

Bangladesh

July-September 2021

Quarterly



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib : His Life, Struggle and Leadership

Bangabandhu's Speech on 7th March: Why World-Famous

Reminiscences of Bangabandhu



Bangladesh

QUARTERLY

Vol. 42, No. 1, July-September 2021, Sraban-Ashwin 1428



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina offered prayer after placing wreaths at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum on August 15



Department of Films and Publications
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Bangladesh

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Historic House # 677 of Road # 32
at Dhanmandi, Dhaka- the
Residence of Bangabandhu
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (now
Bangabandhu Memorial Museum)

Published by



Department of Films and Publications Tathya Bhaban

112, Circuit House Road, Dhaka- 1000
Telephone : 88-02-8300697
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E-mail : bangladeshquarterly@yahoo.com
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Website : www.dfp.gov.bd

Price : Tk. 30

Printed at

Barnalipi
200 Fakirapul, Dhaka.

The National Mourning Day was observed with due solemnity and deep sorrow on the 15th August throughout the country and in the Bangladesh missions abroad. The day was celebrated with special attention to this Mujib Barsho (the Mujib Year) that extended up to December 2021 on the occasion of the centennial birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The National Mourning Day reminds us of the heinous act of assassination of Bangabandhu and most of his family members at house 677 of Road 32 at Dhanmondi in 1975. The government, different political & socio-cultural organisations also observed the day in a befitting manner.

The Architect of Bangladesh and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was always vocal against injustice from his childhood. He fought entire life for establishing justice. Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, wife of Bangabandhu, was always the inspiration for all struggles and movements of the Father of the Nation and she stood by him like a shadow. The nation is grateful to him as his struggles and sacrifices he made in his entire political life have brought us finally the independence of Bangladesh.

Most of the articles have been accommodated in this issue are written on the life and struggles of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Besides, write ups on Dhaka University's birth centenary, Folk scientist Ashraf Siddiqui, Juvenile delinquency, and wildlife have also been accommodated.

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Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib : His Life, Struggle and Leadership

Md. Quddus Khan

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is a historic name, historic personality. He is popularly known as Sheikh Mujib or Bangabandhu (friend of Bengal). A title conferred on him by the people from a huge Student-Public rally held at Ramna Race Course (Now Shohrawardi Uddyan), Dhaka on February 23, 1969 (where the writer himself was present as a DU Student). Bangabandhu is also the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh: a title

given to him in our constitution in recognition of his services to the creation of Bangladesh.

His contribution in the creation of two independent states in Indo-Pak sub continent namely Pakistan in 1947 and Bangladesh in 1971 is landmark in history. He was one of the founders of two institutions namely Muslim student league (1948) and Awami Muslim League (1949) which later played a vital role for creation of Bangladesh. His formulation of 6-point demand and his movement for its realization made him hero of the Bengali Nation. The people of Bengal took it to be Magna Carta (MuktiSanad) for them. He fought 1970 general election of Pakistan for a mandate on 6-point demand and won a landslide victory. Pakistani Military government refused



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 'Mourning Procession' with Maulana Bhasani, 21 February 1953



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy in Rajshahi, 1954

to accept the result of the election. As a result freedom fight started on his call for independence in his historic 7th March speech, 1971. Bangladesh became an independent state in 1971. He gave Bangladesh a Constitution in 1972, within less than a year which was again a landmark in history. It may be mentioned that Pakistan took 9 years to give her a constitution.

Now, we shall discuss the life and struggle of Sheikh Mujib to show his sufferings for his people and the nation which gave birth to various historic events and ultimately created 2 new Independent states Pakistan and Bangladesh in the world map. Sheikh Mujib was born on March 17, 1920 at a remote village of Tungi Para under Gopalganj Sub Division of Faridpur District of the province of Bengal under British India. His father was Sheikh Lutfar Rahman and Mother Sahera Khatun. He was born in a famous Sheikh family. 200 years old buildings of his ancestors bear testimony to his aristocratic ancestry. He had his early primary education at his village. Later he was admitted first to Gopalganj Public School and then to Gopalganj Missionary School from where he passed his matriculation in the second division. Mujib's father was a Sherestadar in a civil court of Gopalganj. In those days, it was very difficult on the part of a Muslim to get a Government job. Writes Mujib in his *Ashomupto Atmojiboni* (AA, p-7). His road to politics unveiled when Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq, Chief Minister of Bengal and Minister Hossain Shahid Shurawardy popularly known as Shahid Shaheb visited Gopalganj to attend a public rally and an exhibition there in 1938. In course of the visit, Shahid Shaheb came to visit Gopalganj Mission School where he met Sheikh Mujib. Mujib received him as School Captain and chief of Volunteer party. Shahid Shaheb could identify the political potential of Sheikh Mujib, noted down his name and address and left the school. After a few days Mujib received a letter from Shahid Shaheb asking him (Mujib) to meet him at Calcutta. This communication between the political Guru and the disciple continued and made the foundation of political career of Sheikh Mujib. In 1939 Mujib visited Shahed

Shaheb at his residence in Calcutta and on his advice formed Muslim Student League (MSL) and Muslim league in Gopalganj. He became secretary of the MSL of Gopalganj. At this time an important event took place in his life. He was imprisoned for the first time in his life in a case filed at the instigation of Hindu Leaders, as Mujib went to rescue his friend Malek along with others from the illegal confinement in the house of Hindu Mohashoba local president Suren Banerjee. Mujib writes, "SDO was a Hindu, so he (Mujib) was not granted bail" (AAP-13). In 1940 historic Lahore resolution (Popularly known as Pakistan resolution) was passed by the all India Muslim League to safe guard the Muslims of India from the oppression and domination of the British and the Hindu Community.

After matriculation Mujib admitted himself to Islamia College Calcutta in 1942 for higher education. Mujib was lodged in Beckers Hostel of the college and he was an influential Muslim Student Leader. Mujib shared his bed in the hostel with other student who could not manage seat yet. My late elder brother-in-law Late Arman Ali (Teacher) from Faridpur told me that he was one of those fortunate students who shared bed with Mujib. In 1943, a dangerous famine visited Bengal. Many people died because of the famine. "Dogs and men were found struggling together to get food from dustbin." This time Mujib became a member of Bengal Provincial Muslim League. Civil supply Minister ShahidShaheb ordered opening of Civil supply department and longorkhana (mass feeding center) to feed hungry people. Mujib left his college to join LongorKhana operations. He worked whole day, returned to hostel by night or sometimes slept on the table of Muslim League office during the night. Mujib writes, "all leaders know me as good worker and all of them had affection for me). (AA, P-20). Mujib's father also defended his son's involvement in Pakistan movement. At this time, Mujib's friend Nani took Mujib to his uncle's house at Gopalganj Town and took him to their bedroom. At this



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, Mohiuddin Ahmed and Tajuddin Ahmad at the morning rally brought out in memory of the Language Martyrs, 21 February 1964

Nani's aunt got angered and compelled Nani to wash the entire house. Nani asked Mujib not to visit their house in future. This incident had a lasting impact on his future political agenda observed Mujib (AA p-23). Mujib writes "I believe in heart and soul that Muslims will have no existence in undivided India" (AA, P-36).

In 1946 General elections in India was called by the

British Government apparently to see whether Muslims of India want Pakistan. All India Muslim League took it (GE) to be a referendum on Pakistan issue. Mujib actively participated in the Election as a ML worker. He was in-charge of Workers of Faridpur district during the election. He also participated in Sylhet referendum on Pakistan issue. There were at that time 11 provinces in India of which 4 were having Muslim majority (Bengal, Punjab, Sind and North West Frontier Province (NWFP)). In Bengal Muslim League bagged 116 seats out of 119 Muslim seats securing single majority in the house and formed Muslim League Government. But in remaining 3 other Muslim majority provinces, ML failed to get single majority and worked as opposition there. However in those three provinces, governments were headed by Muslim leaders Khajir Hayat Khan (Punjab), Abdullah Khan (Sind) and Dr. Khan Shaheb (NWFP). After the general election British Prime Minister Mr. Clement Attlee sent cabinet mission in India to facilitate transfer of power in consultation with political parties. After the general election Mr. Jinnah called a convention of ML members of central and provincial assembly in Delhi on April 7-9, 1946. This convention took a resolution for only one United Pakistan State (as opposed to two Independent Muslim Majority States in North West and Eastern zones of India as mentioned in Lahore resolution). Besides, viewing anti Pakistan attitude of the British government and the Congress Mr. Jinnah declared the Direct Action Day on August 16, 1946, to press home Pakistan demand. Congress opposed it and communal riots between the Hindus and the Muslims started in Calcutta and other parts of India (eg. Noakhali, Bihar etc). Hindus and Muslims killed each other. Hindus attacked Mosques and Muslims retaliated. ML opened Refuge centers for the Muslim riot victims in Calcutta. Mujib and two other (Nurul Huda and Nuruddin) together pushed the cart carrying rice to refugees shelter centers (Baker Hostel, Eliot Hostel etc) during the riot sometimes Mujib's life was at stake but Allah saved him. After the riots subsided Mujib returned to Baker Hostel and fell seriously ill. After recovery Mujib appeared and passed BA exam. The experience of Hindu-Muslim communal riots in Calcutta and other places and also the result of 1946 general election convinced Hindu leaders of the Congress to agree to divide India to make a room for Pakistan state to emerge. In June 1947 British Government of India declared that India would be divided. Accordingly two independent states Pakistan and India came into being on 14th and 15th August 1947 respectively under the Partition of India Act 1947.

After the creation of Pakistan Mujib came to Dhaka in September 1947. This time Mujib also admitted himself into Dhaka University as a student of law department. Mujib and other student leaders organized to create a separate Muslim student organization in East Pakistan, like that of the British period. So East Pakistan Muslim Students League (EPMSL) was formed on January 4, 1948 at Fazlul Huq Muslim hall of DU. Student leader Oli Ahad opposed the use of term Muslim before student league. But Mujib and others supported it on the ground that time was not yet ripe for dropping the term Muslim from student league. (AA p89). Babu Dharendra Nath Dutta, a Congress member from Comilla demanded Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan in the constituent assembly of Pakistan on February 8, 1948. The EPMSL and Tomuddun Majlish (a non-political organization) also demanded the same like Mr. Dutta. They jointly declared March 11, 1948 as Bangla Vasha Dibosh. At this, Mujib and others were arrested. But later released. Around this time Mujib led a procession of dawals (day laborers who cut paddy in exchange of paddy going from one district to other) to the



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman highlighting the economic disparity between the two parts of Pakistan while Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy sits next

district magistrate Khulna. The issue was, the Dawals were denied the right to take their hard earned paddy to their own districts due to cordon system of the government. In 1949 DU authority expelled Mujib and few other students from the University for taking part in the movement for realization of the demand of 4th class employees of DU. Mujib soon realized that politics cannot be done relying only on student politics. On June 23, 1949 East Pakistan Awami Muslim League (EPAML) was formed at Rose garden Dhaka with Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani as president, Mr. Shamsul Huq as general secretary and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as Joint Secretary. Nawabzada Liakatali Khan PM of Pakistan in 1950 declared a ML meeting 'Jo awamileagekarega, uskoscir hum kuchaldenga. (One who dares to join awami league, I will bash his head in.) Liakat government termed Awami league as enemy decided to arrest their leaders. Warrant of arrest hanging over his head Mujib desired to meet his parents and wife (Renu) and family members at home Mujib writes.. '...Renu might have been waiting for my arrival. She bears all sorrows in silence but does not say anything. Does not say anything or does not want to say either. For this I feel more personal agony for her.' (AAP 146). This expression of Mujib makes me think Mujib was a perfect reader of human mind. Who knows he could be a famous novelist say Sharat Chandra. On way to Dhaka he stayed a few days in his elder sisters house along with his wife and children. Mujib told Renu, 'there is no hope to get any help from me. You are to run the family.' (AAP 164) Mujib mentions that it was Renu's habit to arrange money to give him in need. He mentioned name of Renu and her help in more than two dozens of different pages in his Autobiography. He left his sister's house by night because "Hasina will cry if he leaves during daytime."(AAP165). Such a humane personality Mujib was! Mujib came to

Dhaka and was arrested and sent to Dhaka jail. He was refused division in the jail first, but later allowed. He was given the job of weaving yarn in jail which he enjoyed. He used to recite the Holy Quran, and offered prayers while in jail. Once on query Mujib said to civil surgeon Khulna, "he suffers in jail to capture power. Basically one cannot do anything without going to power."

