore as subsidy against various sectors like fuel, electricity, gas and fertilizer which is 1.9 percent of GDP.

### **Remarkable achievements**

The Finance Minister in his budget speech highlighted some remarkable achievements made under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina since 2009. Today Bangladesh is setting example for other countries to emulate for exemplary development. In the last 13 years, the average GDP growth has been 6.6 percent, above 7 percent in FY2016-2017, FY2017-2018, and FY2018-2019 and exceeded 8 percent in FY2018-2019, he said, adding that even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the GDP growth in FY2020- 2021 is 6.94 percent which is remarkable.

Per capita income has increased from US\$ 543 in FY2005- 2006 to US\$ 2,824. Inflation remains within 5 to 6 percent during this period. The poverty rate has declined from 41.5 percent to 20.5 percent, and the extreme poverty rate has fallen to 10.5 percent. Foreign exchange reserves touched a record US\$ 48 billion (on 23 August, 2021). The size of the budget has increased by eleven times compared to that of FY2005-2006. The power generation capacity has increased from 4,900 MW to 25,566 MW.

The dream of Digital Bangladesh has become a reality. With the setting up of Union Digital Centers in 4,550 Union Councils, laying of optical fibres at the bottom of the deep sea, the launching of Bangabandhu satellite in space, the launching of mobile banking activities, setting up of ATM booths in Upazila towns and making



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina signing the proposed Budget for FY 2022-23 on June 9*

internet facilities available, the services are now at the doorsteps of the people.

Bangladesh successfully achieved the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and received ‘SDG Progress Award’ in recognition of SDG implementation progress.

Implementation of a large number of mega-projects is currently underway in the country, the Finance Minister said, adding that the Padma Bridge, Metro Rail, Karnafuli Tunnel, and elevated expressway from Dhaka Airport to Kutubkhali near Jatrabari will be opened soon. Completion of several other major projects, including Payra Seaport, Matarbari Deep Seaport, Rampal Power Station will add a new dimension to the progress of the country. The work of establishing 100 Special Economic Zones is progressing in full swing.

### **Stimulus Programmes**

AHM Mustafa Kamal said stimulus programmes will continue in the fiscal year 2022-2023 to further accelerate the pace of development by speeding up the recovery process and bringing the economy back to its pre-pandemic state.

In his speech, he said special emphasis has been given in the budget on the implementation of various programmes to generate employment in the industrial sector, CMSME, service sector and rural informal sector and employment for the returnee migrant workers. He mentioned that the implementation of the stimulus packages announced by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will continue to offset the losses of the affected enterprises, keep the economy afloat and help the temporarily jobless workers during the pandemic. In addition, the programmes that the government has adopted with a focus on increasing the coverage of social security, housing for the homeless poor and distributing free or low-cost food among low-income people will continue.



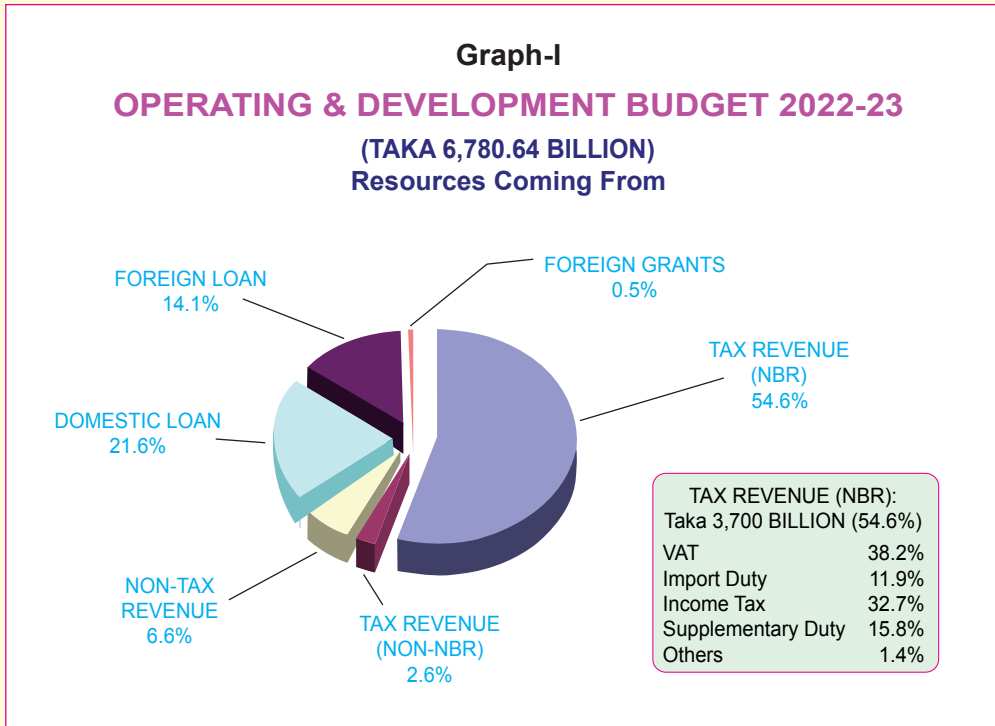
## ADP

The size of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) for fiscal 2022-2023 has been finalized at Taka 2,46,066 crore. Earlier on May 17, the National Economic Council (NEC) in its meeting approved the ADP size which had given highest allocation to the transport and communication sector alongside putting priority on ensuring optimum utilization of public fund through checking misuse. Out of the total ADP outlay, Taka 1,53,066 crore will come from the local sources while the rest of Taka 93,000 crore as project assistance. However, considering an allocation of Taka 9,937.18 crore against the autonomous bodies and corporations, the overall ADP allocation for the fiscal reached Taka 2,56,003.27 crore. The size of original ADP in the FY22 was Taka 2,25,324.14 crore which was later downsized to Taka 2,07,550 crore. Some 1,435 projects are in the new ADP including some 1,244 investment projects, some 106 technical assistance projects and some 85 projects to be financed from the own fund of the autonomous bodies and corporations.

Out of the 15 sectors, the transport and communication sector witnessed the highest ADP allocation of Taka 70,695.52 crore in the next fiscal year followed by the Power and Energy Sector Taka 39,412.36 crore, the education sector Taka 29,081.38 crore and the health sector Taka 19,277.87 crore. The other sectors with fresh ADP allocation are: General government services sector with Taka 2,875.28 crore, defense sector Taka 1,270.05 crore, public discipline and protection sector with Taka 3,609.77 crore, industry and economic services sector Taka 5,407.26 crore, agriculture sector Taka 10,143.57 crore, local government and rural development with Taka 16,465.02 crore, environment, climate change and water resources with Taka 9,859.25 crore, housing and community facilities with Taka 24,497.22 crore, religion, culture and entertainment sector with Taka 2,364.91 crore, science and ICT sector with Taka 4,167.90 crore and social security sector with Taka 2,569.73 crore.

According to Ministry and Division-wise new ADP allocation, the Local Government Division enjoyed the highest allocation of around Taka 35,842 crore followed by the Road Transport and Highways Division with around Taka 31,296 crore, the Power Division with around Taka 24,139 crore, Ministry of Science and Technology with around Taka 16,011 crore, Health Services Division with around Taka 15,851 crore, Ministry of Railways with around Taka 14,929 crore, Secondary and Higher Education Division with around Taka 14,001 crore, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education with around Taka 11,642 crore, Bridges Division with around Taka 9,290 crore and the Ministry of Water Resources with around Taka 7,938 crore.

Out of the mega projects, the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project received the highest fresh ADP allocation of around Taka 13,396 crore followed by the Fourth Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-4) with around Taka 8,759 crore, Matarbari 2x600 MW ultra super critical coal fired power plant with around Taka 6,554 crore, Expansion of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (1st phase) with around Taka 6,019 crore, Padma Bridge Rail Link Project with around Taka 5,809 crore, COVID-19 Emergency Response and Pandemic Preparedness (WB-GoB) project with around Taka 4,254 crore, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Railway Bridge Construction Project with around Taka 3,851 crore, Dhaka-Ashulia elevated expressway construction project with around Taka 3,703 crore, Expansion and strengthening of power system network under DPDC area with



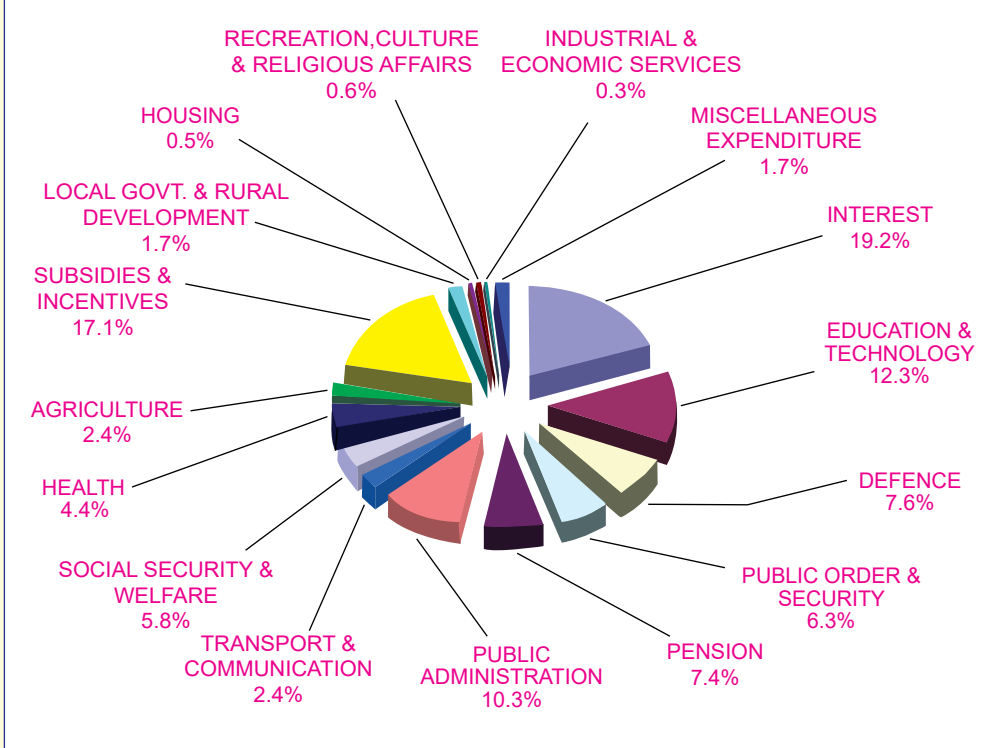
around Taka 3,059 crore and Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Development Project (Line-6) with around Taka 2,883 crore.

**Social Safety Net**

The Finance Minister proposed a total of Taka 113,576 crore budgetary allocation in fiscal 2022-2023 for social safety net which is 16.75 percent of the total budget and 2.55 percent of GDP. He said expansion of the social safety net is an important part of the government’s economic recovery efforts to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. During the last two fiscal years, the allowances have been extended to all eligible senior citizens and widows of 262 upazilas. The digital system has been introduced in 10 major programmes with the aim of bringing all cash transfers of social safety net programmes under G2P system and the number of beneficiaries under G2P has been increased to 26.3 million in fiscal 2021-2022.

He said as a free emergency food aid, arrangements have been made to distribute rice, relief (cash) and baby food to the poor who have suddenly become unemployed due to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. The ongoing programmes of selling rice at a price of only Taka 10 per kg to the low-income people across the country have been accelerated. In FY23 a total of 50 lakh low-income families will get rice at an increased cost of Taka 15 per kg during five months lean period of the year. Kamal mentioned that a total of Taka 2,168 crore has been provided in two phases while Taka 2,500 was distributed to each of the target-oriented beneficiary families across the country. In two phases a total of 66 lakh households which includes day labourers, farmers, laborers, domestic workers, motor vehicle

**Graph-II**  
**OPERATING BUDGET : 2022-23**  
**( TAKA 4,184.47 BILLION)**  
**Details of Sector-wise Allocation**



workers and people involved in other professions were included in the programme. In the wake of the recent Russia-Ukraine conflict and the disruption of the global supply chain, the government has launched the Family Card program to distribute essential commodities among the poor across the country at a low cost. The finance minister said a list of one crore families has been finalised under this programme. As a result, Kamal said, about five crore low-income population of the country will be directly benefited from this government initiative.

**Incentives continued on inward remittance**

AHM Mustafa Kamal said the government will continue the 2.5 per cent incentive on inward remittance in fiscal 2022-23. He said, in FY2020-2021, the growth of remittance stood at 36.10 per cent. However, since the very beginning of FY2021-2022, the income from remittances has slightly decreased. With a view to encouraging remittance through legal channels, the rate of incentives is raised to 2.5 per cent from January 2022. Besides, the government has withdrawn the mandatory provisions for submission of earning documents of the remitters in the case of availing cash incentives against remittances exceeding the amount of US\$

5,000. As a result, he expects that a satisfactory growth of remittance will be back on track soon.

### **Investment to implement climate prosperity plan**

The government is planning to invest US\$80 billion by 2030 to achieve climate resilience. The Finance Minister said, “To move from climate risk to sustainable climate prosperity, the government is going to implement the ‘Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan’, which is essentially a strategic investment framework for climate financing.” Kamal said, the investment will be funded by both domestic and external sources.

### **Step to bring back money, assets acquired abroad**

The government is going to take measures to bring back money and assets acquired abroad with a view to creating a flow of fresh fund and investment for economic activities. The Finance Minister proposed to add a new provision in the Income Tax Ordinance, 1984 so that the money earned and asset acquired abroad can be mainstreamed into our economy with a view to creating a flow of fresh fund and investment for economic activities.

The finance minister said, according to the proposed provision, no authority, including the income tax authority, shall raise any question as to the source of any asset located abroad if a taxpayer pays tax on such asset. The proposed rate is 15 percent for immovable property not repatriated to Bangladesh, 10 percent for movable property not repatriated to Bangladesh and 7 percent for cash and cash equivalents repatriated to Bangladesh, he added. He said this opportunity will be in force for the period starting from the first day of July 2022 and ending on the thirtieth day of June 2023.

### **Universal pension to take effect from next fiscal**

The government has decided to introduce a universal pension system from the next fiscal year. “In the 2008 election manifesto, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina promised to introduce a universal pension scheme nationally to ensure old-age protection for the elderly citizens under a sustainable and well-organised social security framework,” the Finance Minister said. Accordingly, the government, in its 2015 ‘National Social Security Strategy’, proposed the creation of a comprehensive, integrated and participatory pension scheme. An outline of the universal pension scheme was made in the Finance Minister’s budget speech of FY20. Now, the government has decided to introduce a universal pension system from the next fiscal year.

### **Six Major Challenges**

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal saw six major challenges for the fiscal year 2022-2023 (FY23) and said that the government needs to be pragmatic in addressing these challenges as any failure to address them properly may destabilize the macroeconomic stability.

While placing the national budget for FY23, Kamal said the challenges are 1) containing inflation and enhancing domestic investment; 2) financing additional subsidy required for the increased price of gas, power and fertilizer in international markets; 3) utilizing funds available through foreign assistance and ensuring timely completion of high priority projects of ministries/divisions; 4) ensuring timely completion of projects in education and health sectors; 5) increasing collection



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivered concluding speech on Budget FY 2022-2023 at Budget session of 11th Parliament on 30th June 2022*

of local Value Added Tax and raising the number of individual tax-payers and 6) maintaining stability in the exchange rate of taka and keeping foreign exchange reserves at a comfortable level.

‘Our major strategy would be to enhance the supply while reducing the growth in demand. Import-dependent and less important government expenditures will be stopped or reduced. The pace of implementation of the low-priority projects will be lowered while enhancing the implementation of high and medium priority projects,’ he added.

He said the sales price of fossil fuel, gas, electricity and chemical fertilizers will be adjusted gradually and on a small scale, he said, adding that the automation process regarding tax collection will be expedited with a view to gearing up revenue mobilization activities and VAT and income tax coverage will be expanded.

Kamal said import of luxury and dispensable goods will be restrained and under/over-invoicing will be cautiously monitored. The exchange rate of Taka against the US dollar will be kept competitive.

### **Some highlights**

Government proposes to withdraw advance tax on gold imports. Cigarettes will get costlier. Ten percent tax increases on shaving, beautification, toiletries, disinfectant and depilatory items. Textile sector will enjoy reduced tax of 15 per cent till 2025. Ultra-rich will have to pay more excise duty on bank accounts. Government imposes five percent VAT on locally-made mobile phones and fridges. Government reduces corporate tax to 12 per cent for non-RMG sectors. Government slashes source tax on raw materials to four percent. Import duty for capital machinery is kept unchanged at 1 per cent for the small and medium industries to give a boost to the sector. Tax-free income limit is remained unchanged.