With the assassination of PM Liakat Ali Khan in 1951, influence of bureaucrats in Pakistan politics started increasing rapidly with appointment of bureaucrats Choudhury Mohammad Ali as finance minister, of Pakistan. Politics also started to face defeat to bureaucracy, (commented Mujib AAP 195). Sheikh Mujib was keen observer of politics in

Pakistan. In his AA he observed that people of East Pakistan was more democratic and politically conscious than that of the people of West Pakistan. It was proved during 1946 general election on Pakistan issue. Mujib also observed that Muslim league fell in the trap of conspiracy of British period born bureaucracy. On the otherhand, a group of central leaders and big bureaucrats of West Pakistan conspired to transfer resources of East Pakistan to West Pakistan as early as possible. They feared, one day East Pakistan would be separated from West Pakistan. So they hurried to build West Pakistan with East Pakistan resources. AL revealed disparity between East Pakistan and West Pakistan and published a pamphlet saying 'Shonar bangla shoshan kano?' (why golden Bengal is a cremation ground today?) As a result West Pakistani leaders identified AL as enemy number 1. (AAP239-240). Muslim league chose to forward their false propaganda of Islam at stake 'instead of attending to people's economic and other mundane problem'. As a result popularity of ML dwindled in East Pakistan. Which was evident from the result of 1954 provincial assembly election of East Pakistan. AL as a partner of Jukto front participated in the said election. Out of 237 Muslim seats Jukto front secured 226 seats of which AL bagged 140. ML Government was heavily defeated in the elections. Mujib joined Jukto Front Government headed by Sher-e-Bangla, as a cabinet minister. Central ML Government could not bear this. They within a few months dismissed Jukto Front



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on his way to the special tribunal set up to try the Agartala conspiracy case, January 1969

Government under dubious ground under section 92 A, of Government of India Act 1935. Mujib was the only cabinet minister to be arrested and sent to jail after the dissolution of the Government. This gave a message that ML central Government has less respect for the democratic rights of the people of East Pakistan and their right to rule them by themselves. In 1955, June 5 Sheikh Mujib was elected member of Pakistan constituent assembly to frame a constitution for Pakistan. On August 25, 1955 Mujib demanded in CA autonomy for East Pakistan and Bengali to be one of state languages of Pakistan. Mujib felt that time is now ripe for non-communal politics. On October 21, 1955, In council session of Awami Muslim League the name of AL was changed from Awami Muslim league to Awami league deleting the term Muslim from its name...also Mujib was re-elected general secretary in this session. On September 4, 1956, Mujib led Bhukha Michhil, (hunger procession) for food violating section 144, CRPC. At this time in another development Pakistan was able to frame a constitution of its own called 1956 constitution, after 9 years of its existence. 1956 constitution of Pakistan accepted Bangla as one of state languages of Pakistan but failed to give minimum autonomy to East Pakistan. At this time Mujib also resigned from provincial coalition cabinet to consolidate his party. On October 7, 1958, Martial law was promulgated in Pakistan and politics was banned in Pakistan. Mujib was arrested and detained in jail for about 14 months and was re-arrested at jail gate. However he was released on December 1960 on High Court order. In 1962, February 6, Mujib was arrested under Public Safety Act. On lifting of Martial law Mujib was released on June 18, 1962. Mujib along with 25 national leaders issued a joint statement against Basic democracy system of president General Ayub Khan. National democratic front consisting of opposition national political leaders were formed at Lahore, 1962. Under the leadership of Hussein Shaheed Suhrawardy Mujib toured all over Bangladesh with Suhrawardy to form public opinion in favour of them. On December 5, 1963 Suhrawardy died at Beirut. On 25, January 1964, AL was revived. Mujib was re-elected general secretary of the party again. On March 11, 1964 Shorbo Dolio Shongram Porishod and communal riot protection committee were formed under the leadership of Sheikh Mujib, 14 days before the presidential election, 1964 Sheikh Mujib was arrested. He was jailed for 1 year on charge of sedition and later released on High Court order. In 1965 Indo-Pak war took place experience of this war brought far reaching changes in the political thinking of Sheikh Mujib. He realized that normal federal type of autonomy will not serve the purpose. Autonomy based on historic Lahore resolution 1940 under a federal structure was necessary for East Pakistan. During the India-Pakistan war East Pakistan was almost unprotected. East and West Pakistan divided by almost 1000 miles of foreign territory India, made it almost impossible on the part of Pakistan central Government located in West Pakistan with all its defense headquarters and central capital there at Karachi to help East Pakistan during the war even if they wanted to. Moreover unfriendly foreign territory (India) made movement of manpower, goods and services between the two wings almost impossible. So territorial and other realities made it clear that two wings of Pakistan must have separate defense and separate economic safeguard system. It may be mentioned that historic Lahore resolution envisaged two independent Muslim majority states in the north west and eastern zones of India, indicating in effect East and West Pakistan.

In this background Mujib came out with his famous six point demand. He



Bangabandhu became emotional after he arrived in liberated Bangladesh- Dhaka Racecourse Ground, 10 January 1972

formulated and placed his six point demand in a national conference of opposition leaders which was held on February 5, 1966 at Lahore. Mujib called it a magnacarta (Muktisanad of Bangalees). But the conference rejected his demands. In demand number 1, a federal structure for Pakistan state was suggested based on Lahore resolution, separate defense and separate economic safeguard system was also demanded for East Pakistan. Separate currency, separate tax and revenue collection, separate foreign exchange account and right to have direct trade link with foreign states were demanded for economic safety of East Pakistan. Only two subjects were suggested for central government – defence and foreign affairs, while remaining subject going to be governed by provinces. Before 6-point demand Mujib was merely a party general secretary and a provincial minister. But 6-point demand made him a national hero. AL also elected him for the first time as its president on March 1, 1966. 6-point demand quickly won public approval in East Pakistan. This enraged Pakistan government and they arrested Mujib 8 times within 3 months of the demand. Hartal was called to release him which saw 11 people including Monu Mia dead by police firing at Tejgaon industrial area. Since then in Pakistan politics, Mujib was regarded with due political weight. That is why Agortola conspiracy case was withdrawn against him and others to attend a round table conference (RTC) of national leaders, called by President General Ayub Khan. RTC failed as it refused to consider Mujib's 6-point demand. Mujib was elected president of AI again, on January 6th, 1970. AI decided to participate in general election of 1970, called by military Government President General Yahya Khan. Election to be held under LFO. Legal framework order. Many were not in agreement to participate in election under LFO. As it empowered military govt. to cancel the election result. Mujib said " I shall throw LFO to dustbin after

the election.' In the election AL secured landslide victory bagging 167 of 300 national assembly seats and 288 seats out of 300 provincial assembly seats. This general election results made Mujib recognized leader of East Pakistan. He also secured majority in the national assembly of Pakistan thus making him entitled to be Prime Minister of Pakistan. But President of Pakistan General Yahya Khan postponed national assembly session scheduled to be held on March 3, 1971 at Dhaka. Thus indirectly refusing to transfer power to Mujib. Mujib said, 'we shall not let it go unchallenged.' He called hartal on March 3, 1971. Delivered a historic speech at a meeting on March 7, at Dhaka. Where he declared non-cooperation movement. He changed his stance from autonomy to independence and declared 'this time struggle is for emancipation, struggle is for independence.' He also asked people to put up resistance to Pakistan army. Mujib-Yahya and then Mujib-Bhutto negotiation in March 1971 failed. On March 25, 1971 Mujib was arrested and sent to Pakistan jail. Before his arrest Mujib sent a message to all concerned at about 12:20 am on March 26, 1971 saying... "this may be my last message, from today Bangladesh is independent..."(AAP 299). An army officer also echoed his message of independence in the name of Sheikh Mujib on March 27, 1971. From a local radio station in Chattagram. It was their elected leader's (Bangabandhu's) call, which was of utmost importance and driving force to the people, elected representative and the world. Mujib called for independence led to muktijuddho. Muktijuddho was led by Mujibnagar Sarkar. Formed on 17 April, 1971. Mujib was declared head of this government though he was in jail. The Muktijuddho was conducted in the name of Mujib. Within less than a year, our Muktijuddha with the help of Indian army defeated Pakistan army within less than a year, with the surrender of Pakistan army on 16th December, 1971 at Dhaka Bangladesh became independent de facto. Although became independent de jure on March 26, 1971 on Bangabandhu's call. Bangabandhu was released from Pakistan jail on January 8, 1972 and returned home on January 10, 1972, his homecoming day speech is also historic document. He gave the nation a constitution in 1972 within less than a year whereas Pakistan took 9 years to give her a constitution.

Mujib's philosophy of life and politics and his leadership: Mujib writes in his AA, "I myself am not a communist. But I believe in socialism and do not believe in capitalism." (AA 236). "I do not want to be prime minister of Pakistan we want rights of people of our country' (Bangabandhur Vashion-BV p18). On homecoming day at Dhaka airport he said, 'The world is divided into two, the oppressor and the oppressed. I belong to the oppressed. "I am a Muslim, I am a Bengali.... I do not want desecration of Islam...our country will be democratic, secular and socialist country." (BV p 21-22). "My only prayer is that people of Bangladesh must get food, shelter, and achieve a decent life," (BV pg 22)

From the above statement of Sheikh Mujib, it appears that Mujib loved his religion (Islam) and at the same time he was non communal, having respect for other religion, it is on record he many times said, secularism does not mean religionlessness. He was for a State which will ensure social security provide adequate food and shelter and ensure decent life for its people. Bangabandhu stood by oppressed people like 4th class employees of DU., daylabourersdawals at Khulna, he also stood by oppressed Malek at Gopalganj and suffered imprisonment. He suffered throughout his whole life fighting for the cause of his people Banglaees. He was an affectionate father, beloved husband and dear to his parents and community.



US Senator Edward Kennedy and Mrs. Kennedy called on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at his official residence in Dhaka, 14 February 1972.

He was a visionary popular public leader. He changed his political agenda according to the needs of people and time. Accordingly his political demand barometer of bangabandhu started rising, starting with Pakistan demand then autonomy for East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and finally independence for East Pakistan which created Bangladesh in 1971.

Bangabandhu was a charismatic leader. Due to his charisma, people in thousands and lakhs thronged to his meeting. The writer himself attended a meeting of Bangabandhu at Faridpur in 1966 during 6-point movement. At one stage heavy downpour started, people were drenched heavily but none of them left the meeting venue. They listened to the leader until he finished his speech. Many stories of his charisma abounds in fact he was charismatic leader like Nelson Mandela of South Africa.

There is no dearth of seasonal politicians in Bangladesh. Bangabandhu laid down his life for the people and the nation. Bangladesh needs more dedicated leaders like him in the years to come to make Bangladesh into a Sonar Bangla. His daughter our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is doing her best to implement the vision of the her great father.

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Bangabandhu's Speech on 7th March: Why World-Famous

Dr. Md Matiur Rahman Khan

East Pakistan with the West Pakistani regimes and the political leaders. The heroic and patriotic people of the then East Pakistan, responding to his clarion call and the directives, shut down lower courts, educational institutions, secretariat, the Supreme Court, High Court, Judge's Court, government offices, semi-government offices, WAPDA and stopped even paying of taxes sine die. It was possible because of his compelling, forceful and powerful speech which was an embodiment of trust, confidence and faith of people of all walks of life.

Of the world-famous speeches of the great leaders of the world, Bangabandhu's speech is one that rates and ranks with those of the global leaders. It is because his speech contains all the vital points and characteristics that are needed to be called a world-famous speech. Maybe, his spontaneous public speech on the 7th March is even more effective and persuasive than those of the world leaders. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib, the Supreme Command of the Liberation War, Father of the nation and sculptor of Bangladesh delivered a historically famous impromptu speech on the Racecourse Ground in Dhaka on the 7th March, 1971 inspiring and motivating the people to be emancipated and freed from the exploitation and oppression of the Pakistani regime. It was so rousing and convincing a speech that it stirred and touched the hearts of hundreds of thousands of people and made them feel excited and exhilarated to sacrifice themselves in order to create an independent country of the name of Bangladesh.

Bangabandhu in his impassioned speech on the 7th March explained the country's political situation and the pressing need to the audience and then logically declared a non-cooperation movement with the Pakistani government. People supported the declaration of the non-cooperation movement wholeheartedly. Then the brave and enthusiastic Bengali people of the then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) started full non-cooperation throughout the then

We know that an ordinary speech cannot effectively motivate people and cannot make the people ready for big sacrifices because it lacks in trust, confidence and popularity of people. So, it cannot be a world-famous speech. On the other hand, a world-famous speech can move people very deeply because it has certain impressive and persuasive characteristics and attributes that can successfully generate and strengthen motivation in people, provide people with inspiration to achieve the target, arouse extreme feeling of patriotism in the mind of the people, make long lasting direct appeal to the heart and mind of people, build up trust and confidence in people, win popularity and point out the most crucial and gravest problems, and suggest urgent solutions spontaneously. We find the similar and corresponding elements or factors in Bangabandhu's speech on the 7th March, 1971.

Furthermore, to rate a speech as world-famous, and to rank it with that level, we consider several standard and classic characteristics and attributes which are essentially needed to be contained in the speech. These characteristics and attributes inspire people to make big sacrifices in order to gain great achievements. Bangabandhu's speech on the 7th March was not an ordinary speech or call to people, but it was the final and ultimate speech or call to the people to get ready to liberate the country from the emancipation of the Pakistani government. It was the speech for pre-declaration of the independence of Bangladesh. This was a charismatic speech which made the people spell-bound



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on a car coming towards Racecourse Ground, 7 March 1971

and inspired them to fight for the freedom of the motherland. This speech inspired the people; they came forward and fought for about nine months, brought independence, created a nation-state of the name of Bangladesh in the world map. This has been possible for his notable, remarkable and inspiring speech which really ranks with the world-famous speech.

However, despite that nitty-gritty, questions may naturally arise at the back of our mind as to what attributes or qualities are found in his 7th March speech and how we can compare it with the world-famous speeches of the great leaders and finally why we call it a world-famous speech. In this context, our answer is unambiguous and clear that world-class or world-famous speeches always contain some rare attributes and qualities and, above all, inspiring messages and encouraging words and leave an unending impression on and everlasting appeal to the mind of the people. However, some of the attributes and characteristics of the world-famous speeches of the world leaders as well as some of those that are found in Bangabandhu's speech are as follows:

Firstly, every world-famous speech will always be inspiring, substantial and rich in contents so that it can arouse new spirit and ideas in people to make great sacrifices for acquiring important and monumental achievements. Bangabandhu on 7 March, 1971 could motivate and stimulate people by his speech. In his speech, he voiced loudly and authoritatively to people using the words, "we will submerge them in water" "we will starve them to death" "we have learnt to die; no power on earth can keep us under subjugation." He also voiced in his speech, "Remember: Having mastered the lesson of sacrifice, we shall give more blood. God willing, we shall free the people of this land." All these words are urgently inspiring messages to people.

Similarly we find that during the Second World War the Prime Minister of Britain Winston Churchill in his speech voiced, "We Shall Fight on the Beaches." "We shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight... in the air, we shall defend our land, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight ... in the fields and in the streets. We shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender..."

Secondly, a famous speech contains characteristics that express the highest level of patriotism, demonstrate true leadership, reveal steely determination for the achievement of definite target and issue clear cut guidelines and directives for reaching the goal. The principal and immediately implementable objectives of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib were the emancipation and freedom of the Bengali speaking people from the exploitation and internal colonial rule of the Pakistani rulers. So, in his speech he uttered in a booming voice, "The struggle this time is a struggle for independence." He did not refrain just by setting or stating the objectives. To achieve the objective of independence in the liberation war, he gave detailed guidelines especially of guerilla war and instructed the Bengalis to be prepared for. In his speech he thunderously voiced, "Turn every house into a fortress. Resist the enemy with everything you have. And for the sake of life even if I am not around to guide you, direct you, close off all roads and pathways."

We find the similar notes and sounds in the world-famous speech by Martin Luther King Jr who was an American Baptist minister and activist and became visible spokesman and leader in the American civil rights movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. In 1963, he delivered his famous speech "I Have a Dream" wherein he called to get the black people their rights of freedom, equality



Historical speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 7 March 1971 at Racecourse Ground.

and justice avoiding racial injustice based on the color of skin. Martin Luther King from the Birmingham jail wrote letters in 1963, saying, "Freedom is never given voluntarily by the oppressors; it must be demanded by the oppressed."

Furthermore, we find that former American president Abraham Lincoln delivered a famous speech, "The Gettysburg Address" on the battlefield near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania on November 19, 1863. He voiced, "All men are created equal ..." which refers to slavery, a key cause of the American Civil War.

Thirdly, it may be mentioned that a world-famous speech transcends the time-limits and boundary of places. It means that a famous speech is not limited to a particular period of time or to a particular place. Its appeal and attraction are timeless and eternal and it provides inspiration as a national heritage document, passing from generation to generation. For example, the appeal of the 7th March Speech of 1971 is still inspiring, encouraging and promising. It will last forever. In the speech, he spoke, "You cannot keep seventy five million people in bondage."

Again, in Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" Lincoln spoke, "... that these dead shall not have died in vain ... and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth." In the speech "I Have a Dream," Luther voiced, "...that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of the skin but the contents of their character" (Martin Luther King Jr).

Fourthly, we find another historically remarkable trait in a world-famous speech.

This trait is the use of poetical art and rhythm or utilization of aesthetic value and sense in choosing friendly words in making sentences for the speech to be delivered spontaneously in the metrical pattern or in the sweet-sounding voice wonderfully pleasant to the ears. Bangabandhu's speech contains similar traits and characteristics. Hence, he is called the "Poet of politics." Similar traits and characteristics have been reflected in the world-famous speeches of Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Oliver Cromwell, Winston Churchill and Julius Caesar and so on.

Fifthly, a world-famous speech is based on the emerging critical situation and crisis. In this case, the speaker tries to speak about the crisis and seeks immediate, instant and spontaneous solution. Bangabandhu's whole speech on 7 March was exactly the same; no way was it a written script.

It may be recalled that the timeless speech "I Have a Dream" of 1963 by Martin Luther King, though he began initially from the script but the most important heart-rending ending part was wonderfully spontaneous without script.

Sixthly, another important specialty of the world-famous speech is that it is 'not too long', it is moderate in size. For example, "The Gettysburg Address" by Abraham Lincoln contains 272 words, and the time taken to deliver the speech was less than 3 minutes, "I Have a Dream" by Martin Luther King contains 1667 words, and the time taken for the delivery of the speech was 17 minutes, on the other hand, the 7th March speech by Bangabandhu contains 1105 words, and the time he took to deliver the speech was 18 minutes. His 7th March Speech is an invaluable heritage for the Bengali people as well as for the world. His speech is similar in quality and specialty to those of the great leaders of the world.

In this connection, it may be mentioned that British historian Jacob F. Field compiled a valuable book under the title: "We Shall Fight on the Beaches: Speech That Inspired History" in which he selected 41 national heroes and generals that appeared within a period of two thousand and five hundred years in different countries from 431 to 1987, and which was published in London in 2013. In his book, in addition to the speeches of Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Oliver Cromwell, George Washington, Napoleon Bonaparte, Joseph Marie Garibaldi, Abraham Lincoln, Vladimir Lenin, Thomas Woodrow Wilson, Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, Charles the Gaul, Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi Minh so on, the speech on 7th March delivered by Bangabandhu has been included.

Moreover, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), an agency of the United Nations recognized the 7th March historic speech of Bangabandhu as the "World Heritage Document" on October 30, 2017, and thereby the speech has been accepted as the valuable property to humankind. This recognition of the speech has brought great, rare and special fame, glory and honor to our nation. This process has been expedited and implemented because of the tireless effort of our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the ablest daughter of the Father of the nation. The whole nation feels proud of this world Heritage Document.

Incidentally it may be recalled that for the non-cooperation movement and independence of Bangladesh, supreme sacrifices of life and property had to be made. The barbaric Pak army in the name of "Operation Searchlight" fell all on a sudden on the innocent and unarmed people with lethal weapons and killed

thousands of men and women in Dhaka, on the night of 25th March, 1971. Following the circumstances, the Father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman shortly after midnight of 25th March, that is, early hours of 26th March, 1971 declared independence by saying, "This may be my last message, from today Bangladesh is independent. I call upon the people of Bangladesh wherever you might be and with whatever you have, to resist the army of occupation to the last. Your fight must go on until the last soldier of the Pakistan occupation army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh and final victory is achieved." (Sheikh Mujibur Rahman 25 March 1971) This declaration reached at once all over Bangladesh.

Hearing the declaration of independence by the Bangabandhu, the brave people including students, teachers, farmers, political activists, service holders, businessmen, policemen, answers, armies, naval forces, air forces, BDR and people from all walks of life got ready to start liberation war. This liberation war continued for about nine months. The Pak barbaric and savage soldiers caused havoc and ravage throughout Bangladesh. About three million people received martyrdom that is they were killed and more than two hundred thousand women were stripped of their modesty and chastity by the savage Pak soldiers. It was an unprecedented sacrifice in history for independence. So far as I know, no speech of any other world leader could rouse such inspiration and enthusiasm in the mind of the people to make such an enormous sacrifice in the world as his speech could. However, after nine-month long liberation war, about ninety three thousand Pak soldiers including officers surrendered to the combined unit of Liberation Forces and the Indian army in Dhaka on December 16, 1971. With their surrender, Bangladesh emerged as an independent country. But behind the independence, Bangabandhu's speech worked as a driving force to organize the people, inspire them to fight for the independence of the country. So, the speech played the most vital role for the country's independence. Hence, his speech beyond any reasonable doubt ranks with the world-famous speeches.

In conclusion, we may mention that Bangabandhu's speech on the 7th March, 1971 contains all the qualities and specialties of the world-famous speeches of the great leaders of the world. It was wonderfully charismatic, powerful and forceful to motivate and convince the people to bring independence of Bangladesh at the cost of their life. On top of that, the speech ranks with the other world-famous speeches in toto. Moreover, the 7th March Speech was recognized as the 'World Heritage Document' by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). And this recognition brings added reputation to the speech to be regarded as one of the world-famous speeches in the world. Furthermore, this speech has brought international honor and dignity to us and, above all, an independent nation state of Bangladesh. We are pleased and proud of our leader and his world-famous speech. This speech will act on and remain as an unending impression on and inspiration in every mind of the Bengali speaking people in and outside Bangladesh.

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



Reminiscences of Bangabandhu

Syed Salehuddin Mahmood

I first got acquainted with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib as one of his contemporary students and as an ordinary worker of Calcutta City Chhatra Federation. It is not very easy to talk about Mujib Bhai, considered the greatest Bangali in a thousand years. His depth was like an ocean. It often surprises me how a single individual could bring about the liberation of a whole nation. His success lay in his unfathomable courage and a fearless attitude towards life.

The circumstances in which Sheikh Mujib entered the political arena need some elaboration. It was the 1940s. There was the odour of ammunitions all around. Tanks were rolling on the land and fighter aircraft's hovering in the sky. The whole of Europe was engulfed in the flames of an all-out war. And then, suddenly in Asia, Japan entered the fray siding with the Nazi Germany. In British-held India, places like Calcutta, Chittagong and Feni became targets of the Japanese Bombers. And very soon Chittagong and Feni were bombed.

In the face of these Japanese onslaughts, the British government closed down all food godowns. Boats carrying rice were also seized. As a result, a severe famine struck the province of Bengal. According to official estimates, 3 million people perished during the episode.

In this grim backdrop, Sheikh Mujib entered the political arena as a leader of the student community. By then, he had witnessed the 'Quit India' movement of Mahatma Gandhi, the August revolution of the Congress, and the formation of the 'Azad Hind Fouj' by Netaji Subhash Bose. It was destiny which brought Sheikh Mujib into the political arena of Calcutta in such a volatile circumstance. Initially, he received patronization of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Abul Hashem who were clearly his political mentors.