*The author is Deputy Press Secretary, Hon’ble President’s Office, Bangabhaban, Dhaka*



## Festive Pohela Boishakh Greets Bangladesh As Bangla New Year's Day

**M. Mizanur Rahman**

their festivities we often find communal harmony. It appears from their sentiment and emotion, as they are the sons and daughters of nature itself. Nature takes them as if on its lap and brings them up on its swinging cradle like the mother herself. The reason why Bangali people usually called the land where they live as the motherland. There is no distinction between the different religious communities about such calling. It is very difficult to ascertain when Bangalees have started living on cultivation. Naturally the people of Bengal used to live on cultivating

**T**he beginning of Pohela Boishakh gives us a focal point of pleasant enthusiasm of festivity of an auspicious time to carry ensuing days, months for a year a new irrespective of social, economic, and political diversities of our people until the next Pohela Boishakh arrives at our door. Before we conceive our enormous dreams of creative works on different programmes materialized time flies like air. Yet we are not disheartened or disappointed in hoping the better future. This is what our struggle for existence. We are that people who fight to fit themselves and achieve their rights.

For ages immemorial Bangalee people are basically the lovers of nature. It is evident from their age-old customs and traditions. Ritually some customs and traditions of different religious communities differ among each other to some extent But in



*Fine Arts Faculty of Dhaka University takes out rally- 'Mangal Shobhajatra' on the occasion of Bengali New Year's Day (Pohela Boishakh 1429) in the capital on 14 April 2022*



*Girl in traditional dress on the Bengali New Year's Day*

their land sowing seeds of foodstuff and reaping them during the harvesting season. These softhearted people co-exist with the aliens who were allowed to trade on their soil and bartered their harvested fruits whatsoever long before the urbanization and industrial revolution took place unlike other nations who

boost mostly on agro-economy. Beside their food grains like rice, wheat, barley etc., Bangalees used to cultivate vegetables, spices and engaged themselves in developing fishery and livestock in support of agriculture. Earlier tools and appliances were not so developed as now a day. Farmers had to earn their living on farming by strenuous but hard labour. Yet after the lot of scientific development of farming the farmers have to adopt planning objectives and best possible techniques and scientific knowledge about cultivation of corps, pattern of cropping, economic use of land, fertilizer, seeds and pesticides. No, there were no such developments earlier but natural bounties were abundant. In those days Bangalee people had their fisheries, poultry and livestock in plenty. There were no dearths of clothes also. They used to weave clothes in their homemade handloom. The land of Bengal used to give forth-enormous agricultural products. Naturally Bangalees were so affluent that they could export surplus agricultural products to farflung countries like Southeast Asia, Middle-eastern and African countries beyond Indian peninsula meeting out all local demands. The french traveller Francois Bernier had given the vivid accounts of it in details in his book, 'Travels In Moghul Empire'. Most probably Bangalees fixed Pahela Boishakh as the first day of Bengali new year on account of its harvesting season of the year. Historically there is no confirmed evidence that Emperor Akbor of Mughal Empire fixed that day for counting the Bengali year.

He simply ordered his general Todar Mall to exact taxes or revenue from Bangalees in cash or kind on that Bengali harvesting period while extending his suzerainty over Bengal. It has been assumed that the Emperor Akbor might have introduced the above-mentioned Bengali day of festival. That is not the fact. This is the Bangalee people who are apt to take advantage of all auspicious moments to celebrate with joys at heart. The event of 'Punnah' of the so-called Zamindars of those days could not signify such joyous moments. Because the collection of revenues in the name of 'Punnah' by Zamindars were mostly extortion exerting their muscle power over the teeming farmers under their heels could hardly be termed as the celebration of Pahela Boishakh by the people in joyous mood. However on Pahela Boishakh, with an auspicious outlook closing their business

accounts of the previous year for opening a new red-ledger called '*Khero Khata*', the Bangalee businessmen start afresh the ongoing business transaction. A few days before Pahela Boishakh, concerned businessmen would send colourful cards inviting their customers with sweet words to attend their business place. The customers also used to repay their dues, if any, on that day to keep mutual relations with respectful reciprocity. This is what maintenance of good relation between the businessman and the customer since early times. Maintaining good-will and confidence is always a pre-requisite for every good business. On the auspicious day of Pahela Boishakh we all realize this in attending business places being entertained with sweetmeat sweet words of the host businessmen. This has become an age-old Bangalee custom. It's really commendable. Throughout Bangladesh and also in west Bengal of India including all of its surrounding villages this sort of celebration of Pahela Boishakh is in vogue till now. So this legendary festival gives a pleasant look among the Bangalee people with a pledge of composite communal harmony. In spite of the , hottest summer season intermingled with sudden change of sky being overwhelmed with clouds but greyish colour wrapping the shining sun by the cyclonic storm that thrusts all over the horizon, but the Bangalee people remain undaunted and face the challenge of the ominous force with fortitude. They have been enjoying this hard time with a high morale since long unknown period.

The urban Bangalee people, specially in Dhaka, commemorate '*Bangaliana*' by taking *Panta Bhat* (watered rice) with pieces of fried hilsa fish and slices of aubergine at Ramna Botomul (root of the banyan tree), Dhaka, in the big fair of Pahela Boishakh. Most of the cultural organisations like Chayanot, Sisu Academy, Nazrul Academy and others used to present Tagore's or Nazrul's seasonal songs in Bengali and stage dance drama on this occasion. Tradesmen of different colourful toys, flutes, balloons and handicrafts crowd here and sell their items to the fascinated children. The people of almost all classes throng here to enjoy the occasion with festive mood. The Botomul as it were resounds welcoming this great festival,

*'Esho hey Boishakh, Esho, Esho, Taposho Nishasho Baye... (Come O Boishakh! Come and breathe out of devotee's fragrant air...).'*

The young beautiful girls having dressed with red-bordered yellow sari and red or white flowers set in bun within the tuft of their coiled hairs seem to have always been the additional attraction of the fair.

And young handsome boys wear colourful long boutique punjabi and pajama that give no less attraction adding to festival's seemingly graceful but enthralling, ambience. Professor Muntasir Mamun in his book, *The Festivals of Bangladesh* described, 'The



*Traditional food items of Pahela Boishakh*





*Fair on the Bengali New Year's Day*

most important function of Boishakh and the first day of Boishakh is the fair. The New Year fairs of our country are also nothing but the changed forms of the oldest 'seasonal festivities' and 'agricultural festivals of Bangladesh.' All festivities bear pleasures of heart. So our Pahela

Boishakh festival overcoming such hottest summer brings to us blissful pleasure of our heart no matter what agonies lie ahead. Let our great Bangladesh with its enduring and ardent people live in heavenly bliss from the first day of Boishakh for good eternally. Let us recollect a few lines of our national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam on this sacred occasion

'Let us sing of them/ who brought forth on earth /the fruits of their toil... Their hardest labour that contributed/ basket-full of fruits and flowers, as offerings for earth...Let us sing of them'...

Let us enjoy also that poetic deliberation in which we can invigorate the spirit of our life where poet says -

When a year ends,  
as it were, a new span of life,  
expands touching another year.

But it does not mean that the old one is left aside.  
You cannot throw away anything that is old  
but attach those who are always good and useful  
unlike precious gold.

That means you are embracing the old  
anew from the beginning of another year.

It happens that whom I found last year  
has been living till now.

Time and again I see many of them  
who are moving about me  
embodied but living beings.

As it were, it's not always possible  
to remain attached to all those old ones;  
still many an old episodes like reminiscence  
of parents stick to everyone's mind.

In human habitation, many an old trees stand  
by the waysides, in courtyards, forests,  
woods and jungles and give us shades.

Sometimes, they also bear flowers and fruits;  
Some of them, though, may no longer bear  
flowers and fruits but they give shelters  
to bees to make their hive;  
in order to frame the pleasant stupor of life.  
Also some stray-birds take rest on their branches  
and sometimes they make their nests there  
and use to come and go.

Those who are old and decrepit, and sad people,  
they also become pleasant at the advent  
of the new one.

Like those trees that bear blithe leaves anew  
after the fallen ones;  
their hearts are also awaken  
by hopes and aspirations with new dreams.

Time and tide of life go circling like this way  
year after year!

Still everyone welcomes the new  
and starts for a new beginning  
Thus the time of varied almanac is entwined  
in human history.

On the waves of life and death  
there remains truth and falsehood, faith and infidelity,  
sorrow and happiness, union and separation  
and after all, therein lies also the freedom of pleasure  
in the breath of desires into the vast expanse of eternity.

*(Translated from the Bengali poem 'Notun Bochhorey' (On a new year) and extracted from the anthology of poems, 'Jey Hridoieh Rakto Jharey' written by M. Mizanur Rahman).*

**The author of this article is a poet and researcher**



## Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr: Significance and Celebration in Bangladesh

**Dr. Md. Matiur Rahman Khan**

**R**amadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It is a very significant month during which the able-bodied adult Muslim men and women around the world fast from sunrise to sunset. They refrain from eating, smoking, drinking and any other immoral pleasure-making during this holy month. Ramadan is the month that aims to purify the soul and bring the individual closer to Almighty Allah. The holy Quran says about the blessed month, “O you who believe! Observing Saum (the fast) is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become Al-Muttaqun (the pious (2: 183). It is mandatory for every Muslim adult healthy person to observe the fast. But it may be noted that Islam is never an orthodox. It is a religion of peace and contentment. It never imposes any unbearable burden on people. It leaves many options for people so that they can carry out their bounden duties easily. In this connection it may be mentioned that the Holy Quran says, “[Observing Saum (fasts)] for a fixed number of days, but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same

number (should be made up) from other days. And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g., an old man), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a Miskin (poor person) for every day. But whoever does good of his own accord, it is better for him. And that your fast is better for you if only you know.” (2: 184). With the above verse, the Holy Quran makes it clear that fasting was ordained compulsory on all Muslims and that they have to fast if they are to stay righteous.

But Ramadan is a gift from Allah; an opportunity for Muslims to capitalize on and earn His blessings and a way to seek salvation and forgiveness. It is considered as the most sacred month to the Muslims. God-fearing able-bodied Muslims all over the world observe fasts from dawn to dusk throughout the month and commemorate the first revelation of the holy Quran to Hazrat Muhammad (SM). Muslims engage



*Eid congregation at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque*

themselves in prayer, meditation, devotion and worship for Allah. They abstain from eating and drinking by day, refrain from sinful and harmful acts throughout this holy month. They practice austerities to improve self-discipline, self-control, self-restraint, self-sacrifice, self-renunciation, empathy and sympathy. The name of this month occurs in the holy Quran: (Sura 2, Verse 185). This Quranic verse prescribed fasting as compulsory for the able-bodied Muslims more than 1400 years ago. This month is very significant and important from different Islamic points of view. Many historic, religious and significant events took place and still take place in this month. In brief some of the historic, religious and significant events are as follows:

### **Messages of the Prophet (SM) about significance of Ramadan**

According to Hazrat Muhammad (SM), the gates of heavens and the skies open on the first night of Ramadan and the gates are not shut down until Ramadan ends. Similarly the gates of hells are shut down and never open until the end of the month of Ramadan. With the advent of Ramadan heavens are adorned and decorated afresh, and gentle breeze starts blowing underneath the Aros (all pervading seat of Allah). The virgins of paradise are beautified in the night of Ramadan. Almighty Allah commands the angel Ridwan (AS), who guards the gates of heaven, to keep the gates of heavens open during this month. Allah orders Maalik (AS), an angel who is in charge of the gates of the hells, to close the gates of hells. Then at the behest of Almighty Allah, Jibril (AS)/Gabriel (AS) comes to the earth and keeps Iblis/Satan (devil) in chains for the whole month of Ramadan.

Our Prophet (SM) said, ‘Any of my followers who observes fasting only for Allah in Ramadan with devoted and pure mind, it is tantamount to that he emancipated 600 slaves, sacrificed 600 camels, and possessed virtue for prayer and worshipping

of Allah for more than 6000 years.’

In another hadith, Prophet (SM) said, there are eight doors of heaven. One of the doors named Raiyan. No one can enter through that door except the fasting person (Bukhari and Muslim). It is also stated in a hadith that Prophet (SM) said, ‘Allah says, every act of Adam’s child except fasting is for himself. But fasting is for me. I will reward myself.’

### **Revelation of divine/ heavenly books**

According to the Quran and the Hadith, all the heavenly/divine books were sent down to different Prophets on different dates in Ramadan. Some of them are in brief mentioned below:

1. The Sahifah (Scripture) was sent down to Hazrat Ibrahim (AS)/Abraham during the first night of Ramadan.
2. The Taurat (Torah) was sent down to Hazrat Musa (AS)/Moses during the sixth night of Ramadan.
3. The Zabur (Psalms) was sent down to Dawud (AS.)/David during the 12th Ramadan
4. The Injeel (Gospel) was sent down to Isa (AS.) during the 13th Ramadan
5. The verse of the holy Qudran was sent down to Hazrat Muhammad (SM) during the night of the Lailatul Qadr. The revelation continued for 23 years.

### **Revelation of the Quran during the night of Lailatul Qadr in Ramadan**

The message of the holy Quran is always absolutely and definitely true and is beyond doubt. Therefore, Almighty Allah in the verse 2 of the Sura Al Baqarah has said, ‘This is the Scripture whereof there is no doubt, guidance to those who are Al Muttaqiin (who fear Allah).’ Almighty Allah as to the revelation of the holy Quran and the night of Al-Qadr in verses 1,3,4 and 5 of the Sura Qadr has very clearly said, ‘Verily, We revealed this (heavenly message) in the night of Al-Qadr (Decree).’ (97:1). ‘The night of Al-Qadr (Decree) is better than a thousand months (i.e. worshipping Allah in that night is better than worshipping Him a thousand months i.e. 83 years and 4 months).’ (97:3). ‘Therein descend the angels and the Rooh [Jibreel (Gabriel)] by Allah’s Permission with all Decrees’ (97: 4) and (All that night), ‘there is peace until the appearance of dawn.’ (97:5). Lailatul-Qadr is the prized jewel of Ramadan. This night carries more blessings than a thousand months. Muslims spend this night in prayer and meditation; to make dua and to seek forgiveness for the past sins. There is salvation in this night; a chance to be cleansed of all sins and reborn again. The Holy Quran says, ‘Truly, Allah is with those who fear Him (keep their duty unto Him) and those who are Mushinum(good doers) (16: 128).

### **Opinions as to the date of the revelation of the Holy Quran**

Revelation of the holy Quran to Hazrat Muhammad (SM) began in 610 AD. Some opine that the verse of the holy Quran came to Hazrat Muhammad (SM) in any uneven night during the last 10 days of Ramadan, while some others opine that the verse of the holy Quran came to the Prophet Muhammad (SM) on the night following the 27th day of Ramadan. Then verse after verse revealed and it took 23 years for the revelation of the whole Quran.

### **The holy Quran revealed in two phases**



*Traditional Iftar items sold in the holy month of Ramadan*

In the first phase, the whole Quran from the Laohe Mahfuz situated in the all pervading seat (throne) of Almighty Allah and from where the entire Quran was revealed on the 24th Ramadan to a place Baitul Uzzat in the first sky nearest to the earth. It is also called the Baitul Mamur which is located in the upper sky just straight over the Kaba. In that upper sky, angels remain devoted to Almighty Allah. Then in the second phase, the verse of the holy Quran on the night of 27th Ramadan was revealed to Hazrat Muhammad (SM).

### **The process of revelation of the holy Quran**

According to the opinion of the annotators and historians, in 610 AD when Prophet Muhammad (SM) was forty, once he was in deep meditation for Almighty Allah in the cave of the Hera Mountain on the night of Lailatul Qadr in Ramadan, the first divine message was revealed. Jibril (AS) came when Hazrat Muhammad (SM) was in meditation, and said, (Oh, Muhammad (SM), 'Read! In the name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists) man from a clinging substance. Read! And your Lord is the most Generous and Bountiful Who taught man that which he knew not' (Sura: 96, verses 1-5). The Prophet (SM) replied, 'I do not know.' Jibril (AS) placed the chest of Muhammad (SM) against the chest of Jibril (AS) and embraced him strongly. This process of embracing and conversation continued thrice, and then the repertory of knowledge became open to the Prophet (SM). Then he began to read. This time 5 verses of Sura Alaq (96) were revealed.