Until then, the Muslim League was a favourite hunting ground for the Nawabs, the Knights and the Khan Bahadurs. A new life was infused within the party when

Abul Hashem became its General Secretary. He incorporated various economic programs in the agenda. Frustrated Muslim youths then started to flock into the Muslim League fold in greater numbers. Sheikh Mujib realized that the Muslim league could not be reinvigorated as a political institution through religious orchestrations alone. By holding meetings and rallies in the rural areas, he started to publicise his party's manifesto, which included economic programs.



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (standing at the back wearing glasses) with Mahatma Gandhi and Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy at Sodepur Haydar Mansion in Kolkata, 1947.

Abul Hashem observed those rare qualities in Sheikh Mujib which were mostly seen among the Communist Party workers. He worked for the Party almost round the clock. His intimate associations with Abul Hashem and Suhrawardy helped Mujib inculcate those rare leadership qualities that ultimately made him the undisputed leader of the Bangali nation.

At that time, most of the Congress leaders were behind bars. In a way, the whole of Congress as an institution was imprisoned. Consequently, it was easy for the Muslim League to play its game in a barren field. Its publicity campaign in favour of a separate Pakistan was thus very easy.

Around this time, Sheikh Mujib became the leader of Calcutta City Chhatra Federation. In the city executive committee, Nuruddin Ahmed was the President while Mujib Bhai was the General Secretary.

The period in question was between 1942 and 1946. In order to elicit cooperation from the Congress, the British government sent the 'Cripps Mission' in 1942 with a formula for granting dominion status to India. To create a conducive climate for discussion, top Congress leaders were released.

The discussions started in New Delhi in a cordial atmosphere. But the Congress rejected the Cripps Mission proposal on the ground that it contained the seeds of Pakistan. Even Gandhiji described it as a post-dated cheque. After this came the Wavell Plan in 1945, and lastly the Cabinet Mission in 1946. This last scheme envisaged the division of India into three regional groupings under a loose Federation. The liberation of the eastern wing of Pakistan as Bangladesh in 1971 under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib through an independence war was in the final analysis a partial reflection of the last scheme.

At that time, Mujib Bhai was watching very keenly the changing scenario in the political arena. He had a firm conviction that he would be able to reframe the status of Bangladesh anew.

In 1946, communal disturbances spread throughout the sub-continent. The war had ended in 1945, and the British Labour Party cabinet headed by Lord Attley had passed the Indian Independence Act. Arrangements were then made in 1946 to hold elections for provincial and legislative assemblies.

Around this time, Mujib Bhai led the united movement of Hindu and Muslim students in Calcutta centring on the farcical trial of Captain Shahnewaz and Captain Rashid Ali, and the subsequent observance of Rashid Ali Day.

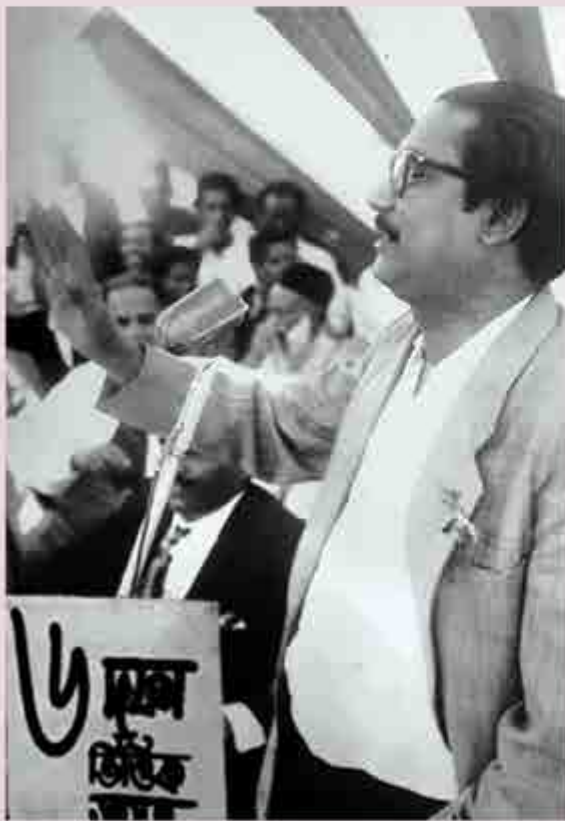
After the Cabinet Mission went back to Britain, the whole of Muslim League exploded in anger on the ground that the interests of ten crore Muslims were ignored by the three Englishmen.

As a result, communal riots broke out among the Hindus and Muslims, especially in places like Punjab, Delhi, Bihar and Bengal. Later on, these disturbances engulfed the whole of India. It was almost a point of no return.

Then after India was partitioned in August 1947, a students' rally was held in Calcutta on the lawn of Sirajuddowla Muslim Hall. It was held in the backdrop of farcical elections for the leadership of East Pakistan Assembly. Addressing this

huge rally, the General Secretary of Calcutta City Chhatra Federation Sheikh Mujib declared that he was in favour of a newer struggle for freedom. He asserted, 'Independence cannot have a final shape. As one famous Political Scientist had said, 'The state has no finality, nor can it have any perfected form'. What we call democracy is a beginning, and not an end'.

After the partition of India in 1947, Sheikh Mujib had to cross anew many hurdles, and many roads in his quest for the emancipation of his fellow Bangalis. The language movement of 1948-52, the country-wide movement for constitutional principles of Pakistan, provision for combined elections in place of separate ones, 6- point movement of 1966, inhuman torture in jails, the Agartala Conspiracy case, and the historic 7 March speech of 1971 in front of a million-strong audience - all these



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announces the 6-Point in Lahore, 1966



Bangabandhu with others following his release from the Agartala conspiracy case (from left) Mohiuddin Ahmed, Maulana Bhasani, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Maulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish, 1969

were different evolutionary phases of Bangabandhu's charismatic life. Most significant was his declaration of independence on the night of March 26, 1971, after the Pakistani forces had launched a genocidal attack against unarmed Bangalis. The ultimate outcome of all these was a free and sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh.

The renowned Bangali of British era Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray had once said, 'When my days will end, I shall seek to live among those who wage relentless battles against oppression and injustices until this ignominy of slavery is erased from the destiny of my motherland'.

Great men like Bangabandhu arrive in this world at different times of history to finish the incomplete tasks of other great men. They come in different ages when their presence is acutely felt. Like the insightful Christians who say, 'Jesus Christ was born long before taking up the leadership of mankind' we also should not be pushed into saying, 'Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib was born long before leading the Bangali nation to victory'.

Translated by Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed

Writer Syed Salehuddin Mahmood (1927-2006) was a close associate of Bangabandhu at Islamia College during his Calcutta days, who subsequently served as a Deputy Principal Information Officer of the Press Information Department



Mega Projects in Bangladesh changing the country rapidly

Imam Hossain

momentum, ushering hope for positive change in the country's economy and people's livelihood in Bangladesh. Besides, work of the floating LNG Terminal in Maheshkhali, one of 10 projects with a combined value of Tk 2,73,636 crore (USD 32.44bn), has been completed and has been operating since September 2020. The 2400 MW Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, the biggest single project worth Tk 1,13,092 crore, 1320 MW Rampal Power project and metro rail are progressing as scheduled. Work of the much-anticipated Padma Bridge is going on in full swing after issues over some of the piers have been addressed while work of the 1200 MW coal-fired power plant in Matarbari of Maheshkhali has witnessed significant progress lately. However, Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Rail

Mega projects mean large-scale, complex ventures that involve multiple public and private stakeholders. These projects usually cost billions of dollars or more and transformational in nature impacting millions of people. Countries throughout the globe are increasingly mobilizing the public and private sectors to invest heavily in multi-million and multi-billion dollar infrastructure initiatives. The current global spending on mega projects amounts to about USD 6-9 trillion a year (roughly 8% of the global GDP), which makes it the biggest investment boom in human history.

Half of the 10 first track mega projects have finally gotten some



Padma Multipurpose Bridge



Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant

Link, Padma Rail Link and Paira Deep Sea Port are running behind schedule mainly due to delays in signing loan agreements, land acquisition and finalisation of project design.

The country's first-ever metro rail will be able to start operation on December 16, 2021, when the nation celebrates its golden jubilee of independence. Originally, the project's implementation period was 2012-2024. However, the government wanted to complete it within December 2020. Now, the entire part (the 20km) will be operational within 2021. Once completed, a total of 24 trains together will transfer 60,000 passengers every hour in both directions.

Work of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant Project is going on as scheduled. Having begun in 2016, the project is scheduled to be completed within 2025. Although the project saw slow progress at the preliminary stage, it has made significant progress in last fiscal year with Tk 17,927 crore spent till May this year. The government allocated around Tk 15,000 crore for the project this fiscal year.

Construction of the power plant consists of two power units in Rooppur of Pabna with a capacity of 1,200 MW each.

Work of Matarbari power plant is going on in full swing with 25 percent of the work completed as of May this year. The Tk 35,984 crore



Dhaka Metro Rail



Payra Deep Sea Port

project is scheduled to be completed by 2023. The works for 1320MW Rampal Coal Power Project near the Sundarbans, was started in April 2017 and expected to be completed in 2021.

Once the projects are completed, the

communication and power sectors will get a huge boost, traffic congestion in Dhaka city will reduce, and ultimately trade and tourism will be benefited immensely. Various studies show that the country's GDP will increase by 3 to 4 percent after the completion of the projects.

For the fiscal year 2019-20, the government allocated BDT 40,000 crore to implement ten mega projects in order to strengthen the country's communication network and to develop the power and energy sector to boost the economy. The government has proposed the highest allocation of BDT 14,980 crore for the country's first nuclear power plant, the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Pabna. The second highest allocation is set to go for the Metro Rail project at BDT 7,212 crore. Besides the projects, the government proposed to allocate BDT 1,407 crore for the power grid network, and BDT 2,108 crore for the expansion of power system network.

These large infrastructural undertakings and mega projects can transform communications, transportation, ports and energy scenarios of Bangladesh and can help us achieve high mid-income country status. In a developing country like Bangladesh, 7% economic growth is usually required for capital accumulation to fund the mega projects.

Even before the 'Agenda 2030' was adopted, the present government in Bangladesh envisaged implementing a few mega projects for the economic and social benefits for millions of people. the ongoing megaprojects can be divided into two main categories such as

- 1) Communication Infrastructure and
- 2) Power Projects.



Rampal Coal Power Project

Project Name	Type	Timeline	Estimate Cost	Funding
Kooppur Nuclear Power Plant	Power Project	Started in November, 2017 and expected to be completed by 2025	USD 12.65 billion	USD 11.38 billion taken as loan from the Russian Government
Rampal Coal Power Project	Power Project	Started in April, 2017 and expected to be completed in 2021	USD 5 billion	Financing of Main Plant by EPC (Turnkey) and package by Indian EXIM Bank
Padma Rail Link	Communication Infrastructure	Started on January 1, 2016 and to be completed by June 30, 2024	USD 4.63 billion	The Ministry of railways
Matarbari Power Plant	Power Project	Started in July, 2014 and expected to be completed by June, 2024	USD 4.4 billion	Majority of funds provided by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
Padma Multipurpose Bridge	Communication Infrastructure	Started in January, 2009 and to be completed by 2021	USD 3.65 billion	Self funded by the Bangladesh government
Dhaka Metro Rail	Communication Infrastructure	Started in July, 2012 and to be completed by December, 2021	USD 2.82 billion	Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
Karnaphuli Underwater Tunnel	Communication Infrastructure	Started in December, 2017 and expected to be completed by 2022	USD 2.49 billion	Bangladesh Bridge Authority
Chattogram - Cox's Bazar Railway Link	Communication Infrastructure	Expected to be completed by June, 2022	USD 2.13 billion	Asian Development Bank, The Government of Bangladesh
Dhaka Elevated Expressway	Communication Infrastructure	Started in 2011 and expected to be completed by March, 2022	USD 1.63 billion	Italian Thai Development Public Company, China Shandong International Economic and Technical Corporation Group
Moheshdiali LNG Terminal	Power Project	Started in 2017 and commissioned on April 29, 2019	USD 179.5 million	International Finance Corporation (IFC), CDC Group, Development Bank of Germany, JICA and Dutch led Entrepreneurial Development Bank
Payra Deep Sea Port	Communication Infrastructure	Implementation of the revised project started in January 2019 and will be completed by December 2021	USD 98.5 million	Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and government-to-government (G2G) deals



Moheshkhali LNG Terminal

Drawbacks and Challenges

1. There have been delays in completion for multiple megaprojects and deadlines have been extended multiple times. Each of these delays and exceeding budgets are major problems for the country and defeat the purpose

of a megaproject in the first place.