### **Some pious persons were born and some died in Ramadan**

According to Al Biruni (Abu Rayhan Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Al-Biruni, a famous Arabian educationist and researcher of Middle Ages), martyred Hussain, son of Hazrat Ali (R) was born on the 6th Ramadan. On the 10th Ramadan Khadija Bint



*Two kids embracing on the day of Eid*

Khuwaylid aka Khadija Al-Kubra (R) who embraced Islam first and who was the first wife of Hazrat Muhammad (SM) died. On the 17th Ramadan the Battle of Badr took place between the Muslims and the Quraysh. This battle brought decisive victory to the Muslims. 19th Ramadan was the victory day of Mecca (Makkah). On the 21st Ramadan Hazrat

Ali (R), son-in-law of Hazrat Muhammad (SM.) died. The 22nd Ramadan was the birth day of Hazrat Ali (R). The following night of the 27th Ramadan is mostly regarded as Lailatul Qadr. Most importantly, the holy Quran began revealing from this night (44:3) and the revelation became complete within 23 years. At the end of the month, with the sighting of the moon we enjoy and celebrate the Eidul Fitr on the following day.

After every 33 years Ramadan comes back to the same date it started from

It may be mentioned here for its clarification that Ramadan is observed in accordance with the lunar month but not in accordance with Bengali or English calendar month. When Ramadan begins from a particular date of Bengali or English calendar of a particular year, in that case, Ramadan will fall 11 days behind every year from that particular date of Bengali or English year. Thus, Ramadan comes back to its Bengali or English same date after 33 years.

### **Fasting and its importance**

The word ‘Roja’ is a Persian word, it is called ‘Saum’ in Arabic and its plural form is ‘Siam’. Fasting means to refrain from food and drink, wantonness, immoral acts, sensuality, licentiousness from Subhe Sadiq (the last part of the night) till the sun sets in order to carry out the order of Allah and to gain His satisfaction. Fasting is an important and momentous religious prayer. Fasting was first introduced to the first man and first Prophet Hazrat Adam (AS). There were scriptural precepts to observe fasting in the periods of all Prophets (SM) for their own health. Almighty Allah has mentioned it in the holy Quran, ‘...Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that you may learn self-restraint’ (Al-Baqarah, 183).

### **Main pillar of Islam**

Fasting is one of the important five pillars of Islam. It is compulsory to observe

fasting for each adult and sound Muslim man and woman. Muslims fast as an act of deep personal worship in which Muslims seek a richer perception of God, a chance to get closer to God, and a way to become more compassionate to those in needs. Moreover, fasting is also an exercise that controls cardinal passions such as, anger, greed, lust, infatuation, vanity and envy, and widens the way of prayer to Allah. Fasting develops spiritual strength, including resisting temptation.

### **Fasting acts as a shield**

As man protects him from an attack with shields, likewise he protects him by his prayers to Allah from his brutal nature, evil intention, sexuality, sinful act etc. Fasting acts as a shield to control and restrain human lust or sensuality. It is said that Almighty Allah of His own accord separated 'Lust' from 'Self' and had some conversation between 'Lust' and 'Self'. First Allah put a question to 'Lust' as, 'Who am I?' and 'Who are you?' Lust answered to the question very impudently, saying, 'You are you' and 'I am me.' On hearing this rude answer, Allah became displeased with 'Lust' and burnt it in fire for 70 thousand years. Then Allah said to Lust, 'Who are you?' This time 'Lust' answered too in the same way 'I am me?' In order to punish Lust again, Allah put Lust into ice for 70 thousand years. Thereafter, Allah put the same question to Lust, Lust made the same reply as it made before. This time Allah became extremely angry with Lust and kept it in starvation for 70 thousand years. As a result of long starvation, Lust became very weak. This time the Almighty put the same question to Lust, Lust became very submissive and surrendered to Allah and very meekly and politely said, 'You are my Lord and I am your obedient slave.' Since starvation removed self-will of Lust and compelled Lust to surrender to Almighty Allah, so in order to control Lust in human beings, Almighty Allah made fasting compulsory for the followers of every Prophet. In a hadith fasting is described as shield to escape the torment of hell.

### **Benefits of fasting in view of medical science**

Fasting is such a religious practice that is conducive to all the rich, poor, young, old, healthy and unhealthy people. There is no such valid argument in favour of the deterioration of disease because of observing fasting. Some people may think that fasting worsens gastritis, heartburn, peptic ulcer, stomach ache or ailment etc. This is a lame excuse. But medical research shows the benefit of fasting. Medical science says that the number of parietal cells in stomach is about 10 crore. These cells continuously cause secretion of hydrochloric acid. Excessive secretion of hydrochloric acid causes duodenal ulcer and gastritis in the stomach. But this acid secretion occurs usually after taking meal. On the other hand, if the stomach remains empty, acid secretion will become less.

In this context we may mention a book titled 'The secrets of successful fasting' written by German physician professor Dr. Hellmut Lutzner, which was published in 1984. In this book, it is stated that by fasting for one month during Ramadan the cholesterol that silted up in the blood vessels (total length is about 60 thousand miles or 96 thousand km) is burnt into ashes.

Human studies of intermittent fasting (16 hours in a day) found that it improved such disease indicators as insulin resistance, blood fat abnormalities, high blood pressure and inflammation, even independently of weight loss. Modern studies



show that fasting brings many benefits to human health such as it helps weight loss, improves insulin sensitivity, speeds up the metabolism, promotes longevity, improves hunger, improves brain function, improves immune system, help clear the skin & prevent acne, and also fasting may aid in cancer prevention and increase the effectiveness of chemotherapy. In recent days many physicians in the western countries suggest going on fasting for 3days/6days/9days as a part of the treatment as per the nature of the illness of the patient.

### **All living beings must die**

In the words of the poet, Janmile morite hobe, amor ke kotha robe (We are born to die. None is ever immortal anywhere). The holy Quran says, ‘Every soul shall have a taste of death and only the Day of Judgment, shall you be paid your full recompense...’ (Sura: Al-Imran (3) verse 185)’. The holy Quran reminds us of our death and the life after death. Therefore, every Muslim should carry out all religious practices including observing of fasting so that he or she can escape hellish torture, and can enjoy eternal and perpetual heavenly bliss and peace after death. Towards the end of Ramadan, the Muslims mark the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

### **Eid ul Fitr and its significance**

Eidul Fitr is one of the biggest and holiest festivals of the Muslim umma and communities. Muslims observe fasting throughout the month of Ramadan for the satisfaction of Allah. And after the end of Ramadan, the fasting comes to an end. Then the Muslims all over the world on the first day of the Shawwal moon celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr by paying tribute to Allah through prayers for peace, prosperity, strength, health and help. The word ‘Eid’ literally means joy, pleasure or a festival. Celebration of Eid occurs in the holy Quran. Isa (Jesus) son of Maryam (Mary) says, ‘O Allah, our Lord send us from heaven a table spread (with food) that there may be for us –for the first and the last of us-- a festival and a sign from you; and provide us with sustenance, for you are the Best of Sustainers (5: 114).’

The significance of Eidul Fitr in the Muslim Ummah is very important, valuable and instructive. It lies in the self-sacrifice, abnegation and dedication of the Muslims, and teaches us to be self-devoted and self-denying. In addition, the significance of Eidul Fitr brings us together on the same platform and makes us forget the difference between the rich and the poor; the high and the low and thereby brings oneness in thoughts and ideas and strengthens the faith in Allah and the unity in the Muslim Ummah. Furthermore, it inspires us to be loyal and submissive to the Almighty, and purifies our soul and heart and makes our mind happy. It also promotes social ties, friendship and unity among the Muslims and brings opportunities to the devotees and adorers of Allah to offer their prayers together to the Almighty in a big and significant congregation. On this occasion, the prayer is offered for the wellbeing of the people and also for the salvation of the departed souls. The Muslims on the prayer mats with folded hands shed tears and offer prayers sincerely to Allah to end the sufferings and privation of mankind. Thus, this significant occasion of Eidul Fitr brings Muslims the opportunity to promote universal brotherhood and religious spirits all over the world. So, it is hoped that realizing the significance of Eidul Fitr, the Muslims will uphold and maintain the significance, importance and spirits of it forever.

Eid Fitr is a glorious day of redemption, and on that day the faithful believers repent of their past misdeeds and seek redemption, expiation, salvation and deliverance from sins and vices. God is very forgiving and may kindly grant His mercy and bestow His blessings upon them without measure for their religious performance. The day is also regarded as one of the virtuous days of forgiveness because the faithful Muslims assemble in the congregation of the day, and they all wholeheartedly pray to gracious God for forgiveness and strength of faith. On this historic, eventful and memorable day, the Muslims forget the differences in status between them, and the destitute or the vulnerable people in society. The well-to-do gracious Muslims treat the destitute and the vulnerable people to improved food and drink and become cordial, friendly and amiable to them. Thus, Eidul Fitr brings solemnity, religious fervor and a significant change in the mind of the Muslims all over the world. For the Muslims there are two major religious festivals – one is Eid-ul-Fitr which is observed at the end of Ramadan, and the other is Eid-ul-Adha which is observed on the 10th Jilhaj (lunar month). Emphasis has been laid to express joy and cheerfulness on the day of Eid. That is why fasting on those days are forbidden. In this connection it may be noted that Muslims should pay off zakat and fitr before Eid day. If zakat and fitr are given before Eid, the poor get the opportunity to attend the Eid congregation with new clothes on and can share joy.

### **Sunnah (traditions of Prophet) on Eid Day**

As per the traditions of our Prophet (SM) we find that from early morning on the day of Eid-ul-Fitr some preparations are taken by the Muslims. Taking bath, use of perfume, wearing new or clean clothes, and before attending prayers having some sweetmeat (but on the day of Eid-ul-Adha it is sunnah not taking any food before Eid prayers) are some traditions of the Prophet (SM). Muslims say their Eid prayers in order to satisfy Allah and to gain His blessings. Eid prayers consist of two rakat (part of the prayer which includes standing, bending and two prostrations) and the prayer is offered in additional six takbirs (the shout of ‘Allahu Akbar’ meaning Allah is the Greatest). The Eid prayers do not require any Azan (Muazzin’s call to congregational prayers), after prayer the Imam (leader of the religious congregation) utters Khutba from the holy Quran. Eid prayers are wajib (bounden/obligatory). This prayer congregation is preferably held on the open field. This prayer is performed in between sunrise and until the sun comes in the mid sky. Allah takes special care of his Baanda (obedient and devoted servant) and feels proud before his angels. Then Allah declares pardon for His obedient persons.

### **Celebration of Eidul Fitr in Bangladesh**

Eidul Fitr is celebrated with due solemnity, religious fervor and enthusiasm in Bangladesh where about 90% people are Muslims. This occasion is celebrated throughout the country in a befitting manner. The Muslims of rural and urban areas get up from bed early in the morning. After offering Fajr prayer they take bath in the morning and put on new or clean dress and cap and use perfume. Then they start going to Eidgah, the venue of prayers. Usually the congregational prayer is held on an open field otherwise in mosques.

The National Eid Congregation is held in the National Eidgha adjacent to the High Court in the capital. The two city corporations arrange more than 400 Eid

congregations in the capital city. But the biggest congregation of the country is held at Solakia in Kishoreganj District. People from home and abroad come here to offer their prayers. At the end of the prayer, the Imam appeals and seeks blessings and supplication from the Almighty for the peace, prosperity and happiness both for the Muslims and the country. Following the prayer, they embrace each other and exchange Eid greetings and come back home.

The radio and television put up special programs on this occasion. Discussions at various levels are held marking the significance of the day. In the urban areas, the roads, streets and the public and private buildings, in the capital and in the divisional and district towns including the upazila headquarters are officially decorated with national flags and festoons and illuminated by lights to grace the occasion.

On this day improved diets such as semai, feni, sweets, biriyani, kabab, polao, roast etc. are served at hospitals, prisons, orphanages, safe homes, and shelter centers. The district administration, upazila administration and city corporations across the country, organize and draw up many programs including charity show to celebrate and observe Eid-al-Adha in a befitting manner. On this occasion honourable President, Prime Minister, and leader of the opposition give messages wishing continued peace and prosperity of the people and the country. Edul-Fitr in other Muslims countries of the world is celebrated almost in the same manner as it is celebrated and observed in Bangladesh.

In conclusion it may be said that Ramadan month is full of historically and religiously important and significant events. Many religiously famous people were born in this month. It is the best month for the Muslims for religious practices. Verses from the holy Quran and divine books were revealed in this month. Heavens remain open and hells remain closed and Satan is kept in chains in this month. On the other hand, Eid plays an important part to meet near and far relatives, near and dear ones. This occasion forms a good bond of tie among the Muslims and brings the opportunity to exchange good wishes to one another. Moreover, during the Eid the rich come forward to help the poor, as a result a balance in social and economic condition is maintained. May Allah enable all Muslims to observe fasting and celebrate Eid happily. On the day Muslims all over the world gather at Eid Jamat (congregation) in their respective localities and pray to Almighty Allah to relieve and eliminate human sufferings and afflictions and make the people peace-loving and the world a peaceful one. The people also pray for forgiveness of their sins and to strengthen faith in Allah. On this occasion, the Muslims find the opportunity to purify and cleanse their heart and mind by dispelling malice and enmity from the mind. Moreover, it may be hoped that even people other than Muslims will come forward to the festive occasion, bury the individual and collective differences and give peace a lasting chance, and the total peace will bring about development and promote the spirit of good relations among human beings on earth. This is how the Edul Fitr brings about continued peace in the Muslim Ummah as well as in mankind and thus promotes humanity in the whole world.

***The writer is a former Joint Secretary to the People's Republic of Bangladesh***



## Spiritualism in Tagore's Poetry

**Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed**

forms, the gushing of the spirit never stops.'

By connecting with our environment in this manner, our self-consciousness becomes sweeter, deeper and brighter. The man within us grows up into a fuller entity. Our soul seems to mingle with His colours and flavour. Rabindranath had identified this phenomenon as devotion. He said, 'The poet's task is to ignite this awareness in the consciousness of man, to transform indifference into a newer zeal. That poet is great in people's eye who diffuses human hearts with the attributes of constancy, grandeur, freedom, omnipresence, and depth'.

**N**obel Laureate Poet Rabindranath Tagore's spiritual outlook and humanism was derived from man, nature and the Brahma or God. He held the view that the route to spiritual development was from 'body to society, from society to totality and from totality to the spiritual domain'. In this way, the melody of the soul was intertwined with the universal power. But what was required for this inter-mingling was connecting the world of nature with that of human beings. To Tagore, the whole human body appeared to be reverberating with the touch of light, air, affection, love, bliss, joy and electricity, as if embedded in a supernatural flute. Although he might have been influenced by the romantic-movement of the time, the '*Brahma Samaj*', the '*Bauls*', *Sufism*, or the Vedanta philosophy of '*Upanishads*', those views were in some respect Tagore's very own. We can very well comprehend how his spirit was liberated by connecting with the universe, the nature and the environment which surrounded him, by looking at some of his writings. The following lines are an indication of his spiritual outlook.

Tagore had said, 'Where He has given himself up through his infinite mirth and youthfulness, there is no dearth of affluence there, no limit to variety, and the riches are unending. There, the sky is lit in thousand directions wearing the girdles of stars; there, beauty surfaces in so many new



*The poet on his birthday in Tehran on 25 Boishakh, 1339 (8 May, 1932)*

This theme of liberation of the spirit is found in many of Rabindranath's poems. There is thus a new excitement for self-expansion in '*Kalpana*'— 'Oh bird, my bird/ blind, don't fold your wings now'. The formula for revival of the self encompasses the spirit of the universe. This inseparability of the self is made clearer in the poem '*Anobachchhinna Ami*'— 'I saw under the infinite sky/ I rock while seated on the swing of light'. In the '*Geetanjali-Geetimalya-Geetali*' phase, the soul of Rabindranath could become one with the cosmos. Overwhelmed by the unified voice of the waves and the forests, the ocean and the land, the sky and the earth, the poet wrote in his later years:

'I have tied you with my two joints,  
Your creations are with you and me,  
Your pain today is my pain.  
Today you know yourself  
With my knowledge.  
My surprised eyes are touched by a wand of gold,

It has revived the sense of beauty  
In your own consciousness.' (*'Doita', Shyamoli*)

Then in '*Prantik*', Tagore said,  
'I have bought my freedom from bonds  
Crossing the far away sky of soul, the Milky Way,  
In the pilgrimage of light, on the fine coast of extinction.'