2. Delay in some projects, especially the urban transport projects, is causing unexpected disruption in daily lives for which the project cost and productivity both are increasing.

3. Inefficiency in planning well ahead and lack of experience in dealing with such large scale projects combined with lack of transparency and political pressure in selecting the implementing agency are some of the reasons for which most of the megaprojects are facing delays with massive increases in cost.

4. Diversifying the fuel mix is a major challenge. Sole dependence on depleting natural gas can exacerbate the gas famine situation in Bangladesh.

5. The current global fuel market is volatile. The dependence of Bangladesh on imported liquid fuel-based contingency plants have grown above 40% needs to change and sustainable alternatives should be chosen.

6. Most of the current mega projects are being constructed by foreign firms with their technology. Despite the arrangements, successful training of our own manpower has not been possible due to lack of academic competence and lack of experience to understand advanced technology.

7. The country's macro-economy now depends on public investment for the megaprojects. Such economic management has weakened relation to private investment, revenue mobilization, monetary policy and even trade policy. Private investment



Express Highway



Karnaphuli under water Tunnel

has stagnated at around 23% for years although the economy is expanding fast. Instances of money plundering, capital flight and tax evasion have increased.

Bangladesh's development story, especially implementation of the ongoing and future mega



Matarbari Power Plant

projects, has earned the reputation in the region as a hot spot for global investment. The role of these mega infrastructure projects is expected to be fundamental in the overall national development process as they will contribute positively in employment generation, connectivity, regional trade, economic integration as well as energy security of the country. Therefore, the present government is putting special emphasis in implementing the planned projects at the earliest. With the completion of the mega-projects the government envisages the economy to grow at a faster pace, which in turn will foster long-term sustainable development.

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Centenary: Dhaka University during the British Era

Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

college students in the new province was 1,692 in 1905, which rose to 2,560 by 1912. The number of students in all educational institutions of the province rose to 9,36,653 in 1910-11 from only 6,99,051 in 1905. Revenue expenditure for the education sector almost doubled during the period. Besides, as many as 819 girls' schools were set up in the province during 1908-09, which raised the number of such schools to 4,550 by 1910-11.

There was not a single primary school other than private ones in East Bengal at the time of Bengal's partition. But amazingly, the foundation for primary education was firmly and robustly laid in the newly created province during 1905-12. The district and local boards set up innumerable primary schools in the rural areas at that time. The number of Maktabas (primary schools for mainly Muslim pupils) rose to 1,584 in 1911-12 from 1,299 in 1907-08. The number of students in Maktabas also rose to 54,703 from a mere 40,188. The government of East Bengal and Assam offered special scholarships to Muslim students and also raised the number of scholarships. Muslim teachers and sub-inspectors were almost zero in 1905, but their numbers rose to 14,656 and 114 respectively in 1912.

The partition of Bengal (Banga-bhanga) was annulled through declarations made by the British colonial government on 1 November and 12 December 1911. Many observers conjectured at the time that the rapid progress made in East Bengal in the field of education would have culminated naturally and swiftly into the

Genesis and Background: July 1, 2021 is the birth centenary of Dhaka University – once known as 'Oxford of the East'. But its birth did not happen all of a sudden. It is quite apparent from its founding and evolution that it emerged from the push and pull of innumerable historical forces and events during the British colonial era in India. The province of East Bengal and Assam came into being on 16 October 1905 comprising the areas having Muslim-majority populations. Dhaka was made its capital. In contrast to the Bangali Hindus, the partition of Bengal was popular among a majority of the local Muslims not only because of communal or political reasons, but also due to economic and educational grounds. Some statistics may be cited here for clarifying this point. Foreign trade through the Chittagong Port rose four-times in 1905-06 in a matter of five years compared to the figures for 1901-02. The number of

establishment of a university in Dhaka. Following the annulment of 'Banga-bhanga', the British Viceroy Lord Hardinge came on a visit to East Bengal and Assam in the month of January 1912. On 31 January, he announced before a delegation comprising Nawab Salimullah, Nawab Syed Nawab Ali Choudhury, A K Fazlul Huq and a few others in Dhaka that the government was very pleased at the progress made in the education sector of East Bengal. He therefore would recommend the appointment of a special officer for the establishment of a university in Dhaka, as well as development of overall education system in the area. A formal announcement on the creation of Dhaka University was then made by the government on 2 February 1912.

Opposition, Bickering and Delays: But surprisingly, after the conclusion of the Viceroy's Dhaka trip and return to Kolkata, a delegation led by Dr Rash Bihari Ghosh met Lord Hardinge on 16 February 1912 and submitted a memorandum opposing the establishment of Dhaka University. The Viceroy told the delegation that even if a university was set up in Dhaka, it would not be a Muslim university. Rather, it would be a general university open for all. Therefore, it can be said that just as setting up a university in Dhaka was inevitable even when 'Banga-bhanga' was not annulled, establishment of such a university was indispensable even after that annulment. It can also be safely claimed that Dhaka University might not have been founded if 'Banga-bhanga' had not occurred.

Nathan Commission: The Viceroy sent a letter to the Bengal government on 4 April 1912 to prepare a detailed plan for the establishment of Dhaka University. The 'Nathan Commission' was then constituted on 27 May 1912 by the colonial government, headed by Barrister Sir Robert Nathaniel, to formulate a plan for the setting up of a university in Dhaka. The other members of the 'Nathan Commission' were GW Kuchlu, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal; Rash Bihari Ghosh, Advocate of the Calcutta High Court; Syed Nawab Ali Choudhury;



Dhaka University Committee (1912)



Nawab Salimullah



Syed Nawab Ali Choudhury

Nawab Sirajul Islam; Ananda Chandra Ray, Pleader and Zamindar of Dhaka; Mohamed Ali of Aligarh; HR James, Principal of Presidency College, Calcutta; WAT Archibald, Principal of Dacca College; Satish Chandra Acharya, Principal, Sanskrit College, Calcutta; Lalit Mohan Chatterjee, Principal of Jagannath College, Dacca; CW

Peake, Professor of Presidency College, Calcutta; and Shamsul Ulama Abu Nasar Muhammad Waheed, Superintendent of Dacca Madrasa. DS Fraser, ICS, was appointed the Secretary of this Commission.

The colonial government provided the following outline regarding the terms of reference of the commission: The proposed university will be a teaching one having residential facilities; it would not have a federal or centralised structure; the colleges of Dhaka town and not those outside it will be under its jurisdiction. The Nathan Commission submitted its recommendations based on the suggestions made by its 25 sub-committees. An annual expenditure of Taka 5.31 million was envisaged for the construction of this university. The commission proposed to run Dhaka University as a state university with government employees looking after it. The commission was in favour of treating the colleges of Dhaka town as residential units of the proposed university. Besides, it was in favour of keeping provisions for post-graduate studies in sciences, engineering, law, medicine, arts and Islamic studies in the university.

The Nathan Commission proposed establishment of Dhaka University on 450 acres of abandoned land in the erstwhile capital territory of East Bengal and Assam province, which included structures like Dhaka College, Government House, Secretariat, and Government Press buildings. The report of the Commission was published in 1913 for eliciting public opinion, and then was approved by the Secretary of State in December 2013. But the university faced many obstacles prior to its founding. The colonial government recommended a depleted budget for Dhaka University in the backdrop of the First World War. In line with that, an amended plan was submitted with a budget of only Taka 1.12 million by incorporating Dhaka, Jagannath and Mohammedan Colleges, as well as a new arts college in the university. But even that was not implemented.

Sadler Commission: A majority of the population of Bengal became apprehensive due to the delays in the establishment of Dhaka University. In March 1917, Syed Nawab Ali Chowdhury called upon the government to immediately place the Dhaka University Bill for consideration of the Indian Legislative Council. In the same year, a commission formed by the then Viceroy and chancellor of Calcutta University Lord Chelmsford for investigating the problems of that university was also tasked to offer advice on the planned Dhaka University.



Dhaka University area in 1950s

Headed by the vice-chancellor of Leeds University Sir Michael Earnest Sadler, the commission acknowledged the need for setting up a university in Dhaka, but there were differences of opinion on whether it should be a residential one or an entity having grant-sanctioning authority. The colonial government was in favour of according Dhaka University the status of a residential university. On the other hand, the Muslim leaders of East Bengal supported the idea of bringing the colleges of East Bengal under the jurisdiction of Dhaka University, so that the Muslim students were spared from the alleged discriminations practiced against them by Calcutta University. The Hindus in general were against making Dhaka University an affiliating or grant-sanctioning university.

Ultimately, the Calcutta University Commission or 'Sadler Commission' recommended the setting up of a residential university in Dhaka. This commission praised the plans of the Nathan Commission. But it did not condone the proposal of that commission to make Dhaka University a state or public university. Instead, many educationists including the principal of Dhaka College Professor F C Turner made strong recommendation to establish Dhaka University as an autonomous entity. An assistant professor of law at Dhaka College Dr Naresh Chandra Sengupta termed 'autonomy' as the main strength of any university. Professor of political science and economics at Dhaka College T T Williams demanded full independence of the university in financial matters as well. It can be gauged from these that the issue of autonomy was accorded much importance even during the colonial era.

In place of colleges, the Sadler Commission recommended that various residential halls of the proposed university should be considered as units; and it also proposed the establishment of Dhaka Hall and Jagannath Hall. The commission suggested that the areas within the radius of five miles from the council house of Dhaka University should be considered as the university campus.

Approval in Legislative Council: The Dhaka University Act was placed at the Indian Legislative Council on 11 September 1919. The government then sent the bill to the Calcutta University authorities for examination. The university formed a 9-member committee for examining the bill. The lone Muslim member of this

committee Khan Bahadur Ahsanullah expressed his strong opinion in favour of passing the bill. Then despite opposition from some senate members of Calcutta University, the senate gave its consent to the bill after amending some sections and sub-sections during deliberations held on 17-20 December 1919. Then on 12 February 1920, the bill was sent to the select committee of the legislature, and was finally passed by the Indian Legislative Council on 18 March 1920 with some changes to 13 recommendations made by the Calcutta University Commission. The Governor General assented to the law on 23 March 1920. Dhaka University finally started its journey formally on 1 July 1921 after a lapse of another year.

Overall, the delay in the materialisation of Dhaka University had multiple causes. These included the First World War, administrative red tape of the colonial government, as well as the opposition of the Calcutta University authorities regarding the setting up of a second university in undivided Bengal. Apart from Dr Rash Bihari Ghosh, a powerful opponent to the establishment of Dhaka University was Sir Ashutosh Mukhopadhyay. The former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Dr Ramesh Chandra Majumdar had written in his essay 'Dhaka's Memory' that Lord Hardinge once asked Sir Ashutosh, in exchange for what would he give up his opposition to Dhaka University? Sir Ashutosh eventually stopped opposing Dhaka University after obtaining governmental sanctions for four new professorial posts at Calcutta University.

Founding of DU and Teething Difficulties: The Academic Registrar of London University Sir Philip Joseph Hartog was appointed the first vice-chancellor of Dhaka University for a 5-year term from 1 December 1920. He joined his new post on 10 December 1920. The first Treasurer (Honorary) of Dhaka University was J H Lyndsay ICS (from 1 July 1921 to 20 February 1922). The first Registrar was Khan Bahadur Nazir Uddin Ahmad (from 10 April 1921 to 30 June 1944), and the first Proctor was Fida Ali Khan (1925-30). The first secretary of the university teachers' association was Prof. S D Ayar. Professor W A Jenkins was the first president of Dhaka University Students' Union (1924-25), while Jogendranath Sengupta was the first secretary. The first convocation of Dhaka University was



Curzon Hall: Science Faculty

held on 22 February 1923. The monogram of the university carried the slogan 'Truth shall prevail' at its inception, which was continued up to 1952.