In the same vein, Tagore asserted in '*Nabojatak*',  
'The human child brings back again and again  
The message of eternal hope—  
As if bringing along  
The light of freedom in a new dawn.'

The theme is even more pronounced when in the poem '*Shesh lekha*' Tagore declared,

'Let the bonds of the world come to an end,  
The vast universe has opened its arms,  
The soul is fearless to know  
The great unknown.'

In these autobiographical poems, Rabindranath strove to look at his own self in different lights and perspectives. In the process, he has equated the spiritual force with the eternal force of the universe.

The Bauls and Kirtans of Bangla had a great influence on the poems and songs of Tagore. He stayed almost permanently in East Bengal for around a decade

from the age of thirty to forty. He belonged to an affluent high-class society in Kolkata, but was exposed to mainstream Bangali society while living in Shilaidaha-Shahjadpur-Patisar of East Bengal. He was especially captivated by the Baul songs he heard in Kushtia and made wide use of these Baul tunes in his patriotic, love and prayer songs. He was even termed as the greatest Baul of Bangla at that time.

It was through songs that spiritualism had flowed out of Rabindra ethos most forcefully. Some of the examples are as follows:

1. My days pass on in your wait.

I am alone on this empty slope; take me across O boatman.

I have broken the game's whistle

Have put an end to laments and laughter,

With tired feet as the night advances, sleep overpowers my eyes.

2. Infinite in the midst of the finite, you play on your tune  
That is why your manifestation through me is so very sweet.

3. You stand on the other side of my song  
My melodies get feet, but I do not get you  
When will you come, Lord, and play my flute  
In the intense darkness of a joyous silent night.

Spiritualism had transcended all aspects of Poet Rabindranath's life and he looked at man and nature as images of God. He wrote in a letter, 'If I have realized God or got any hint about him, then it was from this world, its people, trees, animals, dusts and soil – from all these objects.' We therefore find the poet comprehending God as dearest to man and his companion in times of sorrow, as in the volumes of 'Geetanjali' - 'Geetimalya' - 'Geetali'. In 'Balaka' (1916), he depicted God as the determinant of human destiny. Ultimately, this God finds His place in the heart of man and becomes one and the same in the eyes of the poet.

*(Poems from Tagore have been rendered into English by the writer)*

**Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed is a retired Additional Secretary and former Editor of Bangladesh Quarterly. Email: hahmed1960@gmail.com**



*Poet Rabindranath (middle) along with other writers before leaving for England in 1912*



## Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam: A voice of revolt and inspiration

**Md. Quddus Khan**

*Sammer Gaan Gai -  
Amar chokkhe purush-ramani kono bhedabhed nai .  
Bishwe ja-kichu mahan srishti chiro kalyankor  
Ordhek tar koriache nari , ordhek tar noro.'*

(Translation: I sing the song of equality  
Whatever there in the world's creation  
Is beautiful, noble, and good for eternity  
One half of them has been created by woman And the other half by man.)  
(Note: woman mentioned first and then man)

He was uncompromising against all kinds of oppression and suppression—be it political, social, or economic. His first objective was the independence of India from British colonial rule and his second objective was to establish a society free

The **T**he raison d'être behind revolt and inspiration is very evident in his (Nazrul) writings. He revolted against all kinds of injustice — political, social, economic, and all forms of discriminations on grounds of caste, creed, colour, religion etc. In his poem 'Manush' he wrote:

Gahi Sammer Gaan —  
Manusher Cheye boro kichu  
nai nohe kichu mohiyani'  
(Translation: I sing the song  
of equality

Nothing is above man (man  
and woman) and  
None is superior to man.)

In Islam also, human beings  
have been honored as  
'Ashraful Mukhluqat' i.e.,  
Best of creations of God.  
He inspired people for all  
kinds of freedom for him  
political freedom means  
no less than independence,  
social freedom means no  
discrimination on grounds  
of caste, creed, colour,  
religions, economic  
conditions etc. Economic  
freedom means freedom  
from want and hunger. He  
was for equality between  
man and woman. In his  
poem 'Nari' (Woman)  
Nazrul writes:

from oppression and suppression.

In his *Dhumketu* (Comet) Patrika Nazrul writes in his editorial

First of all, Dhumketu wants the full Independence of India. We do not understand Swaraj or otherwise, because meaning of this (Swaraj) is differently interpreted by different quarters' (Muzaffar Ahmed, Kazi Smritikotha, Page 293).

Referring to all kinds of oppression and suppression — political, social, and economic Kazi Nazrul Islam writes in his poem *Bidrohi* (Rebel):

*'Moha-Bidrohi rono-klanto  
Ami sei din hobo shanto,  
Jobe utpiriter krondon-rol akasha batashe  
dhonibe na, Ottacharir Khorgo kirpan Bhimo  
rono-bhume ronibe na  
Bidrohi rono-klanto  
Ami sei din hobo shanto!'*

(Translation:

'I am the great rebel weary of war,  
Shall be silent on the day when the chorus of cries of the oppressed  
Will no longer ring in the sky and the air  
I am the rebel, weary of war  
Will only rest in peace then')

Poet Nazrul writes in his poem *Kaifiat*':

*'Rakta jhorate pari nako eka Tai likhe jai e rakta-lekha'  
(Translation: I cannot shed blood alone  
So I write this blood stained writings')*

*'Prarthona koro jara kere khay tetrish koti mukher grassh  
Jeno lekha hai amar rakta-lekhay tader sorvonash'*

(Translation: Pray, those who snatched away  
Morsel of rice from the mouth  
Of thirty-three crores of human beings  
Pray, my blood-stained writings  
Shall curse them to doom.')

Poet kazi Nazrul Islam was born on 11th Jaishtha of Bengali era 1306 B.S. corresponding to May 24 (Tuesday), 1899 AD. He was born in village Churulia of Jamuria Police Station (P.S.) under Asansol subdivision of Burdwan district under the province of Bengal (Now West Bengal). His father was Kazi Faqeer Ahmed and mother Zahida Khatun. His father died in 1908 AD at the early age of Nazrul. Hence, his struggle of life started at an early age. Nazrul after passing his junior primary examination from village Maktab, started his career there as a Maktab teacher at an early age of 10. After doing his vi grade with the help of distant relatives, he left the school to earn his living - worked as a boy servant of Ramprasadpur Railway bungalow, worked also in the bread making shop and bakery of Mohammad Ahad Baksh at Asansol. He also worked as a boy servant in the house of Daroga Quazi Mafizullah who admitted him to Darirampur High school



Poet Nazrul at his young age





*Kazi Shimla Daroga-bari- Memory-laden place of Poet Nazrul at Trishal in Mymensingh district*

in class vii (1914). Then he had his schooling in viii, ix, x in Searsole Raj High School, Raniganj with the help of its Headmaster. He ended his academic career while studying in class x. He joined 49th Bengal Paltan HQ in the Army in 1917. Nazrul did well in army — hence, promoted to the post of Lance Naik Havildar and then to the post of Battalion Quarter Master Havildar and posted in Karachi. Nazrul

researcher Professor Rafiqul Islam wrote in his book *Nazrul Jiboni*, real Poet life started from his military life' (Page 46). Havildar Nazrul from Karachi sent his poem titled 'S Khoma' to quarterly '*Bangiya Mussalman Sahitya Patrika* (Edited by Muhammad Shahidullah) for publication. They published it in the name of 'instead of Xhoma' (which Nazrul liked and endorsed). Nazrul was so happy for publishing of his first poem that he wrote to the editor from Karachi military camp 'I do not have language to express my gratitude for this (Publication of the poem Mukti). If your blessings continue, I shall one day become a renowned poet and writer, which I shall prove in reality, take it for granted'. (*Nazrul Jiboni* Page 50). This assertion and confidence of Nazrul, makes me remember of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's confidence in him (Mujib).

Once political Guru of Bangabandhu, Hussain Shahid Suhrawardy (ex. Chief Minister of Bengal) became annoyed with Mujib and said, 'You are nobody'. Mujib instantly replied, 'One day I shall prove that I am somebody.' (*Asamapto Atmojibonee* Page 29). This self-confidence of both poet Nazrul and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman came true in future — the former becoming one of the greatest and favorite poets of Bengali literature and the latter becoming the Father of the Nation of independent Bangladesh.

Nazrul took part in non-co-operation movement against British Government in 1921. He edited *Dhumketu* Ptriba in 1922. '*Dhumketu*



*Bed used by Poet Nazrul preserved at Daroga-bari*



*Nazrul Mancha (stage) at Daulatpur in Cumilla district*

became spokesman of armed rebels' - commented Prof. Radiqul islam (Nazrul Jibonee Page 188). Poem 'Anandamoyir Agomone' of Nazrul was published in Dhumketu Patrika on September 26, 1922 after which warrant of arrest was issued against Kazi Nazrul Islam by the British Government. Nazrul was arrested under section 124-KA of the Indian Penal Code for sedition from

Comilla on November 23, 1922. The Court sentenced him to I-year rigorous imprisonment. Nazrul gave a written statement before the Court in his defense, which is popularly known as Rajbondir Jobanbondi'. In the statement he told the British Judge Mr. Suinoho, am a poet, I am sent by God to disclose undisclosed truth, to give shape to the unveiled truth. God responds to the voice of the poet. My message is the expression of truth, voice of God, that message may be seditious in the eye of the Royalty (Government). But in the eye of justice, it (message) is not anti-justice, it is not anti-truth. For that message one may be sentenced in the Court of Royalty (Government), but in the eye of religion, in the court of Justice it is innocent, taintless, colourless, a burning truth'. (Nazrul Jiboni Page 222)

Nazrul was the first poet to be imprisoned in British India. He started hunger-strike in the jail in protest against oppression of the convicts sentenced for sedition (Rajbondi). Kabi Guru Rabindranath Tagore sent him (Nazrul) a telegram requesting him to break the hunger-strike saying 'Give up hunger-strike, our literature claims you' (Nazrul Jiboni, Page 235). On the 39th day Nazrul broke hunger-strike on the request of his mother-like personality Biroja Sundari of Comilla. Why Nazrul did not honor Kabiguru's request in this respect remains a mystery. I think, it happened out of his disappointment.

Nazrul (23) was married to a hindu lady (It was his second marriage) Promila (16) on April, 1924. Promila's mother Girabola was the only hindu to approve of it. Hence, no hindu / non-Muslim was invited in the marriage ceremony. First son of Nazrul was born on September,



*The place where Poet Nazrul stayed for sometime at Mission Para in Chuadanga district*

1926. His name was Bulbul (Arindam Khaled). Nazrul had his political venture also in his life. He contested for central legislature upper house Muslim seat from East Bengal and was defeated (1926). During 1927 Nazrul became a bit sick. In 1927, he also attended first annual Conference of Muslim Sahitya Samaj at Dhaka. Nazrul's book *Prloyshikha* 'was proscribed (1930) and Nazrul was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment for writing a book containing seditious subjects (Nazrul Jiboni, Page 406-407) by Calcutta Chief Presidency Magistrate Roksburg, but later he was acquitted by the High Court (Nazrul Jiboni , Page 408) Nazrul contributed to songs as well. One of his popular songs was '*Charkar Gaan*' (Move, move my dear Charka). He got acclamation of Mahatma Gandhi and Deshobondhu Chittaranjan Das singing this song before them at Faridpur session of Congress (1925).

In 1926 Nazrul added a new parameter in Bengali songs. He did not confine himself to the home-songs (Swadeshi Songs), political and freedom struggle songs only but also extended it to the noncommunalism and anti-feudalism and converted it to songs of equality and mass songs' (Nazrul Jiboni, Prof. Rafiqul Islam, Page-430). Nazrul composed many songs and also sang himself. He composed Gazals for the Muslims and Shyama Sangeet for Hindus. He was a versatile genius.

Nazrul was associated with H.M.V electronic recording Company since 1928 and up to 1942 he recorded songs Gazals etc. in many other recording Companies. His songs were sung in Calcutta Radio since 1932. Dhaka Betar broadcasted his songs *Gitibichitra* in December 12, 1940. Nazrul also acted as play-back singer in many cinemas including *Dhrubo*, *PatalPuri* etc. Some estimate that Nazrul composed more than 3000 songs.

Nazrul fell severely sick in August 1941 and lost his speaking power in July 1942. After the independence of Bangladesh, Father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman brought the poet Kazi Nazrul Islam as Bangladeshi from India on May 24, 1972. Poet Nazrul was housed in Kabi Bhaban in Road No 28 of Dhanmondi Residential Area, Dhaka. The then Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared Tk. 1000/- allowance per month for him from Government fund. When Bangabandhu met poet Nazrul at in 1972, I remember, an English newspaper headlined as follows:

'A rebel called on the rebel.'

Government recognized poet Nazrul's song- '*Chal , Chal*' as war song of our nation .

Bangabandhu recognized him as our national poet. Our official publication also mentions this. But no official Gazette has been published so far. It is a national commitment. We hope our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina may kindly fulfill this unfinished national commitment and arrange publication of Gazette declaring poet Kazi Nazrul Islam as National Poet of Bangladesh.

The success of poet Nazrul lies in the fact that his writings inspired people to raise voice against all kinds of oppression, suppression and discrimination. His poetry inspired people in British India and Bangladesh for political freedom. His writings also inspired to fight for freedom from poverty and hunger.

***The writer is a retired Secretary to the Govt. of Bangladesh. He was a former Assistant Professor of Politics in Chattagram University, Bangladesh***



## A story to Overcome Monga Sustainably

**Dr. M. G. Neogi**

farm employment dries-up. When this monga period arrived, the food stocks of the poor people had been heavily depleted, while opportunities for farm labouring work dried up before the next peak, which falls during the aman rice harvest in December. These families may have to survive extended period without proper meals and sometimes with no food at all.

From the very beginning, RDRS (Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service), which was established in 1972 as the field programme of the Geneva-based Lutheran World Federation/Department for World Service to assist the most affected vulnerable poor people of greater Rangpur-Dinajpur districts to provide these distressed people with food, clothes and shelter including agricultural inputs. Later RDRS concentrated its attention to overcoming the most burning issue of north-western Bangladesh 'monga' through extensive research to make a permanent solution.

Thus, to know the causes of monga, a survey was carried out under the leadership of M. G. Neogi during 1998-2020, where it was found that more than 67 percent of the total population of Rangpur region are landless and fully dependent on agriculture as agricultural day-labourers. During the dry season (mainly November-May), farmers are cultivating different type of crops like potato, maize, mustard, tobacco, boro rice, wheat, winter vegetables, etc. throughout the dry season and thus day-labourers getting job in this season.

After the dry season, when all these farmers are coming to cultivate crops in monsoon season (mainly June-November), they have only choice to cultivate *aman* rice in monsoon which is the main food crop in Bangladesh. Due to heavy rainfall during this monsoon season, there is limited opportunity to go for other than rice while most of the farmers like to cultivate aman rice as staple food.

**F**rom many decades, Rangpur was known as amonga prone area, a curse for the region. The local Bengali term 'monga' was used to describe a famine like situation in north Bengal particularly in Kurigram district when the poor suffered acute deprivation due to their lack of purchasing power caused by seasonal unemployment. This acute seasonal distress recurred each year as an inherent feature of northern Bangladesh, especially greater Rangpur district.

Evidences available in Bangladesh indicated that the people of northern Bangladesh used to face severe food insecurity every year during mid-September to mid-November (Awshin-Kartik). During this period, the rural poor who relied on farm work regularly suffer severe seasonal hardship, when household food availability and



*Short duration rice at ripening stage while other rice fields are still green*

In north-western Bangladesh, almost hundred percent farm families cultivate aman rice in monsoon season which is a long duration rice variety that requires 150-170 days (Swarna, BR11, etc.) to ripe.

Normally, farmers and day-labourers prepare seedbeds and sow seeds of these long duration rice varieties in late June and then prepare the main field in July and transplant the seedlings in late July to August. Then, they are involved with other intercultural operations during late August to first half of September. After that, there was a little farming field operations required from mid-September to mid-November in the rice field which was the main causes of *monga*. Since there was no job opportunities in rice field during mid-September to mid-November, farm households and day-labourers passed their life with limited or no income during these days.

To find the root causes of *monga*, another research was conducted by M. G. Neogi and his team during 2000-2002, where it was confirmed that farm households are facing serious problems to cultivate winter crops in right time, i.e. in November. Normally, in high and medium high land, farmers are cultivating potato, maize, tobacco, mustard, winter vegetables after harvesting of aman rice. The proper time to cultivate of these winter crops in north-western Bangladesh is in November. But due to presence of long duration aman rice crops in most of the lands in November, farmers have no scope to cultivate winter crops in due time. This delay hampers the normal yield and also increases the production cost of different winter crops.

Under a separate survey, it also be mentioned that when farm households will be able to cultivate potato, maize, mustard, etc. in right time, i.e. in November, farmers will get more yield for timely cultivation and side by side could be able to minimize the production cost by reducing use of pesticides and other inputs and farmers will get good price of their products for early marketing.

After identification of the root causes of *monga* through above research programmes, a team with M. G. Neogi, initiated to conduct further research to overcome such problems. In this connection, the team conducted the research program along with Irrigation and Water Management Division of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) under PETRRA-ICM project with a short duration rice variety 'BRRI dhan33' which was released by Bangladesh Rice Research Institute in 1997. They tested this variety in farmers' field as short duration rice variety in order to harvest rice in lean period, i.e. in *monga* months. It was observed that the variety was ripped in lean period (*Awshin-Kartik* months), but huge amount of grains and plants were damaged by rats, insects and birds, as there were no other ripe rice crops or any other crops available in the field at that time.

Based on this learning, a PhD study with six sub-component research programmes on 'Adjustment of rice-based cropping pattern and agro-techniques to mitigate seasonal food insecurity in north-west Bangladesh' had been established at RDRS Rangpur Farm in 2004 by the former Head of Agriculture and Environment of RDRS Bangladesh Mrinmoy Guha Neogi, under supervision of Prof. Dr. Abul Khair of Jahangirnagar University. The short duration rice variety BRRI dhan 33 and a number of local short duration rice variety like Pariza, Shaita, etc. were included with both direct seeded and seedling transplanted system during monsoon season.

After successful research program, a field campaign was arranged by RDRS in RDRS Rangpur farm where it was the first time for the people of Rangpur region to see the successfully harvesting of short duration rice on 22nd October 2004, i.e. in *monga* months. The IRRI representative Dr. Zainul Abedin, BRRI Rangpur regional head Dr. M A Mazid, Dr. Musherraf Hossain of BRRI along with agricultural extension personnel, government officials, journalists, NGO personnel and farm households of different districts participated and observed the harvesting of aman rice in *monga* months.

Under direct seeded system, the yield was recorded with 4.1 ton per hectare within 100 days of harvesting, while under transplanting system, the yield was recorded with 3.8 ton per hectare within harvest of 120 days of seeding seeds. The yield was almost similar, compared to existing long duration rice variety and at least 50 days' earlier harvest compared to normal harvesting time. The event got wide electronic and print media coverages.

After successful research trials in 2004, M. G. Neogi along with partner NGOs of RDRS initiated to replicate this proven technology in 100 farmers field of different districts of Rangpur region. The team tried to motivate 100 farm households of different districts of the region to establish the technology, but finally only 18 farmers agreed and established the technologies at their own field under close technical guidance of concerned technologists headed by M. G. Neogi. Out of 18 trials, 15 farmers of different districts successfully harvested their crops and they are very much satisfied about the technology.

In this year (2005), the team refined the short duration rice cultivation technologies, where three considerable points have been identified to cultivate short duration rice successfully. Firstly, only 20-25 day-old seedlings to be transplanted instead of existing 35-45 day-old seedlings; secondly, distance for transplanting of rice seedlings to be closer compared to long duration rice transplanting practices, as number of tiller formation is less in case of short duration rice variety; and, finally,

last top-dress of nitrogen fertilizer to be applied within 30-35 days of transplanting instead 40-50 days existing practices.

The first year research findings of PhD programme were presented on introduction of short duration rice to mitigate *monga* in presence of agricultural state minister at Tista Barrage in 2005 where it was highly appreciated by the government of Bangladesh for its appropriateness to mitigate *monga* sustainably. The print and electronic media coverage the program while Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) extended their cooperation to promote the technology.

Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) and Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) along with Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB), Research Initiative Bangladesh (RIB) and other organizations extended their cooperation to establish the technologies at field level in large scale. After successfully invention of the short duration rice based cropping system, RDRS replicated the technology at 50 thousand farm households of greater Rangpur through its partner NGOs during 2005 to 2011 while RDRS is still continuing the program by its own initiative.

After huge coverages by the electronic and print media in last four years, in 2008, the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh took the lead role and extended the same in 40,000 hectares of land under GO/NGO collaboration to ensure food security in lean period while the present government played the significant role and extended the technology in farm households.

As a result of usefulness of short duration rice variety in *monga* prone areas, research organizations are coming forward to develop most promising short duration rice variety. As of now, BRRI developed a very good quality of short duration rice variety BRRI dhan75 and Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture (BINA) developed short duration aman rice variety Binadhan-7 and very recently they developed another short duration aman rice variety – Binadhan-17. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University (BSMRAU) developed BU dhan1, a short duration aman rice variety with slender grain quality. Now, huge farm households are cultivating short duration hybrid rice variety at Rangpur region while farm households of greater Rangpur region are now able to harvesting rice in *mongamonths* and after that they are now successfully cultivating winter crops in right time and ensuring good yield with high market price.

As outcomes of this technology, in 2021, farmers of greater Rangpur region were cultivated short duration aman rice in at least 40 percent of their total aman cropped area which is gradually increasing where none of such practice was there before 2005. Side by side, such farm households are now availing the opportunity to cultivating winter crops in right time as their next crop and getting higher benefit.

*Monga* is now gone forever. Due to the great contribution for the nation through developing such a successful technology to mitigate *monga* in a sustainable way, the honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina honoured to Dr. Mrinmoy Guha Neogi, the Deputy Project Leader of the University of Western Australia and handed over the highest prestigious state award 'Independence Award-2021' for his outstanding contribution in Science and Technology.

***Dr. Mrinmoy Guha Neogi, Deputy Project Leader, University of Western Australia and, recipient of the highest prestigious state award 'Independence Award-2021' for his outstanding contribution in Science and Technology***



## World Health Day

---

### Umma Halima

per year. From 1 billion in 1800 to 7.9 billion in 2020, the world's population has increased dramatically. According to World Bank in 2022, the world's fertility rate is 2.428 births per woman, decrease 0.41 percent from 2021. Global life expectancy at birth went from 66.8 years in 2000 to 73.3 years in 2019, while healthy life expectancy increased from 58.3 years to 63.7 years. Bangladesh's current life expectancy in 2022 is 73.29 years, increase 0.39 percent from 2021. Bangladesh's life expectancy in 2021 was 73.00 years respectively.

The first World Day was held in 1948. To make crucial choices about various

**W**orld Health Day is a global health awareness day celebrated every year on 7 April. The World Health Organization (WHO) observes this day with the aim of raising awareness among the people about various health related issues. This year, the WHO is urging people to come forward to think broadly. This year 'World Health Day 2022' is designed with the theme of 'Our Planet, Our Health' and focuses on keeping people and the planet healthy and encouraging a movement to build a society focused on wellness. Every year, the WHO highlights a new health topic that needs serious attention.

According to the most recent United Nations projections compiled by Worldometer, the current world population is 8.0 billion as of June 2022. The global population is growing at a rate of roughly 83 million people per year, or 1.1 percent



*Rural health service in Bangladesh*





*Urban health service in Bangladesh*

health issues, the World Health Organization decided it was necessary to enlist the help of renowned physicians from around the world. In 1948, it convened the World Health Assembly for this aim. It was the first World Health Assembly, with 194 countries participating. The World Health Organization is administered by its member states, who were elected to constitute the world's highest health policy-making body. This body includes the member nations' health ministers. It was recommended for the first time during the World Health Assembly to dedicate a special day to global health. It was deemed an excellent concept by all member governments, and April 7 was named World Health Day. The growing number of diseases around the world prompted the creation of World Health Day. Many infectious diseases spread rapidly around the world, resulting in epidemics. This causes people to panic. People are made aware of various ailments and strategies to avoid them through activities held on World Health Day. The WHO estimates that over 13 million people die each year due to preventable environmental causes around the world. This includes the climate problem, which is the world's single greatest health danger. The climatic emergency is also a health emergency.

The World Health Organization commemorates World Health Day in order to promote global health. The aim is that everyone has access to high-quality health care at a reasonable cost. Many dreadful diseases afflict millions of individuals around the world. As a result, the major goal of Health Day is to promote dialogues and raise awareness about themes such as disease prevention and management. Human health, according to the World Health Organization, is defined as being physically, intellectually, and socially healthy.

Every year, a theme is chosen for World Health Day. There is a particular health concern in this topic. The chosen topic is the focus of World Health Day activities. In general, events are planned to emphasize the importance of maintaining good health. People are encouraged to abandon their harmful habits and adopt a healthy lifestyle that includes a nutritious diet and regular exercise.

World Health Day is acknowledged by various governments and non-governmental organizations with interests in public health issues, who also organize activities and highlight their support in media reports, such as the Global Health Council.

‘The World Health Day’ is observed in the country as well as around the world. Country’s growth of health infrastructure, the creation and recruitment of skilled workforce, the buying of state-of-the-art medical equipment, and the use of information technology have all improved the quality of medical services. Life expectancy has risen, while maternal and newborn mortality rates have fallen. The current government has pledged to protect people’s health and to develop a pro-welfare society and state by creating a pollution-free environment that is favourable to healthy living for all citizens of the country.

The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman performed a variety of actions after the country’s independence, including the building of hospitals for the growth of the country’s medical system. By delivering quality Health, Nutrition, and Population (HNP) services to the people, the Awami League-led government is conducting huge development efforts to bring health services to their doorsteps and construct a healthy, strong, and functioning community.

By creating a people-oriented health strategy, the government has taken several initiatives, including the establishment of new hospitals and nursing institutes, to assure up-to-date healthcare. She said that the government has expanded the number of physicians, nurses, and support staff in hospitals across the country, and that 18,000 community clinics and union health centres have been established at the village level to bring health services to people’s doorsteps. These health centres provide free health, family welfare, and nutrition services to vulnerable populations. Mobile phones and online platforms have been used to deliver medical services from district and upazila level hospitals.

Despite limited resources, Bangladesh has made significant progress toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on health, and the government is working to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.



*Covid -19 vaccination*

Sector-wide operations are being implemented for the period 2017-2022 under 29 operational plans of the 4th Health, Population, and Nutrition Sector Programme (4th HPNSP). During the COVID-19 crisis, the administration implemented a variety of internationally praised solutions. Bangladesh has won the MDG Award, the ‘South Cooperation Visionary’ award, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) award, and the Vaccine Hero award in honour of its efforts in the health sector.

Everyone, regardless of gender, colour, social class, or economic status, should have access to health care. In the case of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign, as well as other health challenges such as communicable and non-communicable illnesses, maternity and child health, and malnutrition, this strategy is required. In order to address long-term disparities, such an intersectoral strategy is required.

Bangladesh’s administration has demonstrated a strong commitment to COVID-19 vaccination campaign. It has set an international precedent by consistently implementing the ‘whole-of-government, whole-of-society’ approach in response to the COVID-19 epidemic.

Resilient health systems, based on equal access and social protection, are critical for addressing injustices and inequalities and for achieving universal health coverage, particularly in times of crisis like the COVID-19 epidemic. It is also critical to carefully monitor and analyze health equity statistics in order to make informed judgments about how to reduce inequities.

The World Health Day is an annual global health awareness day held on April 7 to commemorate the World Health Organization’s (WHO) founding anniversary and to give people with a unique chance to mobilize action around a specific health subject that affects people all over the world.

### **Themes of World Health Day since the year 2010**

- 2010 – Urbanization and Health: Make Cities Healthier
- 2011 – Antimicrobial Resistance: No Action Today, No Cure Tomorrow
- 2012 – Good Health Adds Life to Years
- 2013 – Hypertension: Silent Killer, Global Public Health Crisis
- 2014 – Vector-borne diseases
- 2015 – Food safety
- 2016 – Diabetes: Scale up prevention, strengthen care, and enhance surveillance
- 2017 – Depression: Let’s talk
- 2018 – Universal Health Coverage: everyone, everywhere
- 2019: Universal Health Coverage: : everyone, everywhere
- 2020: Support Nurses and Midwives
- 2021: Building a Fairer and Healthier World for Everyone
- 2022: Our planet, our health

***The writer is an employee of DFP***



# Development of Livestock in Bangladesh

**Md. Abu Abdullah**

The livestock sector plays an important role in our economy. It can solve the problems of malnutrition, unemployment, empowerment of women, growth of fertility of agricultural land, making a talented nation, and earning foreign exchange. Meat, egg, and milk play a vital role to meet the demands of food of animal origin in our everyday life. Article 18(1) of our Constitution says, ‘The state shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties.’

The Department of Livestock Services reported that the contribution of livestock to

the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Bangladesh is 1.47% with a GDP growth rate of livestock at 3.80%. Approximately, 20% of the people in the country are directly engaged with the livestock sector.

Currently there are estimated to be 24,540,000 cattle 1,500,000 buffalo, 3,679,000 sheep and 25,604,000 goats and 365,852,000 poultry being raised by livestock keepers. The livestock population has been growing steadily over the past thirty years. Bangladesh is self-sufficient in meat and eggs and has an exportable surplus for each of these livestock products. Milk self-sufficiency is well on the way with a growing trend in the level of dairy production.

Livestock resources have been playing an important role in the development of human civilization. Livestock production is an integral component of the rural life and economy of Bangladesh. Livestock plays a significant role in traditional

farming, supply of food of animal origin, and extensive employment generation. Now a day’s government and private sector are working together to meet the demands of adequate and safe meat, milk, and egg in the country. The overall agricultural sector is working hand in hand to



Cattle Farm



*Goat Farm*

achieve the sustainable development goal declared by United Nations.

The majority of livestock producers in Bangladesh are engaged in mixed smallholder enterprises, growing crops and raising livestock for home consumption as well as for the sale of any surplus products

locally. Where access to services and inputs as well as marketing facilities are often very limited.

However, there is rapidly growing number of farmers, especially in close to urban areas are now investing in semi-commercial or full-scale- commercial enterprises, especially in the poultry industry. Similarly, many farmers have also started to specialize in small to medium-scale dairy farming as well as raising cattle and small ruminants for meat production, in response to a growing demand for meat and milk. A very few large-scale commercial dairy farms have also now been established.

Since the eighties contribution of the livestock sector is increasing day by day, employment opportunities, the number of commercial farms, and the production of livestock increased surprisingly.

Production of meat, milk and egg in 1971-72 was five lakh metric tons, ten lakh metric tons, and 150 crores respectively, which has increased to 84.40 metric tons, 119.85 metric tons, and 2057.64 crores in the 2020-21 fiscal year.

The demand for animal-origin food is increasing due to rapid economic development, reduction of hardcore poor, and health consciousness among the people in the country. Every year first June, World Milk Day is celebrated, in the country to create nutrition awareness among people. The government has taken different steps to remove barriers and support this sub-sector to meet the demand for milk in the country.

Since 2013, the second Friday of October is observed as World Egg Day in the country, with the patronization of the World Egg Commission. The demand for sacrificial livestock for Eid ul Fitr in the country is fulfilled by the country's supply.

Now we need to increase the supply of meat, milk, and egg to mitigate the supply of food of animal origin at a rapid speed. Therefore, we need to follow science-based modern technology to upgrade breed development and give adequate coverage to animal health. Supply of feed and fodder at affordable prices around the year is essential for smooth growth in this sector.

Animal disease diagnosis, disease surveillance, and treatment of anthrax, novel coronavirus, bird flu, swain flu, Ebola virus, SARS, MERS, zoonotic avian and human influenza, nipa virus, rabies should get more public attention. To protect our livestock and food items, we must take more protective measures, by monitoring

the activities of 24 quarantine stations in the country. These surveillance activities could be effective by strengthening the digitization of information, e-livestock services, livestock support mobile apps, and software-based reporting activities.

The production and distribution of vaccines needed to be more organized to curb and treatment of infectious diseases. Treatment facilities for livestock and poultry need to reach out to the doorsteps of remote areas farmers. We have to ensure the supply of quality and standard medicine at the same time. Awareness about the dangers of urging medication without the prescription of a veterinarian, especially the need to raise awareness about the dangers of using antibiotics and the effects of Anti-microbial Resistance.

World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), Food and Agriculture Organisation, and World Health Organisation have joined hands in developing a ‘ One Health ‘ approach towards the development of standards and guidelines to help member countries to ensure human health, animal health, and environmental protection. The implementation of these standards relies on the close collaboration of all stakeholders having an interest or part to play along each of the livestock and food value chains from the ‘Farm to Fork’.