A major part of the initial manpower and infrastructure of Dhaka University came from the teachers and buildings (at present Curzon Hall) of Dhaka College. The institution started its



Arts Building

academic journey with 3 faculties (arts, science and law), 12 departments, 60 teachers, 847 students and 3 residential halls. There were 8 departments in the arts faculty, viz. Sanskrit and Bangla, English, Education, History, Arabic and Islamic Studies, Farsi and Urdu, Philosophy, and Political Economy. The three subjects under the science faculty were Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics. And the lone department under the law faculty was Law. Among the 877 pupils under the three faculties, 386 were attached to the Dhaka (presently Shahidullah) Hall, 313 to Jagannath Hall, and 178 to Salimullah Muslim Hall as resident cum non-resident students.

The first three decades of Dhaka University during the British era are encapsulated below in the following paragraphs based on recollections of various luminaries associated with the university.

Initial Years: The Dhaka University faced many governmental obstacles after its formal founding on July 1, 1921. The fourth vice-chancellor of the university (1937-42) Dr Ramesh Chandra Majumdar had mentioned in his memoir that the first education minister of Bengal Prabhash Chandra Mitra was hostile towards the new university at the very outset. After becoming minister, he ordered reduction of salaries for Dhaka University teachers, and the university was powerless to do anything about that as it could not spend any public money without the sanction of Bengal government and the legislative council. Dhaka University had a reserve fund of Taka five million during its inception. But the Bengal government deducted that sum against the land and buildings awarded to the university, and allocated only Taka 500 thousand per year for running it. As a result, the salary of teachers had to be cut.

In the souvenir titled 'That Dhaka University of Ours' published on the occasion of reunion of former students of Dhaka University at Kolkata in 1974, Dr Ramesh Chandra Majumdar reminisced about the university and recalled, 'The main reason for the initial complexities was that the Hindus were against Dhaka University, and the education minister lacked sympathy for East Bengal as he

hailed from West Bengal. The educated Hindu class of Dhaka also did not look at Dhaka University in a positive light. All the Hindu professors and readers who served there came from outside Dhaka; so the local Hindus could never tolerate their fat salaries or residences in such big houses. A professor once asked an eminent Hindu leader of Dhaka, 'If we did not occupy these houses, would the government have allowed you to stay here? Why are you so jealous of us then?' The Muslims did not oppose the Hindu teachers. But they sought appointment of as many Muslims as possible to the posts of lecturers – even when there were better-qualified Hindus. But they generally supported the appointment of professors and readers based on qualifications. Many teachers of the university were ex-officio members of the University Court, and many Hindus were also its members; it would not have been an exaggeration if they were termed as the opposition. Dr Naresh Chandra Sengupta was the spokesperson of teaching members, and I had to fight with the opposition Hindu group at court meetings. For this reason, the Hindu civic leaders of Dhaka were not much pleased with me. But as the Muslims supported the Hindu teachers during court meetings, it was not possible to pass any resolution that harmed the teachers or anything related to university education”.

Communal Harmony and Bonhomie: In his essay titled 'That Dhaka University of Ours', the former teacher of English department at Dhaka University Professor Profulla Kumar Guha recalled that Dhaka University became famous as an ideal institution among the Indian universities within 15-16 years of its establishment. But it had to face serious adverse circumstances at the very outset. The learned society of Dhaka considered this new university as an impediment to higher education in Dhaka. There were choruses: 'They have killed a good college (Dhaka College) to make a bad university'. On the other hand, the government had a profound political motive behind setting up this university. It wanted to turn this educational institution into a 'communal cockpit' by arranging special facilities for the Muslim teachers and students. But the enmity and doubts of Dhaka's citizenry and the ill-motive of the government were soon dissipated through the magic touch of the university's teachers and administrators. It was fortunate for Dhaka University that the people who ran the university at the initial stage had that pure academic spirit and mind-set that was most liberal and free from communal parochialism. Under their direction, the new university became a sacred temple of learning. In their eyes, there was no difference between Hindu and Muslim students. They imparted lessons neutrally by showing equal sympathy and love for all students'.

'Because of this noble resolve displayed by them, a bond of cordiality and friendship also grew among the Hindu and Muslim students. Teachers like A F Rahman, Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Gyan Ghosh, Muhammad Shahidullah, Naresh Sengupta et al made this impossible task possible through the impact of their liberalism and personality. The special opportunities and facilities offered to the Muslim teachers and students did not evoke any jealousy among the Hindu teachers and pupils. The Hindu teachers discharged their responsibilities with a missionary spirit. They and Hindu administrators took up the task of extending help to the creation of a middle class among the Muslims by tutoring the Muslim students, as higher education was scarce among that community. The Muslim students who were illumined through education at Dhaka University laid the foundation of a Muslim middle class. Previously, there was no middle class in the

Muslim society. Therefore, creation of this middle class was a historically significant contribution of Dhaka University”.

Teachers belonging to both Muslim and Hindu communities deserve credit for the non-communal environment that prevailed from the very beginning at Dhaka University. For example, Profulla Kumar Guha wrote about the first provost of Muslim Hall and the first Muslim Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University, 'But Mr Hartog's most important appointment was the posting of A F Rahman as the first provost of Salimullah Muslim Hall. Due to the influence of Mr A F Rahman, who had a great liberal personality devoid of communal narrow-mindedness, no anti-Hindu thinking could enter the minds of the Muslim students'.

In his essay titled 'In the memory-lamp of life', the former provost of Jagannath Hall and former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Dr Ramesh Chandra Majumdar wrote about the conduct of Muslim members at the Dhaka University Court and Executive Council (present-day senate and syndicate). He recalled, 'Although many unpleasant incidents occasionally took place with regard to the appointment of teachers and students, the Muslim members did not hinder any other matter of the university. The subject of examination may be cited as an example. They never tried to show any partiality for Muslim students in this regard. The renowned political leader Nazimuddin, belonging to the Nawab family of Dhaka, had a brother named Shahabuddin. The latter's son appeared in the Honours examination of history, but did not get Honours for shortage of a few marks. At that time, many Hindu and Muslim teachers and even some outsiders claimed that such a happening would have been impossible at Calcutta University. In reality, Dhaka University had an excellent reputation with regard to examinations. And I had conviction that the principles and standards that were set at Dhaka University in this area were rare in many other universities of our land. That anyone had lobbied for succeeding in examination or increasing the marks was unheard of in Dhaka University'.

A former student of the English department of Dhaka University as well as ex-teacher of English at Dhaka, Calcutta and Aligarh Muslim University and eminent litterateur Dr Amalendu Basu had written in his essay 'Unforgettable' about the communal environment of Dhaka University before the partition of India. He wrote, 'Just as the press termed Dhaka University as 'Oxford of the East', similarly it was called the 'Mecca of the East', that is, it was mainly the educational institution of the Muslims. But for a long time, the proportion of Hindu



Teacher-Student Centre

teachers and students at Dhaka University was more than that of the Muslims. During my student and teaching life between 1926 and 1948, I never saw any shrinkage of the non-Muslims in sports, education and social life of the university. But there were special financial aids for encouraging the Muslim students to study, similar to the ones for scheduled caste Hindus. During my student life, I recall that apart from the teachers of Urdu, Arabic and Farsi departments, there were only three Muslim teachers at the university. They were A F Rahman (later Sir Ahmad Fazlur Rahman and third vice-chancellor of Dhaka University) of history, Mahmud Hasan of English department, and Muhammad Shahidullah of Bengali and Sanskrit department. They were ranked very high in the areas of education and knowledge not because of their Muslim identity, but because of their extraordinary merit.... My life was very intimately intertwined with Dhaka University during my 22 years as a student cum teacher there. During that long period, I never saw anyone being given extra honour because of his religion in examinations, sporting arena, or debate competitions. In the contests for excellence, there were no Hindus or Muslims, but only the outstanding youths'.

The non-communal atmosphere conducive for free thinking that existed at Dhaka University during the decades of 1920s and 1930s was evident from the preface of the Rabindra Award-winning (1373 BS) book 'RajasthanKahini' (1372 BS) written by the former professor of Islamic History at Dhaka University and renowned historian Kalika Ranjan Kanungo. He wrote, 'I have taught my Hindu-Muslim students about the religion of Islam and the history of Khelafat for almost 21 years (1927-48), and received kudos for showing reverence for the HazratRasulullah during the Milad Sharif prayers'.

Cultural and Literary Setting: There were healthy cultural activities at Dhaka University since its very birth because of the non-communal environment that existed from its inception. A glimpse of the cultural environment of Dhaka University can be obtained from the visit of Poet Rabindranath Tagore to Dhaka at the invitation of the university in February 1926 and his speeches on 'The Meaning of the Art' on 10 February, and 'The big brand the complex' on 13 February delivered at Curzon Hall. Rabindranath expressed his original views on fine arts during the episode at Dhaka University. He was scheduled to be accorded receptions by the three residential halls – Salimullah Muslim Hall, Jagannath Hall, and the Dhaka Hall. But he could attend only the Muslim Hall reception because of his illness. Dhaka University also honoured the novelist Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay. None of the universities had awarded any honorary degree to him as he did not have any formal academic recognition. But Dhaka University honoured him by awarding the honorary D Lit degree in August 1936. These events demonstrated the non-communal atmosphere that prevailed at Dhaka University during the 1920s and 1930s, although Dhaka city witnessed many communal riots between 1926 and 1946.

Beyond formal education and research, the most important development at Dhaka University during the 1920s was the practice of free-thinking and liberal views by the young Muslim teachers and students of the university. In fact, the free-thinking movement of the Bangali Muslim community was launched from the Dhaka University campus. The 'Muslim Sahitya Samaj' (Muslim Literary Society) was founded at a meeting chaired by Professor Muhammad Shahidullah at the Salimullah Muslim Hall Union room on 19 January 1925. This society arranged ten annual conferences at Dhaka University from 1927 to 1936. The tenth

conference was presided over by Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay. The activities of Dhaka-based progressive writers and artists led by the 'Pragati Lekhak O Shilpi Sangha' (Progressive Writers and Artists' Association) – founded in Dhaka in 1939 – also flourished up to 1949 centring on the Dhaka University campus.

Decade of 1940s: During the 1940s, a majority of the Muslim teachers and students of Dhaka University were supporters or activists of the Pakistan Movement. Due to the influence of this movement, the East Pakistan Renaissance Society was formed in Kolkata in 1942. The convener of this organization was the journalist Mujibur Rahman Khan, and his associates included the journalists cum litterateur Abul Kamal Shamsuddin and Abul Mansur Ahmad. The ideals of the Renaissance Society were the inauguration of national renaissance, literary fruition of Pakistanism, holding scientific and intellectual discussions on Pakistan, and resisting the anti-Pakistan viewpoint in literature.

The 'East Pakistan Sahitya Sangsad' (East Pakistan Literary Council) was founded centring on DU campus in 1942, as a cultural organization rooted in the two-nation theory of Muhammad Ali Jinnah that supported the Pakistan movement. The chairman of the council was Syed Sajjad Hossain, while its secretary was Syed Ali Ahsan. The first annual conference of this council was held at Salimullah Muslim Hall in 1943, where the chairman of Kolkata-based Renaissance Society Abul Kalam Shamsuddin was the chief guest. The council accorded reception to the poet Kaikobad in 1944. Its mouthpiece was the fortnightly 'Pakistan'. Edited by the Dhaka University student Nazir Ahmad, its objective was to spread the ideology of Pakistan Movement as well as Islamic ideals.

As the situation started to heat up, the Muslim students of Dhaka University staged demonstrations on 2 February 1943 in protest against the singing of 'Bande-Mataram' song of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay that was used at the start of DU programs in line with the tradition of Calcutta University. As a result, a communal riot broke out between the Hindu and Muslim students. On the third day of this riot, the founder of the fortnightly 'Pakistan' and activist of Sahitya Sangsad Nazir Ahmad was killed when he was stabbed with knife. In this way, Dhaka University's two decade-long non-communal, free-thinking, modern and progressive heritage started to get tarnished and stigmatised.

Moreover, Dhaka University descended into a cycle of abnormal scenarios during the 1940s due to the Second World War, the Bengal Famine, and the Partition of Indian Subcontinent. During the war, the main building of Dhaka University (at present medical college) was acquired by the colonial government for setting up a military hospital. Besides, the military authorities also took over the Salimullah Muslim Hall and Jagannath Hall buildings, and military barracks were set up in the university area. As a result, the classes and residential facilities of the university were severely curtailed. At this time, a number of professors of the university also retired. And then, many non-Muslim teachers and students left the country following the partition of India.