Transportation of animals to slaughterhouses or markets is carried out informally, and Animal Disease Act or Animal Welfare Act provisions should be enforced properly. Most of the time animal slaughtering also took place in a very informal manner. Establishment of the modern slaughterhouses is now the demand of the time. While some good ones are operating in big cities, we need to establish more modern slaughterhouses across the country.

New diseases and pathogens can enter through imported or locally produced food of animal origin, and seeds, embryos, and parents stock eggs in the country. We need to control the spread of harmful chemicals, biochemicals molecules, and other possible threats by maintaining strict quality control based on science and good practices.

A modern quality control laboratory has been established in Savar, near Dhaka for livestock and poultry-related services. This laboratory has earned ISO/IEC 17025-2015 standard accreditation from Bangladesh Accreditation Board in 2021.

The laboratory can test the quality of adolescents’ breeding materials, food of animal origin, pesticides chemicals, fertilizers, mycotoxins, hormones, antibiotics, formalin, melamine, dyes, bacteria, anthrax, tuberculosis, salmonella, E. coli, and seventy other tests.

Any government-  
n o n g o v e r n m e n t  
organizations, livestock, and  
poultry farm owner can test  
their sample from there by  
paying fees.

Department of livestock  
services has taken the  
Livestock and Dairy  
Development Project to  
modernize the sector with  
4280 crore takas funded by



*Poultry Farm*



*Sheep rearing*

the World Bank. Nearly 680 crore taka has been distributed among Five lakh eighty thousand farmers during corona time as compensation. Some components of this project will be implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization to upgrade the sector as per international standards.

Due to the sudden attack of Covid19 livestock

sector of Bangladesh suffered a great loss. Every small and big farm has suffered deeply, for break down of their supply chain and sales. Weak supply and sales systems are the main weakness of to flourishing livestock and poultry sector, even at the normal time. Bangladesh Dairy Farmers Association claimed that nearly 12 million liters of milk were unsold at the very outset of pandemics. Other producer's association also claimed their losses at the same time. Department of Livestock Services operated a control room to facilitate services and sales in this sector. Even they facilitate online sales of the sacrificial cow for kurbani. During Ramadan, they are selling meat, milk, and eggs through mobile vans comparatively less than the market price among the public. Therefore, ensuring a good supply chain system is a prerequisite for the success of the sector.

Development of livestock resources depends on veterinary health services, support services, supply of biological products, quality production inputs, extension services, prevention and control and treatment of disease, and cooperation between private and public sectors. The government and the private sector have taken various initiatives to increase productivity and artificial insemination system to raise the standard of this sector. Gradually this sector is moving towards science-based modern commercial trade and industry.

Alongside the public sector livestock services, there is a rapidly emerging demand for private veterinary services. The expansion of veterinary education has been expanded in different parts of the country from diploma to graduation and post-graduation level. It is reported that there are currently more than 5000 veterinarians registered with Bangladesh Veterinary Council. Many of them are now employed directly by the dairy and poultry farms. There are 13052 cadres, non-cadre officers, and staff in the government sector along with veterinary paraprofessionals in the private sector providing veterinary services in the country.

Now we need to provide training on poultry and animal husbandry, treatment, and improved animal farming technic to the youth, landless small farmers, and small farm owners to create employment opportunities and enhance productivity in this sector. Better marketing facilities, commercial production, and proper policy supports are key elements for the development of livestock in Bangladesh.

***The writer is a former Additional Secretary, mdabuabdullah@gmail.com***



## Otters of Bangladesh: At the Brink of Extinction

Professor Dr. A N M Aminoor Rahman

entered the canal! As soon as we finished taking pictures of the kingfisher, four pairs of widened eyes got stuck in our eyes for a moment! But, within a few seconds their eyes started to blink, they moved a little, and finally ran away and hide behind the bushes of the bank.

We stopped the boat and sat quietly. After a while, they came out of the bushes feeling safe. The creature at the front stood up straight like a human. Then he raised his ears and looked around. The other 3 animals at the back just followed him and did the same thing. Then they slowly stood on the bank of the canal. Once again, all of them raised their ears and looked around. Their behavior looked quite normal as we kept 'pin drop silence'. So, they paid attention for hunting fishes in the canal. After about 10 minutes of hunting, they climbed on the bank; some of them leaned on the ground and others on the trunk of a tree. What a relief? At one point they fell asleep. I have seen these creatures many times before, but never seen resting or sleeping them like this. So, it was a new experience to me. Soon after woke up from sleep, they again jump into the canal for fishing. For about half an hour we quietly took some good pictures of the animals and left the canal.

The story of the strange creatures that I just told from a mangrove canal of Kokilmoni of the Sunderbans is about an endangered mammals of Bangladesh, the small-clawed otter. Now-a-days otters became very rare and vanishing mammals in Bangladesh. Although they are considered as the ecological indicators, but our ignorance and negligence thrown them to the brink of extinction.

Otters are carnivorous mammals of the Lutridae subfamily of the Mustelidae family. At present there are 13 extant otter species found all over the world, of

As soon as I woke up and got out of the launch cabin, I stopped in the thick fog. I was saddened to think that we would not be able to enter the 'Agunjola' canal of Kokilmoni in the Sundarbans until the fog cleared. What else to do? So, some of us spent another hour and a half taking pictures of jellyfish floating on the Poshor River, while others were engaged in fishing, gossiping or just tried to enjoy the foggy view of Kokilmoni. At about 8:40 am in the morning we got in the boat when fog was nearly cleared. Our boat headed to an impeccably beautiful 'Agunjola' canal. Seven species of kingfisher could be seen in this canal. A black-capped kingfisher greeted us when we just





*Small-clawed Otter*

which 3 resides in Bangladesh. All of them are semiaquatic, aquatic or marine, with diets based on fishes and invertebrates. Other members of this family includes weasel, badger, mink, ferret, marten and wolverines. The word otter derives from the Old English word *otor* or *oter* that gave rise to the English word 'water'. Otters have long, slim bodies with relatively

short limbs. Their long flat tails and powerful webbed feet help them swim faster and seal-like abilities holding breathe underwater. They have two layers of fur; outer fur varies in its shade of brown and very soft, insulated underfur is lighter. Having two layers of fur keeps them warm and dry. The Oriental Small-clawed Otter is the smallest and the Giant Otter and Sea Otter are the largest otter species. They can be found in South and South-east Asian countries, from Turkey and the Middle East to the Himalayan foothills and Siberia, from the Korean peninsula and Japan to the islands of Indonesia. They are found in Europe, tropical Africa and South America. Sea-living otters are seen in the Pacific seaboard. Of the 13 species, 4 lives in Asia, three in Africa and rest of the six species in the Americas. The scientific classification or taxonomy of otter, for example, according to the Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS), is therefore:

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Carnivora

Suborder: Caniformia

Family: Mustelidae

Subfamily: Lutrinae

Genus: *Lutra* (Type genus; total 7 genera)

Species: *Lutra lutra* (Eurasian Otter- type species; total 13 species)

The 3 species of otters and their present status in Bangladesh are briefly described below:

**Eurasian Otter (*Lutra lutra*):** It is also known as the European Otter, Eurasian River Otter, Common Otter or Old World Otter. Bangla names includes Udbiral, Uud, Vodor and Dhaira. It is the type species of the subfamily Lutrinae. Once the



*Eurasian Otter*

species was widespread in Bangladesh, especially in the wetland habitats of Sylhet and Mymensingh divisions. But its population has been reduced rapidly due to habitat loss, conversion of habitats to agricultural or other purposes, feed crisis and other reasons. There is no sighting records of this very rare species of otter for about 20 years. Therefore, the species is regarded as Critically Endangered by the

IUCN, Bangladesh. However, found in the waterways and coasts of Europe, many parts of Asia, and parts of Northern Africa it is the most widely distributed otter species.

Eurasian otter is one of the largest otter in Bangladesh. The species is more or less similar with Smooth-coated otter in terms of length and weight. Body length is 57-95 centimeter (cm) not including the tail; tail is 35-45 cm long. The female is shorter than the male. Average body weight is 7-12 kg, although occasionally a large old male can reach up to 17 kg. The coat colour is brown above and cream below. Long muzzle and broad forehead easily separates them from other two species.

Eurasian otters inhabit in rivers, lakes, streams, freshwater, rice fields, ocean shores, caves, and terrestrial habitats adjacent to waterways. They are strongly territorial, an individual's territory may vary between 1 and 40 km long. They are basically solitary animals with only temporary pairing of mates or mothers with their young, although sometimes found in loosely knit groups of up to 6 individuals. The strong swimmer can dive for up to 2 minutes



*Smooth-coated Otter*

underwater and most active at dusk and during the night. They forage in water and mainly feeds on fishes, but during the winter and in colder months, can also feeds on amphibians, crustaceans, insects, birds and small mammals.

Although Eurasian otter can breed year round, but their main mating season is from February to March and July. Both male and female become sexually mature between 18 and 24 months of age and the average age of first breeding is found to be 2 and a half year. They make their nest on land; covered dens and dry resting sites are found in earth tunnels, tree roots, boulder piles, shrubs, and banks. Mating usually takes place in the water or on the land. Gestation lasts for 60-70 days and weaning occurs at 3 months. Female usually gives birth to 1-4 pups. The pups' eyes open after a month and they begin to leave the nest after 2 months. The young stay with their mother for 13-14 months and reach sexual maturity after 2 or 3 years. Average lifespan in the wild is 17 and in captivity is 22 years.

**Smooth-coated Otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*):** It is also known as Indian Smooth-coated Otter. Bangla name is Udbiral, Uud, Bhodor, Machh-neul, Dhere or Mosrin Uud. Once the species occurred in and around all the wetlands and forested areas of Bangladesh, but declined more than 80% in the last 3-4 decades due to hunting, poaching, loss of natural habitat and severe conflict with commercial fish farming. Although, presently they are supposed to occur in the hilly areas of the northeast and southeast and the coastal districts as well as the Sundarbans mangrove forest in the southwest corner of the country, however, their presence in the forests of Sylhet and Chattogram is completely covered in mystery. According a scientific source about 50 individuals are still living in a 90 square kilometre riverine area of Rajshahi. There is also a small semi-captive population conserved traditionally in Norail District for traditional fishing. Therefore, the species has been categorized by the IUCN, Bangladesh as Critically Endangered. Except Bangladesh, it is also found in a number of South and Southeast Asian countries and in Iraq.

It is the largest otter in Asia. Its body length is 59-79 cm and tail is 37-50 cm; weight is 7-11 kg. The otter's body is long and thick with short legs and webbed feet having sharp claws. Neck is as wide as the body and head. Fur is shorter and smoother than other otters and appears velvety and shiny. Dorsum is light to dark brown and ventral portion is light brown to almost grey.

The Smooth-coated Otter inhabits in major rivers, estuaries, coastal mangrove forests, freshwater wetlands, lakes, rice paddies etc. They are mainly diurnal and occurs in small family groups with 2 adults and up to 4 four offspring. Sometimes can lives in groups of up to 11 individuals. They are predominantly a fish eater, but can also feeds on shrimp/crayfish, crustaceans, insects and, earthworms as well as other vertebrates such as frog, mudskippers, birds, water rats and turtles. They rest in sandy river banks and communicate through vocalisations such as whistles, chirps, and wails.

Although, they can breeds year round, but mostly mate between August to December. Mating occurs in water and lasts less than one minute. They construct such a burrow on sandy riverbanks under tree roots or among boulders. They either construct such a burrow themselves, or take over an abandoned one. After 60-65 days of gestation female delivers 1-5 pups. At birth, the pups are blind and helpless, but their eyes open after 10 days. They are weaned at about 3-5 months and become adult size at about one year of age, and sexual maturation occurs at 2-3 years. Lifespan in the wild is 4-10 years and in captivity is 20 years.

**Oriental Small-clawed Otter (*Aonyx cinerea*):** It is also known as Asian Small-clawed Otter or Small-clawed Otter. It has several Bangla names, viz. Chhoto Uud, Udbiral, Bhodor, Dhaira Uud etc. Once a fairly common species inhabited in the natural habitats of ponds, lakes, rivers, streams, coastal tide pools, estuaries, freshwater and mangrove swamps as well as near human habitats, especially in the rice fields, now became uncommon and only seen in the Sunderbans and coastal mangroves. Although recently its presence was recorded by camera-trapping survey as well as eye witnessed by a wildlife photographer in the North-east Bangladesh, which was never reported from Sylhet region before! However, presently 50% of its original population is declined in the country due to habitat destruction, pollution, hunting, ignorance and left the species as Endangered. Globally Vulnerable mammal is now can be found in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Taiwan, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia and Philippines. It is also introduced to Great Britain.

This is the smallest otter in the world. Body length is 45-61 cm and tail is 25-35 cm; weight 2.7-5.4 kg. Elongated body fitted on short legs. Dorsal coat is dark greyish-brown. Ventral coat including face and neck are lighter creamy. Claws are extremely reduced, rarely extend past the digit. Paws are partially webbed.

The species lives in areas with low vegetation in the freshwater streams and rivers as well as coastal regions. The diurnal animal prefers shady areas, but can also be crepuscular. It is seen alone, in pairs or in small family groups up to 12 individuals. The swim master performs swimming by moving hind legs and tail and can dive underwater for about 8 minutes. Unlike most other species of otters the small-clawed otter spends most of its time on land. It feeds on crab, shellfish (clams and mussels), molluscs and fishes. They use grassy or sandy banks for resting, sun bathing and grooming.

The species form monogamous pairs for life. They mate in the water. About two weeks before parturition, both female and male engage in digging burrows into the muddy banks. They collect grass, hay or straw and carry this material into the breeding chamber. Female delivers 1-7 pups after 60-64 days of gestation. Mated pairs can have two litters per year. Their eyes open after 35-40 days and are fully weaned at 14 weeks. Lifespan is 11-16 years.

**Conclusion:** In Bangladesh, once largest rivers were teeming with otters, now all of the creatures are severely threatened with extinction. For the last 20 years, there is no sighting records of the Eurasian Otters from any parts of Bangladesh. Smooth-coated Otters are also not frequently seen. Only four decades ago sightings of any types of otters were not rare. But due to deforestation, destruction of wetlands, loss and/or conversion of natural habitat to settlements and agriculture, hunting, poaching, pollution from pesticides etc. enhanced the declining of otter species in Bangladesh and thrown them at brink of extinction. Who knows whether the Eurasian Otter, the rarest of the 3 species found in Bangladesh, to become the next extinct carnivore in the country? Therefore, urgent conservation measures are needed to be taken to restore otter habitats to give them a last chance for the survival of these invaluable ecological indicators of healthy rivers in Bangladesh.

**The writer is Wildlife Reproduction & Conservation Laboratory, Dept. of Gynecology, Obstetrics & Reproductive Health & Library Chief, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, Gazipur**

## BOOK REVIEW



# Thoansh: A Book on Noakhaila Dialect

Reviewed by Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

According to reliable estimates, there are currently over seven thousand active languages in the world. However, human languages also have hundreds of branches and sub-branches based on regional or territorial variations, which are usually called dialects. Bangla also has numerous regional variants, and one such variety is called ‘Noakhaila’, which is spoken widely in the Noakhali region – now comprising the districts of Noakhali, Lakshmipur, and Feni. Although not much attention is paid now-a-days to the study and research of regional dialects in Bangladesh, a recent attempt by four expatriate Bangladeshis living in Australia to present their lifelong knowledge and experience with the ‘Noakhaila’ dialect in a book titled ‘Thoansh’ is certainly encouraging and praiseworthy.

Hailing from the Noakhali region, the four initiators of the book now live in Melbourne, Australia. Despite their varying professional backgrounds, they came together to undertake a collective journey down memory lane during the



### *Thoansh*

**By** Mahiuddin Abdul Ahad,  
Rezina Hossain,  
Khodeja Rahman &  
Nurur Rahman

**Publisher:**  
Ananya, Dhaka,  
February 2022

difficult days of Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. This has resulted in the publication of the book that was formally released recently during the Ekushey Book Fair-2022. The writers cum compilers of the book are well-known physician cum community leader Dr. M A Ahad (Babar), ex-civil servant Rezina Hossain (Chhobi), housewife Khodeja Rahman (Nargis), and former ship-captain Nurur Rahman (Asheq).

As is well-known, Bangla is a 'Prakrita' language that is a sub-variety of the Indo-Iranian language class, which in turn emerged from the 'Satem' branch of the Indo-European languages, the other branch being 'Kmtom'. According to the book 'Origin and Development of Bengali Language' (1975) by Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, the Bangla dialects are basically of four types, viz. Rarhi, Varendri, Kamrup and Vanga, and the 'Noakhailla' dialect belongs to the south-eastern sub-category of Vanga. On the other hand, Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah placed this dialect under the 'Prachya' branch, as opposed to the 'Pashchatya' branch of Bangla dialects. By refining this classification, Paresh Chandra Mazumdar (1992) placed Noakhailla dialect under the 'Purbodeshi' sub-category of Prachya (Vangio) branch, the other branch being Pashchatya (Gourhi).

Printed with an attractive cover depicting the vegetable called 'Thoansh' in local dialect, this slim book of 62 pages contains an executive summary and introduction in English, as well as a preface, an introduction, and seven chapters in Bangla cum Noakhailla dialect. The first chapter tells some familiar and unfamiliar stories; the second recalls some Noakhailla verses, jokes and proverbs; the third tells stories of day-to-day life; the fourth touches on spelling distortions in Noakhailla dialect; the fifth dwells on cooking, vegetables, and names of birds and animals; the sixth on names of people and places; and the seventh chapter narrates some tales and incidents. Besides, there are segments on Noakhailla songs and poems, the contributions of Noakhaillas, as well as a glossary of common words. As the authors put it in their dedication page, the vegetable 'Thoansh' was found in a few places of Noakhali region, but is now on the verge of extinction. Similarly, the Noakhailla dialect also appears to be on a path of gradual decline in terms of usage, which has motivated them to undertake this venture.

Despite a few proofreading errors here and there, the book is undoubtedly a commendable initiative that is likely to serve as a trend-setter for undertaking more such works on the rich and diverse regional dialects of Bangladesh. As the valiant freedom fighter and former secretary Waliul Islam points out in the preface, the Noakhailla dialect is often used by expatriates to add spice and colour to their gossiping sessions. Inside the country, even tea-stalls are opened for facilitating these gossips in local dialects and thereby earn profits. Overall, the book is undoubtedly a time-befitting one, and deserves wide publicity at home and abroad.

***Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed is a retired Additional Secretary and former Editor of Bangladesh Quarterly. Email: hahmed1960@gmail.com***

## DEVELOPMENT CHRONOLOGY

# Major National Events

April-June



*Social Welfare Minister Nuruzzaman Ahmed and State Minister Md Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru handing over crests on behalf of PM to the winners at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre on April 2, marking the 15th World Autism Awareness Day. The premier joined the event virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban*

**2 April, 2022**

### **PM wants autistic children to flourish thru joint efforts**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 2 put emphasis on brining children with special needs and autism into the mainstream of the society giving them opportunity to flourish their hidden talents.

‘I believe we will be able to incorporate persons with autism syndrome in the mainstream of the national life with joint efforts of all including our (government’s) diversified ones,’ she said.

The PM said this while addressing the 15th World Autism Awareness Day 2022 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) organised by the social welfare ministry. She joined the programme virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Later, the PM witnessed a colourful cultural function performed by physically challenged children.

Social Welfare Minister Nuruzzaman, on behalf of the Prime Minister, distributed awards among successful children with autism and individuals and organisations working for the development of such children. A documentary on autism was screened at the programme. Sheikh Hasina also inaugurated Bolte Chai Apps and Smart Autism Barta Apps. *Source: The Financial Express*

**4 April, 2022**

### **PM for ensuring proper use of water**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April, 4 said that her government has taken plans



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks virtually at a function organized by the Water Resources Ministry marking 'World Water Day-2022' on April 4*

for better use of surface water and reducing its extraction from the underground while addressing a programme on World Water Day 2022.

The Water Resources Ministry organised the programme at Pani Bhaban at Green Road in the city while the PM joined virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

This year's theme is 'Groundwater, making the invisible visible'. *Source: The Financial Express*

**11 April, 2022**

### **PM urges police force to work for people's welfare**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on April 11 her government wants to build a well-trained and educated police force which will work for the welfare of the people.

'Our aim is to build a 'police force of the people' which was the dream of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman,' she said.

Hasina said this while speaking at a programme marking the inauguration of service desk for women, children, elderly and disabled people in 659 thanas of the country. She also handed over 400 houses built by the police force for the homeless people in different places of the country. The humanitarian initiatives have been taken by Bangladesh police to celebrate Bangabandhu's birth centenary.

The PM joined the programme, held at Dhaka Metropolitan Police Lines at Rajarbagh, through video conferencing from her official residence Ganobhaban.

*Source: The Financial Express*

**13 April, 2022**

### **Megaprojects to revamp economy**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 13 said the country's economy will witness a complete overhaul once the megaprojects are completed.

'The Padma Bridge is being constructed with own finance, no loan was taken. We've taken the remaining megaprojects through conducting economic surveys by local and foreign experts. Many mega projects are being implemented not only on the basis of loan, but also through foreign partnerships,' she said, addressing the





Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the nation on April 13 evening, marking Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year 1429

nation in the evening on the eve of Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year.

In her about 13-minute address, broadcast by the state-run BTV and Betar as well as other private media outlets, the premier said her government has taken local and foreign loans to implement the projects. *Source: The Financial Express*

**18 April, 2022**

**WB okays \$ 250m budget aid**

The World Bank on April 18 confirmed US\$250 million, the first tranche of its assured budget support worth \$500 million for Bangladesh, to be spent for Covid recovery programmes. Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Fatima Yasmin and Acting Country Director of WB Dhaka Office Mohammad Anis signed the loan agreement in Dhaka.

Under the title ‘Bangladesh - First Recovery and Resilience Development Policy Credit (DPC 1)’, the loan would assist Bangladesh in its efforts to implement budget stimulus for the subsequent recovery of Covid-19 as well as to enhance resilience to future shocks. The \$250-million DPC would be utilised to provide stimulus incentives to the affected industries, agriculture sector and export-oriented industries, and to ensure food security. The interest rate of the \$250-million budget support is 1.25 per cent, and service charge is 0.75 per cent. The maturity period of the loan is 30 years, with a grace period of five years. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaking at the foundation stone laying ceremony of Ghorashal Palash Urea Fertiliser Factory in Narsingdi joining it from her official residence Ganobhaban virtually on April 21

21 April, 2022

### Food processing in focus to boost export: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 21 said her government is prioritising food-processing industry to boost export of food items alongside meeting the growing domestic demand while laying the foundation stone of Ghorashal Palash Urea Fertiliser Factory in Narsingdi district, with an annual production capacity of nearly 1.00 million tonnes, the country's largest.

She unveiled the foundation stone of the fertiliser factory project involving Tk104.61 billion (Tk10,461 crore), joining the function from her official residence Ganobhaban through a videoconference. *Source: The Financial Express*

24 April, 2022

### PM orders actions against hoarders of essential items

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 24 said her government is doing its best to control the prices of daily essentials in the country amid the high global inflation rate.

The Prime Minister also directed the authorities concerned to take proper actions against the hoarders of essential items and those who play with their prices.

She made the directive while inaugurating 40 new fire stations constructed in different places of the country.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina virtually inaugurated 40 newly constructed fire stations in different parts of the country Dhaka on April 24

She joined the inaugural function at the Fire Service and Civil Defence Headquarters in the city's Fulbaria through a videoconference from her official residence Ganobhaban. *Source: The Financial Express*

25 April, 2022

### Govt working on strengthening country's democracy

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on April 25 her government has been working on strengthening democratic environment in the country.

She said this when visiting Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt paid a



Visiting Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban on April, 25

courtesy call on her at Ganobhaban.

Hasina said Bangladesh remains committed to building a peaceful, just and inclusive society. ‘The government has been working on strengthening democratic environment and institutions in the country. The Election Commission which conducts the polls is a totally independent

institution,’ the PM was quoted as saying.

At the outset of the meeting, they exchanged greetings marking the 50 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The Norwegian minister commended Bangladesh for sheltering 1.1 million Rohingya refugees. *Source: The Financial Express*

**26 April, 2022**

**No one to stay homeless: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 26 vowed to ensure houses for all the homeless people at a programme marking the handing over about 33,000 government-built homes to another batch of extremely poor families as her Eid gift.

‘We’ve been able to ensure electricity for 100 per cent people. Now 100 per cent (homeless) people will get the houses. None will remain landless and shelter-less in Bangladesh,’ she said.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina virtually joined an event on April 26 marking the handover of houses to 33,000 families as an ‘Eid gift’ under the third phase of the Ashrayan Project

The Prime Minister was addressing the house distribution function among 32,904 homeless and landless families across the country under the third phase of the Ashrayan-2 Project. She inaugurated the distribution of semi-pucca abodes, joining a virtual function from her official residence Ganobhaban in the morning. Sheikh Hasina exchanged views with beneficiaries from the four cluster housing places at Nagarkanda Upazila in Faridpur, Barguna Sadar Upazila, Sirajganj Sadar Upazila and Anwara Upazila in Chattogram through a videoconference. *Source: The Financial Express*

**27 April, 2022**

### **Railway now profitable entity: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 27 said her government has turned state-run Bangladesh Railway into a profitable agency.

‘As we made BRTC a profitable one, today we’ve proven that train service can be made profitable,’ she said at the launching ceremony of two Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Mobile Rail Museums and 46 locomotives.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina waves a flag as she virtually inaugurates 30 metre-gauge and 16 broad-gauge locomotives at Kamalapur Railway Station in Dhaka on April 27*

She joined the function at Kamalapur Railways Station through a video conference from her official residence Ganobhaban. The Prime Minister commissioned 30 meter-gauge locomotives and 16 broad-gauge locomotives of Bangladesh Railways by flagging off these vehicles.

She also opened two Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Mobile Rail Museums, built on a Broad-gauge coach and a meter-gauge coach on the occasion of Mujib Year.

*Source: The Financial Express*

**28 April, 2022**

### **Hasina offers Ctg port for use by India’s NE states**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April 28 said the India’s northeastern states like Assam and Tripura can use Bangladesh’s Chittagong seaport by strengthening the connectivity between the two neighbouring countries.

The premier said this when visiting Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar met her at her official residence Ganobhaban. She also said an initiative has already been taken to reopen the cross-border routes which had been shut down in 1965.



*Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Ganobhaban in Dhaka on April 28*

During the meeting, both of them expressed happiness at the state of the existing bilateral relations between the two countries. *Source: The Financial Express*

**6 May, 2022**

**PM urges engineers to play effective role in building infrastructure**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged engineers to play more effective role in constructing infrastructure suitable to cope with adverse impacts of climate change.

‘Engineers must play more effective role in building infrastructure tolerant to climate change and its adverse impacts, and ensuring food and energy security,’ she said in a message issued on May, 6 on the occasion of the 74th founding anniversary of the Engineers Institution, Bangladesh (IEB) and the Engineers’ Day.

PM also expressed the hope that the engineers would play a leading role in building a prosperous and developed Sonar Bangla, dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, by 2041. *Source: The Financial Express*

**9 May, 2022**

**PM seeks ADB fund for Delta Plan-2100**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 9 sought support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to implement Delta Plan 2100.



*Asian Development Bank (ADB) Vice President (Operations-1) Shixin Chen calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the latter's official residence Ganobhaban in Dhaka on May 9*

‘This Delta Plan is very important for Bangladesh,’ she told ADB vice president

(operations-1) Shixin Chen when he called on her at her official residence Ganobhaban.

In 2018, the government launched the Delta Plan 2100 to secure the future use of the country's water resources and mitigate the impact of climate change and natural calamities. PM also urged the Manila-based multilateral donor, to help foster regional cooperation, particularly in the areas of connectivity, trade facilitation and energy cooperation.

ADB vice-president Shixin Chen appreciated Bangladesh's economic development despite pandemic under the excellent leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

*Source: The Financial Express*

**10 May, 2022**

### **PM seeks more investments from US**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina May 10 invited the businessmen of the United States with the assurance of best possible policy framework to take up the investment friendly atmosphere in Bangladesh.

The Premier made this invitation during a meeting with the visiting first ever executive business delegation, US-Bangladesh Business Council, at her official residence Ganobhaban.

She mentioned that Bangladesh is now recognized for the state-of-the-art manufacturing factories in various sectors like RMG, leather, plastic, jute, ICT and agro-processing.

'Bangladesh has been recommended to graduate from the LDC in 2026. We are aspiring to become a developed and prosperous country by 2041. For that purpose, we need enhanced investment from our friendly countries, especially from the USA,' she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

**14 May, 2022**

### **None can erase Bangabandhu's name from history- Says PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 14 said repeated attempts were made to remove the name of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from history and thus the nation was deprived of knowing the real history since 1975.

The premier made this remark while addressing the foundation stone laying ceremony of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Trust Library at Dhanmodi-32 in the capital.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana,



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana jointly laid the foundation stone of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Trust Library at Dhanmodi-32 on May 14*

the two daughters of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, jointly laid the foundation stone of the library.

Hasina said the library of Bangabandhu Memorial Trust would help the new generation know about the true history of Bangabandhu and the country. *Source: The Daily Star*

**16 May, 2022**

### **PM stresses best use of funds to achieve SDGs**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May, 16 called for taking effective initiatives to ensure that international commitments are appropriately met for the implementation of the UN-adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

‘We will continue to provide policy support and funding for the implementation of the SDGs, but we must ensure the best use of funds, and wastage must be prevented,’ the Prime Minister said, joining the function virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

She vowed that her government will continue to work to turn Bangladesh into a developed and prosperous nation free of hunger and poverty as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina virtually inaugurates the 2nd National Conference on SDGs Implementation Reviews from her official residence Ganobhaban on May 16. The opening ceremony of the conference was held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre*

The premier mentioned that Bangladesh’s success in implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) brightened its image in the international arena.

In 2015 the UN adopted the SDGs, also known as the Global Goals, calling upon its members to take action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. *Source: The Financial Express*

**19 May, 2022**

### **Find ways to ease economic pressure**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 19 directed the finance and commerce ministries and Bangladesh Bank to find ways to deal with the economic pressure caused by the Russia-Ukraine war and Covid pandemic.

After a cabinet meeting held at the Prime Minister’s Office, Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam told reporters that Bangladesh Bank was asked to find ways to control the volatile dollar market.

Speaking on the unscheduled agenda of the meeting, the PM instructed the ministries of commerce and finance to come up with a comprehensive plan within two or three days to address the price hike, the cabinet secretary said when asked whether the rising prices of essentials were discussed. *Source: The Daily Star*

**22 May, 2022**

### **Delta Plan to include maritime areas: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May, 22 asked for appropriate development planning taking into consideration the features of different regions.

‘The characteristics of all areas of Bangladesh are not identical. . . Bangladesh needs to be better known for any development project,’ she said while addressing Delta Governance Council’s first meeting at her office.

The premier said the government took ‘Delta Plan-2100’ to secure the people of this delta and provide them a better life and asked authorities concerned to take planned steps for its implementation.

Sheikh Hasina added that any planned step could solve easily any difficult task.

The premier particularly asked the authorities concerned to lay an extra emphasis on exploring the blue economy utilizing the country’s vast maritime resources to boost the national economy. She said the country’s vast maritime areas would be included in the Delta Plan.

She said the huge maritime boundary that Bangladesh has got should also be linked with this plan. *Source: The Financial Express*

**23 May, 2022**

### **Better regional financial ties needed to face pandemic, war situation: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May, 23 called for enhancing financial cooperation to improve regional crisis management.

She also placed five proposals to strengthen the regional cooperation against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia-Ukraine conflict.

‘I would like to propose (five) steps that ESCAP may take into account as the Russia-Ukraine war must be stopped immediately and joint actions are needed to tackle the situation,’ she said.

The Prime Minister said this in a video message broadcast in the seventy-eighth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) of the United Nations.

The session is being held in a hybrid modality from May 23 to 27 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok and online on 75th anniversary of ESCAP.

In her proposals, she also advocated for taking action-oriented steps to facilitate collaboration in pursuit of knowledge and innovation and assisting member states to get united to pursue sufficient allocation of funds and technology for climate change victim countries. *Source: The Financial Express*

**25 May, 2022**

### **Keep in mind ecology, environment**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 25 directed authorities concerned to pay attention to environment and ecology while taking up any development project.

‘Everybody has to pay attention to environment in any project. The project has



to be implemented keeping water reservoirs, adequate green area and rainwater harvesting system in it,' she said.