New Journey: Before the university could return to normalcy, the capital of the East Bengal government was set up in Dhaka. The arts building of the university was turned into a medical college, barrack-houses were built in Palashi and Nilkhet areas for the government employees, and a number of buildings of the university like the Bardhaman House, the Chameri House, and the present-day

building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were taken over by the government. In that backdrop, many migrant Muslim students as well as some Muslim teachers from Kolkata joined the Dhaka University.

Dhaka University started its new journey after the partition of India in August 1947 by accommodating the arts, commerce and law faculties in a small part of the medical college building, and the science departments in the Curzon Hall complex. At that time, the three residential halls for males were the Salimullah Muslim Hall, FazlulHuq Muslim Hall, and the combined Dhaka cum Jagannath Hall in the shape of Dhaka Hall. There was also a hostel for the female students. The auditorium and attached parts of the Jagannath Hall were acquired by the government for the East Pakistan Legislative Assembly. Another part was used by administrative offices of the university.

Present Status: This oldest university of Bangladesh has 13 faculties at the present juncture. These are: arts, science, law, social science, biological science, pharmacy, engineering and technology, earth and environmental sciences, fine arts, medicine, post-graduate medical science, and education faculty. Apart from 83 departments, there are 12 institutes and 56 research centres under the university. There are 20 residential halls for the students. Besides, there are separate hostels for the fine arts faculty, the Institute of Business Administration, as well as for foreign students. A distinctive feature of Dhaka University in the beginning was its non-affiliating, residential character like that of the Oxford University. However, since 1947, the University has been awarded an affiliating mandate in place of an exclusively residential character.

The main institutes of the university are: Institute for Education and Research, Statistical Research and Training Institute, Institute of Business Administration, Institute of Nutrition and Food Sciences, Institute of Social Welfare and Research, Institute of Modern Languages, Institute of Information Technology, and Institute of Leather Engineering and Technology. There are some monuments and sculptures on the university compound, which include 'Aparajeyo Bangla' (Invincible Bangla), and 'Shonarjita Swadhinata' (Self-earned Independence). Currently, there are around 40 thousand pupils and about 2 thousand teachers at Dhaka University.

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Juvenile Delinquency: Efforts to put derailed teenagers on track

Md. Saifullah

found forming gangs and getting involved in serious offences like murder, rape, kidnap, robbery, having drugs, trading narcotics, etc.

Why do juveniles indulge in such anti-social activities? Why is juvenility so destructive? The reasons are multifarious. Human beings at this stage go through a series of physical, biological and psychological changes. Various growth hormones secreted from the body glands always keep them unstable. They are moved by emotion, not by reason as found in case of the grown up people. There are also some social pressures which sometimes become unbearable. Excessive pressure for study, poverty, ruthless punishment by parents or guardians, or even boundless freedom in the affluent society may lead them to such infamous juvenility. They always prefer to fly in the world of dream keeping them away from the harsh reality. Open sky culture, globalization and widespread social media also contribute to build up this dreamy world. The callousness of the parents or guardians towards their wards or even excessive care by them also may be a cause of such derailment. The increasing trend of social unrest, fragmentation of the joint or extended families, family conflicts, broken families due to separation of parents, mad business of parents chasing after riches are also fuelling the problem.

However, there is a basic difference between juvenile delinquency and regular crime. Crimes and criminal activities are deliberately perpetuated by the adult people to fulfill their own interest or ill-motives. On the other hand, juveniles usually get involved in tiny crimes out of their emotion or influenced by surrounding environment specially peer group without thinking consequences of their deeds. And that is why, young offenders enjoy some sort of impunity in the trial process. Trial courts, penal code under which verdicts are pronounced and

Juvenile delinquency means crimes committed by young people. 'Juvenile' means youngsters of age group from 13 to 18 years. It has a negative expression that means the turmoil nature of this stage of life with the onset of puberty which is a transition from childhood to adolescence. The positive word used for juvenile is 'youth' while the word 'adolescent' for the same is used from neutral point of view.

'Delinquency' refers to minor crimes perpetuated by juveniles. These crimes include truancy or skipping school, copying or cheating in examinations, leaving home without notice, drinking (alcohol), smoking (cigarette), ragging, eve-teasing, eloping, watching pornography, travelling by bus or train without tickets, pick-pocketing, pilferage, etc. Juveniles under some conditions become so arrogant that they do not care social or religious values, norms, rules and regulations of the state. They are even

even execution of sentences are softer for the tender lawbreakers in compare to the normal criminals. And from that angle, under-aged criminals are sent to the amendment centres, not to the regular jails with a hope of their return to the normal life in course of time.

The juvenile delinquents are being dealt as per the Children Act 2013 which considers the young offenders (age 13 to 18 years) as children following the call of the United Nations Children Rights Charter. Imbued with the spirit of the law, each and every police station of the country has installed a separate desk on the children affairs to dispose the related cases. A police official holding the responsibility of the desk in the police station monitors such lawsuits maintaining a constant coordination with the representatives of the Department of Social Services and the courts concerned. More importantly, the Children Act 2013, envisages the provision of setting up the Children Courts to try the related offences considering their vulnerabilities. As those courts are yet to be established, the Women and Children Repression Combating Tribunals (Nari o Shishu Nirjatan Domon Tribunal) are dealing the cases. At present, a total of 101 such tribunals spreading all over the country regularly hear the cases filed against juveniles. If such tribunal is not in operation in any district, the court of the District and Session Judge itself performs the responsibility.

The trial process of the young perpetrators as delineated in the Children Act 2013 is very mild. They should not be handcuffed or roped when brought under arrest. The decoration of the courts would be informal with the policemen, lawyers and court officials wearing informal dresses. The informal outlook of the courts may help to keep the environment congenial for the minor accused. Rude language or behaviour should be avoided while recording deposition. Moreover, their parents or guardians would be allowed to accompany them during the hearing of the case in the court. Any news-story or photograph of the children concerned with the trial process would never be ventilated through print, electronic or social media, which may expose their identity before public and cause humiliation.

The trial process of the cases filed against such alleged tender aged convicts is very liberal. The bail granting process for them is also soft. If bail is not allowed in any case considering its severity, the young arrestees would be detained in the Children Development Centres run by the Department of Social Services. If any



Shishu Unnyan Kendro (Children Development Centre), Gazipur

such inmate is to be sent to jail in view of the harsh nature of any case, he or she must be kept separately, never with the adult convicts. The law permits the highest 10 years of imprisonment for committing the most gruesome offence. There is no provision of awarding capital punishments like death sentence or life

imprisonment under the law. The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) approach is being given priority to dispose the cases at any stage of the trial process in the court.

The government has developed a huge institutional set up for the proper grooming of the young generation. Rules, regulations and policies on the issue have also been updated. The government has to take the responsibilities



Kendriyo Madokashokti Niramoy Kendro, (Central Drug Addiction Treatment Centre), Dhaka

of the distressed kids in absence of their parents or guardians. A good number of establishments with various identities are being run by the government across the country to accommodate and look after these shelterless children. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs is patronizing eight thousand clubs working on the issues relating to the children at the union level. All the benevolent activities by the government include the amendment of the derailed juveniles and bringing them back to the right track. Over 1100 delinquents involved with the legal process or received from courts are now under shelter at four dedicated development centres in Gazipur (Tongi, Konabari and Joydevpur) and Jashore (Pulerhat). Among them, the Joydevpur Centre under the Department of Women Affairs and the Konabari Centre under the Department of Social Services with the total capacity of accommodating 250 inmates are purely for female inmates. The Children Welfare Boards at the national, district and upazila level headed by Social Welfare Minister, Deputy Commissioners and Upazila Nirbahi Officers, respectively regularly monitor all the children development programmes.

Juvenile delinquency is a universal problem. This problem exists more or less in every country and in every society. This menace, in everywhere, is managed through undertaking various programmes. Game and sports, cultural activities, regular counseling, upholding social and religious spirit, and reinforcing family bonding can go a long way to keep our future generation safe and sound even in a hostile environment. Co-curricular and recreational activities run by the educational institutions are also important in this regard. And above all, the most potential factors are the parents and guardians. They should keep a constant vigilance on the movements of their wards at this stage. They should be tough, rational as well as soft giving due attention to feelings of the Juveniles. Their devoted love and care can turn a delinquent to a worthy citizen of tomorrow.

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Folk Scientist Poet : Dr Ashraf Siddiqui

M. Mizanur Rahman



[1927 – 2020]

Folk-Songs, folk-tales, Folk-ballads, folk-proverbs and folklores are perennial works of our rural poets in rural Bengal from time immemorial. Naturally the people of Bengal are apt to compose poems, humours goaded into nursery rhymes of riddle and songs and punthis (folk-tales) from the very early unknown ages which were later discovered and collected by the educated researchers of home and abroad from our unlettered village-folks, village singers and poets by different means. Nowadays we are fortunate to have them in book-forms.

Dr. Ashraf Siddiqui was a versatile genius. He is a well-known poet and research scholar on folk-literature. He was born in a respectable family at Nagbari village of the Tangail district on 1st March 1927. His father late Dr. Abdus Sattar was the member and Chairman, Local Union Board, Rin Salisi (Debt-Compromise) Board and Jute Board respectably. His mother late Samirannessa was a born-poet. Dr Siddiqui was the third one among two brothers and three sisters.

After his general education in school and college he went to Santiniketon at Bolepur (West Bengal) for further studies in Biswabharati University. Here he met the most aged Nobel Laureate Poet Rabindranath Tagore and got his blessings and great inspiration towards prosecution of studies ahead.

Uttarayan
Santiniketan, Bengal

Kolyaniyo
Sahalom (nick name of Ashraf Siddiqui)
For the New Year have my & blessings.

With good wishes
Rabindranath Tagore
30.4.40

Ashraf Siddiqui started studying Honor's course in Bengali with special English here. But he could not prosecute studies due to the partition of Bengal and as such

he came back and read in Tangail Korotia College in accordance with Calcutta University Syllabus. Here in the examination he stood first in special Bengali Honor's course with the highest marks. While he was studying MA in the Dhaka University, his anthology of poems Taleb Master was published and soon it was widely acclaimed by the readers' intelligentsia. After completion of MA he joined Kumudini College as a lecturer for sometimes. On 15th July in 1950 he was appointed as a lecturer in the government Rajshahi College. However he came in contact with Dr Muhammad Shahidullah and joined Dhaka University in 1953 on deputation as a Researcher. Especially he was then attracted to research on Folklore. He started doing research works in East and West Bengal on collecting information about 19th Century Muslim Litterateurs under the supervision of Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah. While Ashraf Siddiqui was working in the Dhaka University he got a Fulbright Grant from the United States Foundation on Orientation Course at Kansas in 1958.

In the same year he got the opportunity to read MA on Folklore in the Indiana University, USA. He scored the highest marks in the MA examination therein and came back home to collect folk-literature in 1960. On the same subject he worked in the Bangla Unnayan Board Folklore Culture department and in 1963 he left for the Indiana University for his research works on folklore. His research dissertation was 'Bengali Folk-lore and Studies during the British period'. He obtained PhD degree there and came back home. Thereafter he worked at Dhaka College, Daulatpur B.L. College and Mymensingh Anandamohan College as the head of the department of Bengali for sometimes.

He afterwards became the Assistant Chief of the Government Gazette. In 1968, 23rd September, he was appointed as the Director of the Bangla Unnayan Board. During this period a lot of development took place with a huge collection of folk-literature and folk materials in Bangla Unnayan Board and as a result higher standard of Bengali books on folklore and works of the ancient litterateurs were published for the students of the folklore department. In spite of various unfavorable circumstances Ashraf Siddiqui tried his best to marketing Munier Optima Type Writer in Bengali language (the first of its kind) in 1971. In his firm initiative Bangla Unnayan Board was renamed as Bangla Academy on 17th December 1971. In 1976 he became the Director General of Bangla Academy in addition to the post of the Chief Gazetteer. In this period decisions for collection of Bengali folk-literature, establishment of the Museum and general election in Bangla Academy were adopted.

In 1982, Dr Siddiqui became the Principal of the Chittagong University College. Again within the same month he was transferred to Jagannath University College as its Principal. From 1982 to 1985 he worked hard for the various development works of this University College and at last he got his retirement from the government service and engaged himself in literary works.