The PM gave the directives to the authorities concerned while witnessing the designs of four projects at the Ganobhaban. The designs were presented by the housing and public works ministry and the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk). The four projects are: Keraniganj Waterfront Smart City, Conservation of Flood Zone at Turag River and Compact Township Development, Construction of Sheikh Hasina International Convention Centre at Zajira end of the Padma bridge and Construction of Multistoried Residential Building for Government Officials and Employees at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in Dhaka. *Source: The Daily Star*

**26 May, 2022**

### **PM urges dev partners to help with Delta Plan**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged the friendly countries and development partners on May, 26 to join hands in executing the Delta Plan-2100, saying her government has been implementing the plan to ensure a better and improved life for the future generations.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at 'Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 International Conference: Issues and Challenge of Implementation' virtually from Ganobhaban on May 26*

'To implement the Delta Plan, cooperation or participation of all at home and abroad-our friendly countries or development partners-are solely needed in every field of knowledge, technology and exchange of experiences, starting from financing,' she said.

The Prime Minister said this while opening a two-day event titled 'Bangladesh Delta Plan-2100 International Conference: Issues and Challenge of Implementation', at a city hotel, joining virtually from her official Ganobhaban residence. *Source: The Financial Express*

**27 May, 2022**

### **PM seeks Japan, OECD help on preferential facilities**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged Japan and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on May 27 to continue preferential facilities at least till 2029 for Bangladesh's smooth graduation from least developed country to developing nation and achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

‘We would deeply appreciate if Japan and other OECD countries do it (to extend preferential facilities) at least till 2029 to help us attain the overarching goals of sustainable development by 2030,’ she said.

The Prime Minister said this in a video statement aired in the 27th International Nikkei Conference on the Future of Asia.

The two-day conference titled ‘Redefining Asia’s role in a divided world’ is being held in the Japanese capital Tokyo in a hybrid format with both streaming and on-site attendance. *Source: The Financial Express*

**29 May, 2022**

### **Grassroots dev in focus, says Hasina on receiving CIRDAP award**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 29 said her government is developing the country in a planned manner from the grassroots.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivering speech at the ‘Azizul Haque Polli Unnayan Padak-2021’ (Azizul Haque Rural Development Award-2021) function at Ganobhaban on May 29. the Prime Minister was given the award by CIRDAP*

‘My party Awami League has given priority for the development of rural areas of the country as desired development is not possible leaving the grass root people behind,’ she said.

The premier said this while receiving ‘Azizul Haque Polli Unnayan Padak-2021’ (Azizul Haque Rural Development Award-2021) from CIRDAP Director General Dr Cherdsak Virapat at a ceremony at her official residence Ganobhaban.

The Bangladesh-based Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) has honoured the Prime Minister with the prestigious award in recognition of her contribution to rural development. *Source: The Financial Express*

**29 May, 2022**

### **Brand country as peace promoting nation: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 29 asked the Bangladeshi peacekeepers to discharge duties accordingly as establishing peace was a noble task, urging them to brand Bangladesh a powerful peace promoting country.

‘We expect you will establish Bangladesh as powerful peace promoting country and uphold the dignity of its flag. You have to discharge duty with professionalism,



Law Minister Anisul Haq on behalf of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina distributing award to the recipient marking the 'International Day of United Nations Peacekeeper 2022'. PM virtually joined from her official residence Ganobhaban on May 29

honesty, sincerity and dedication as promoting global peace is a noble task,' she said.

The Prime Minister was addressing a function as chief guest marking the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers-2022 held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka. She joined the function virtually from her official Ganobhaban residence in capital. *Source: The New Age*

**2 June, 2022**

### **PM wants safe, regular jobs for workers in Malaysia**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June 2 said Bangladesh will send workers to Malaysia maintaining all necessary protocols, including vaccination and other formalities. She gave the assurance while visiting Malaysian Human Resources Minister M Saravanan called on her at her official residence Ganobhaban. She also expressed her deep satisfaction in holding the first meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWC) between the two countries. She expressed the hope that both sides would be able to devise ways to ensure safe, regular, inexpensive, and orderly employment of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia.

He appraised the Bangladeshi premier about reorganization of their Human Resource Ministry from the Ministry of Home Affairs and their domestic employment process following the ILO guidelines.

'We have taken 5-Year Action Plan for the Migrant Workers,' he said. To this end, he mentioned, they have already increased the minimum wage to RM 1500.

In such a case, the Malaysian Minister said that Bangladesh could earn US\$45 billion in next 5 years with more than 500,000 expatriate workers in Malaysia.

*Source: The Financial Express*

**3 June, 2022**

### **PM urges pilgrims to pray for country's economic progress**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June 3 inaugurated the Hajj Programme-2022 (1443 Hijri) urging everyone to uphold the dignity of Islam, the religion of peace.

'Islam is a very peaceful and holy religion, which is the best religion. So, it is the duty for all of us to maintain its dignity,' she said.

The premier opened the programme at the Hajj camp in the capital's Ashkona through a virtual platform from her official residence Ganobhaban.

She also called upon the hajj pilgrims to pray for Bangladesh so that the country and its people can remain protected from the natural disasters and pandemics like Covid-19 as well as get decent lives. *Source: The Financial Express*

**5 June, 2022**

### **PM stresses joint efforts for S Asia's poverty alleviation**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June 5 laid emphasis on working together to eliminate poverty from the South Asian countries, as poverty is the common enemy in the region.

'The main enemy in the South Asian countries is poverty. So, all will have to work together for poverty alleviation,' she said. The Prime Minister made this remark while SAARC Secretary General Esala Ruwan Weerakun and his wife paid a courtesy call on her at the latter's official residence, Ganobhaban, in Dhaka.

The SAARC secretary general stressed the need to strengthen the SAARC food bank. He highly praised Bangladesh for its contribution to the SAARC Agriculture Centre. *Source: The New Age*

### **Protecting environment must for sustainable development**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June 5 underlined the need for protecting the environment to ensure sustainable development in the country.

'For sustainable development there should be coordination with environment and development. Otherwise, development cannot be sustainable,' she said.

The premier was speaking at the Tree Fair and Campaign for Tree Plantation programme to mark the World Environment Day at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC).

Sheikh Hasina virtually joined the event from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Earlier, the forest minister, on behalf of the Prime Minister, handed over awards including Bangabandhu Award for Wildlife Conservation and National Environment Award among the recipients. *Source: The Financial Express*

**6 June, 2022**

### **Villagers to get online treatment from home: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June 6 said her government will



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina plants a sapling after inaugurating the World Environment Day and Environment Fair 2022 at her official residence Ganobhaban on June 5*

reach specialized healthcare services online to the upazilas so rural people get treatment from home.

‘We’re creating the scope so that they (the patients) can get specialized treatment sitting at their own locations and staying in upazilas,’ she said.

The premier said this while inaugurating the golden jubilee celebration and the 14th convocation of Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS) at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre joining it through a virtual platform from her official residence Ganobhaban. *Source: The Financial Express*

**9 June, 2022**

### **Budget has been placed for the FY 2022-2023**

The government has announced a Tk 6.78-trillion budget for the FY 2022-2023. Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal placed the budget in the parliament on 9 June 2022.

The budget outlay of Tk 6.78 trillion comprises operating budget worth Tk 4.32 trillion and development budget Tk 2.46 trillion. The total size of the budget is equivalent to 15.2 per cent of the GDP or gross domestic product.

To match inflow and outflow of funds, the budget deficit is projected at 5.5 per cent of the GDP. The government plans to borrow funds, equivalent to 2.2 per cent of the GDP from external sources. Experts view this as high when consider in absolute figures and this may add fuel to the flames of inflation.

Speaker Ms Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury presided over the session while President Abdul Hamid and Leader of the House and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, among others, joined the session. *Source : The Financial Express*

**14 June, 2022**

### **Electricity network improvement in Dhaka, Mymensingh**

#### **ECNEC clears Tk 61b project**

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on June 14 approved a project involving Tk 61.79 billion to enhance the electricity network in Dhaka and Mymensingh divisions.

The approval came from the ECNEC meeting held at the NEC conference room. ECNEC chair and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joined it through a virtual platform from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The meeting approved six fresh projects and four revised ones.

The total estimated cost of the 10 projects is Tk 108.86 billion (only additional costs of the revised ones were counted here), State Minister for Planning Dr Shamsul Alam told reporters after the meeting. Of the cost, Tk 51.43 billion will be borne from the government’s fund, while Tk 7.56 billion will come from the own funds of the organisations concerned and the rest Tk 49. 57 billion as project loans from foreign sources, he said. *Source: The Financial Express*

#### **ECNEC clears Tk 61b project**

#### **A total of 10 projects worth Tk 108.86b approved**

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on June, 14 approved a project involving Tk 61.79 billion to enhance the electricity network in Dhaka and Mymensingh divisions.

The approval came from the ECNEC meeting held at the NEC conference room.

ECNEC chair and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joined it through a virtual platform from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The meeting approved six fresh projects and four revised ones.

The total estimated cost of the 10 projects is Tk 108.86 billion (only additional costs of the revised ones were counted here), State Minister for Planning Dr Shamsul Alam told reporters after the meeting.

Of the cost, Tk 51.43 billion will be borne from the government's fund, while Tk 7.56 billion will come from the own funds of the organisations concerned and the rest Tk 49. 57 billion as project loans from foreign sources, he said. *Source: The Financial Express*

**16 June, 2022**

### **Padma Bridge ushers in new dawn for South**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June, 16 said the country's southern region would no longer be neglected as the much-awaited Padma Bridge is set to be opened on June 25.

'People living in the southern region or on the bank of the Padma had always been neglected. Poverty is part of our lives. By the grace of Allah, that situation will not exist any more as we completed the construction of the Padma Bridge facing a huge challenge,' she said.

The PM was addressing a programme marking the inauguration of the Palli Janopad, Rangpur and the Bangabandhu Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development Academy (BAPARD), Kotalipara, Gopalganj.

The LGRD and cooperatives ministry organised the event at Palli Janopad, Rangpur, and BAPARD, Kotalipara.

Joining the programme virtually from the Ganobhaban, Hasina said the Padma Bridge would contribute to boosting the national economy, particularly in the



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a programme marking the inauguration of the 'Palli Janopad (Rural Housing)' in Rangpur & Gopalganj, and Bangabandhu Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development Academy (BAPARD) at Kotalipara of Gopalganj on June 16*

south. She said she wanted an improved life for the people of the southern region.

*Source: The Daily Star*

### **Sheikh Hasina seeks JICA help to become developed nation**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June, 16 sought the support of Japan and Japan International Cooperation Agency-JICA to fulfil the vision of Bangladesh to turn into a developed nation by 2041.

‘I hope Japan and JICA will be with us to fulfil our vision to become a developed nation by 2041,’ she said.

The premier said this in her video message aired in the celebration programme of the 50 Years of Cooperation between Bangladesh and JICA. *Source: The Financial Express*

**21 June, 2022**

### **PM asks police to earn public trust**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June, 21 directed the police force to grow as the last resort of the people who come to them seeking protection for their lives and dignity.

‘In our country, the police will also have to acquire public confidence so the people think the force as their last resort in protecting their lives and dignity. The people can get their shelter,’ she said, joining a function of Bangladesh Police through a videoconference from her official residence Ganobhaban.

In the function, the premier opened five projects of Bangladesh Police, including two newly constructed police stations -Padma Setu Uttar Thana and Padma Setu Dakkhin Thana-on the two sides of the much-desired Padma Bridge.

Among projects inaugurated are 12 newly constructed district-level police hospitals, six women barracks for Bangladesh Police, the online GD (general diary) activities to reach the services to the doorsteps of the people, and the distribution of 120 houses constructed in the second phase for homeless families. *Source: The Financial Express*

**22 June, 2022**

### **Padma Bridge our national pride: PM**

Describing the Padma Bridge as the symbol of national pride, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June, 22 said none can raise question about the standard of the multipurpose bridge which opens on June 25.

‘We’ve not made any compromise over the standard in the construction of Padma Bridge. The bridge was constructed with the world’s latest technology and materials. The whole construction process has been completed maintaining the highest standard,’ she said at a press conference at her office.

Talking about the cost of Padma Bridge, the Prime Minister said as per the revised DPP, the total allocation was Tk 301.93 billion (30,193.39 crore), but the allocation for the main bridge was Tk 121.33 billion (12,133.39 crore) (including Tk 10 billion for installation of 400-kv electricity transmission line and gas line).

The PM explained the reasons behind the rise of project cost compared with the old design. Those include increasing the length of bridge from 5.8 km to 6.15 km, changing the bridge design to keep the scope for river vessel movement under its 37 spans not only three ones out of total 41 spans, incorporating steel structures

instead of concrete ones in the bridge and enhancing the depth in case of filing works.

Noting that the road and rail through the bridge will directly connect the country's 21 southern districts with the capital, the PM said it will ease the long-lasting sufferings of the people in this region and will accelerate the economic progress.

Hopefully, the bridge will accelerate the GDP growth by 1.23 per cent and the poverty reduction rate by 0.84 per cent every year, she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

**25 June, 2022**

### **Padma Bridge a symbol of pride: PM**

Bangladesh steps into a new era of development as a communications mega-infrastructure, the Padma Multipurpose Bridge, becomes a reality undeterred by multiple headwinds.

The defining moment was ushered in when a visibly jubilant Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opened on 25 June the longest bridge in the country, and a unique one in the world, through paying toll herself for the maiden drive across it at 11.48 am amid countrywide festivities and celebrations.

With this, a long-cherished dream of some 30 million people of 21 districts in the southwestern part of the country came true. The bridge will be opened to public traffic this morning, ending ages of agonies and frequent tragedies associated with crossing the world's second-most turbulent river by ferries.

The inauguration of the 6.15-km bridge, which connects the southwestern part of the country with the capital through Munshiganj, Shariatpur and Madaripur, ends seven-year-long herculean task carried out by a 5000-strong workforce with the spending of 3.1 billion US dollars.

‘The bridge is not merely a structure of steel, cement and concrete--it is a symbol of the country's capability, pride and dignity. The 42 spans of the bridge are the



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveils the inauguration plaque as she opens the Padma Bridge at the Zajira point in Shariatpur district on June, 25*



reflections of an audacious Bangladesh,’ an emotion-choked Hasina told the citizen gathering held at the Mawa end of the bridge prior to heading towards her dream bridge.

The Prime Minister said though it was estimated that the Padma Bridge would contribute 1.2 per cent to the GDP growth of the country, she felt that it would be much higher. *Source: The Financial Express*

**26 June, 2022**

### **Keep pace with modern era to build prosperous Bangladesh**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June, 26 asked the students to keep pace with the modern era through acquiring knowledge of ever-evolving technology and science to take the country towards development and prosperity.

‘You have to go with the modern era. We have to step forward keeping pace with the flourishing of technology and science,’ she told the winners of ‘Bangabandhu Innovative Talent Hunt 2022’ competition, at a function held at the International Mother Language Institute.

The premier joined the programme virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The PM elaborated various steps of her government for the education sector like distributing free text books, providing stipends and scholarships, nationalisation of over 26,000 primary schools.

On behalf of the Prime Minister, Education Minister Dipu Moni handed over awards among the 15 winners at national and divisional level. *Source: The Financial Express*

**30 June, 2022**

### **JS passes growth-centric budget**

Parliament passed on June 30 a growth-centric national budget should have been more welfare-oriented to protect people from woes in the crisis time.

The Tk 6.78-trillion budget for the fiscal year 2022-23, beginning, was passed by voice vote through adoption of the Appropriations Bill 2022 that empowers the government to withdraw funds from the Consolidated Fund of Bangladesh for meeting the expenditure during the year.

Earlier on June 30 the Jatiya Sangsad passed the much-debated Finance Bill 2022 to grant legal cover to the fiscal measures in the new budget.

The eighteenth session of the 11th JS resumed on the day with Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended the session. Opposition leader Begum Rowshan Ershad also attended the session.

The Prime Minister elaborated on the Padma bridge expenditure saying that the first feasibility study had missed technical issues, including additional river training and dollar rates. She said it is now a multipurpose bridge with four-lane roads and main bridge has actually spent over Tk 110 billion. “It is very low by any measure.”

She mentioned that the government has taken adequate measures against the inflationary pressures, including regular market monitoring. *Source: The Financial Express*

**Report Compilation: Md. Mazharul Hoque, Mamun Hossain, Umma Halima**



*Mango*



*Jackfruit*



*Lychee*



*Kalojam (Black Berry)*

Indigenous Seasonal Fruits of Bangladesh grown in April-June



**Department of Films and Publications**

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Bangladesh