His published books are Taleb Master (1950), 2nd. Edition (1963), Bish Kenya (1955), Satbhai Champa (1955, 1963), Uttar Akasher Tara (1958), Tirish Bosonter phool (All collected poems in two volumes 1975), Kuchboron Kenya (1976), Briksho dao Chhaya dao (1984), Jhor Tufane (1985), first volume, third edition 1989, 2nd Vol 1989, Darao Pothikbor (1990).

Personally I had many occasions to accompany him in some historic places around Kushtia district by the grace of the local administration and found him inquisitive



Writer (left) with Dr. Ashraf Siddique

about folk-literature of those places he travelled and he took note of them. However he is a born-poet and he will not forget the person he accompanied sojourn who must remain alive if one of the lines of his poem.

So one who met him once could hardly forget him as I find in him such rare instant for he could easily make friend anybody anywhere at any time. I wonder of his splendid quality of character that never encounters enemy among fellow travelers. That is why I recalled him as the trawler-poet in an article describing his life and literary works in the Daily Ittefaq, Dhaka on his 71st birth anniversary. Many wayward people have crowded in his poem as well as novel explicitly. It has been possible on his part to depict characters of those common folk in his works with simple Bengali colloquial. He had also the knack of narrating them flawlessly while delivering before his audience. I always

found him welcoming others with sincere adoration as if all of them are well-known to him earlier. He became popular overnight. His art of stage performance appears to be perfect. The theme is well advanced and as such none is dissatisfied. And here is his success. He got a deep sense of perception that I find in his poem 'Mujibnagare ekdin' (One day in Mujibnagar)

With the blessings of the administrator Idris Miah
our carriage moved very fast,
We are moving towards Mujibnagar from Kushtia
(Local name is Baidyanathtola,
Someone Kedarnath is supposed to have been legendary)
Accompanying poet Mizan, Akhtaruzzaman, Bithi
and Diju, Liju, and Ilias Hossain, and Dr. Tripti Brahma
from India
who are included in this festivity.
The carriage is driven fast turning the pages of history;
Yes, at last we reached that historic mango groves ...

(Jhor Tufane, 2nd Volume, translated by M Mizanur Rahman)

At that time those writers and poets were in tour accompanying him are now included in the above noted poem. Being one of the officials of Kushtia administration I could arrange such tour and Magistrate Eyas Hossain was the Protocol Officer sent by AD.C (admin) Idris Mia.

How can one forget the poet who deliberately includes his/her name in his poem? Thus it appears he filmed those liv-ing people of his entourage in the above noted

poem! Dr Siddiqui acknowledged the debt he owed wherever it might be.

In one of his poems that depicts a panoramic picture of his village by the side of a stream Bongshai river adorned with snow-white Kash flowers emerging Bhatialy tune-

“Uthal patal Bongshai nodir tire
ei geramer namti to Ruppur
Kashphooleri mukut mathay die
tulto a gram bhatialir soor!
ei geramer ekti je sei meye
champa phooler moton chhilo rup.
Keya patay nouko gore gore
vasiye diye dekhtojer nischup ...
t-On the bank of topsy-turvy wavy Bongshai
a girl of this village Ruppur by name,
wearing a crown of Kash flowers
raised the Bhatiali tune in this village!
She is a girl of this village
that adores beauty of Champa flower.
She made the boat of Keya leaf
floating on that river and observed silently.

(Translation: M. Mizanur Rahman)

However a simile of Tagore ‘Keya patay nouka gore bhasiye debo jole’ comes abruptly here. It happens that Siddiqui is apt to catch here Tagore at Santimiketon in his mental horizon. But the picturesque of Bongshai and the village girl appears to be unique no doubt.

On another occasion we made a break journey at Amla Sadarpur of Kushtia that he put in his poem, Amla Sadarpur ekin.

Kushtia Amla Sadarpur
kete gelo ekta dhiledhala din
Amla College tlieke pouchhlam
Paeri Sundorir matite
Nei sei rajparasad, achlie kebol
kichhu bhanga eit, kichhu smriti... (Jhor Tufan, 2nd Vol.)

He stranded a few minutes here at Amla College and talked with the Principal all about students, and its way to education etc.

We enjoyed the tour accompanying Dr Ashraf Siddiqui-a famous litteraturer of national and international recognition. As a poet and folk scientist he has served the nation profusely. That’s all about him is nothing but praiseworthy. He is living with us with his glorious image that can never be faded.

He breathed his last on 19th March 2020 since he was the president of Nazrul Academy, Dhaka while I was the editor of Nazrul Academy potrika editing, publishing and wording on its international affairs.

The author of this article is a poet, essayist, translator and columnist



Porcupines: Nocturnal Mammals of Bangladesh

Professor Dr. A N M Aminoor Rahman

night. The first mammals shunned daylight to avoid dinosaurs and dinosaurs' decline made the day-time safer for those nocturnal mammals.

Mammals are the most intelligent among all the organisms living in the universe. Out of 5,416 species of mammals found worldwide 472 species are recorded from South Asia of which 400 are recorded in India and 138 species occur in Bangladesh. Among the mammals of Bangladesh, a significant number of species are nocturnal. The largest mammalian group of nocturnal mammals are bats. Other night wanderers are wild cats, civets, binturong, pangolins and porcupines.

The nocturnality is an animal behaviour characterised by being active during the night and sleeping during the day. Nocturnal creatures generally have highly developed senses of hearing, smell, and specially adapted eyesight. The nocturnal rhythms, once established, may be exhibited even when they are kept under constant conditions of illumination, humidity and temperature. The advantages for the nocturnal habit includes avoidance of day-time enemies, easier obtaining of preferred food, avoidance of excessive evaporation from the body, and easier communication between themselves.

Nocturnal animals have evolved physical traits that let them roam in the dark more effectively. The main changes in the animal concern vision and luminescence. The eyes get bigger and the pupils become wider. A reflective layer called tapetum sits behind the retina; any light that passes through the eye reflects back onto the tapetum. The retinas contain rod cells, which pack their DNA in a way that turns

As darkness falls in parts of the world, most of the humans preparing to go to sleep, but what happens to the mammalian kingdom? The disappearance of the sun means for most of the mammalian species that their day is about to begin. Although, most of them don't share our ostensible predilection for daylight; only 20% are diurnal (active at day-time and sleeps at night) like us. Surprisingly, nearly 70% of our mammalian relatives are nocturnal. These animals hunt, eat, and wander under the comfort of darkness in the night and sleep during the day-time. The rest are crepuscular (active at dawn and dusk) or cathemeral (active during both day and night). From trusted sources it is known that early mammals were creatures of the

each cell's nucleus into a light-collecting lens. This is different from how the rods of non-nocturnal animals or humans work. Scientists have long assumed that nocturnality was one of the key traits that allowed mammals to succeed after the mass extinction that killed off the dinosaurs and ushered in the Cenozoic—the “age of mammals.”

The porcupines, one of the elusive nocturnal mammal groups, are the members of the profoundly diverse order Rodentia. They have rigid and/or semi-rigid and sharp spines or quills on their coats which are modified hairs composed of keratin that protect them against predation. The porcupines covers two families of animals— the Old World porcupines (family Hystricidae), and the New World porcupines (family Erethizontidae). However, despite the quills, the two families are distinct from one another and not closely related to each other. The largest species of porcupine is the third-largest living rodent in the world after the Capybara and the Beaver. The Old World porcupines live in Southern Europe, Southern and Western Asia and most parts of Africa. In taxonomic term this group form the family Hystricidae. On the other hand, the New World porcupines are indigenous to North America and Northern South America. They live in wooded areas and can climb trees, where some species spend their entire lives. They are less strictly nocturnal than Old World porcupines and generally smaller. In taxonomic terms, they form the family Erethizontidae. Porcupines are classified within the following taxonomic hierarchy:

Animals > Chordates > Vertebrates > Tetrapods > Mammals > Rodents > Porcupines

Unlike their New World counterparts, the Old World porcupines (Hystricidae) are large, heavy, slow-moving mammals that rely on their imposing quills for defense rather than on speed or agility. The largest porcupine may weigh more than 25 kilogram (kg) whereas others weigh only 1-2 kg. They have a massive and broad head with small ears and eyes. In some species, the tail is very short, but can reaches around half the head-body length in others. Their fore and hind legs are short and heavily built. The fore feet have 5 digits, but the thumb is reduced in size. The hind feet have five functional digits. The claws are short. Hystricids are plantigrade, i.e. they place the full sole of the foot on the ground when they walk. The family Hystricidae comprised of eleven (11) species in three genera. Of these, only two, namely Himalayan Crestless porcupine and Asiatic Brush-tailed porcupine, are found in the nature of Bangladesh. Although, most of the wildlife books published from Bangladesh including IUCN Red List of Bangladesh (2015) mistakenly represented another rather common species named Indian Crested porcupine, however, there is no authentic scientific evidence or recent sightings of this species in Bangladesh. If present long time ago, it is possible that it might resided in the Western part of Bangladesh, e.g. Chapainawabgonj. The two species that are presently found in Bangladesh briefly described below:

Himalayan Crestless Porcupine (*Hystrix brachyura*)

It is an uncommon and elusive mammals of Bangladesh which is also known as Crestless Himalayan porcupine, Crestless porcupine, Malayan porcupine or



Adult Himalayan Crestless porcupines

Chinese porcupine. Bangla name of this species is Shojaru, Hazar or Chhada. It is misidentified and wrongly described as Indian Crested porcupine (*Hystrix indica*) in most of the books published from this country. Actually, Himalayan Crestless porcupine is a smaller version of the Indian Crested porcupine with a shorter dorsal crest

and tail. It has three subspecies found in South and South-east Asia. In India, the species is only occur in Eastern and North-eastern India. Other than Bangladesh and India, it is also distributed to Nepal, China, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Himalayan Crestless porcupine is a large and stout-bodied rodent covered with quills or spines (modified hair) which are sharp and rigid with only one dark band. Quills vary in length, with the neck and shoulder quills being the longest. The tail is usually not visible and do not rattle the tail as much as the Indian one. The length of the head and body is 45-75 centimetre (cm), the tail is about 6-11 cm and weigh around 8 kg. The quills on their upper body parts are rough and black with white or yellow stripes. The young's soft quills become hard as it enter adulthood. Legs are short and stocky covered in brown hairs. The animal has four claws on the front and five on the hind legs. Both front and hind legs have smooth soles.

The species is widely distributed, mainly in and around the forested, bushy and grassy areas along with cultivation in the vicinity. It can be found in all forest types up to 1500 metre altitude from the sea level. This nocturnal, terrestrial and shy mammal rests in self-dug burrow or den during the day-time. The burrows have a network of trails that lead into



A juvenile Himalayan Crestless porcupine

surrounding habitat. It is usually seen in small family groups. Feeds on fallen fruits, barks, roots and tubers, but can also eat carrion, insects as well as large tropical seeds; sometimes found to chew bones. It can also swim, gnaw and digs extensive burrows under forest floor. In July 2019, I saw a pair of Himalayan Crestless porcupine getting out from their burrow,



A pair of Himalayan Crestless porcupine near their nest

beneath the observation tower at Kotka, the Sunderbans. But I failed to take any pictures due to the barricade made by one of the tour met. If in danger, it usually erects and rattles the quills and if the threat persist then will rush to backwards and throw quills into attacker. In the Sunderbans, it is known to throw quills when threatens by the Royal Bengal Tiger. The Bengal Tiger sometimes predate on Himalayan porcupine if no other food is available.

Little is known about the mating system and reproductive behaviour of Himalayan Crested porcupine. Females may give birth to two litters annually which consist of 2-3 offspring inside its den. The gestation period is about 110 days. Pups are born with soft quills that harden after a few hours. Although lifespan in the wild is not known, but in captivity one survived 21 years.



Asiatic Brush-tailed porcupine at Zoo Taiping & Night Safari, Perak, Malaysia

Asiatic Brush-tailed Porcupine (*Atherurus macrourus*)

This very rare, burrowing, nocturnal, and extremely elusive porcupine is considered as data deficient mammal of Bangladesh by IUCN. Previously, there was only one record in 2015 based on camera-trap image at Sangu Wildlife



An Asiatic Brush-tailed Porcupine at Zoo Taiping & Night Safari, Perak, Malaysia

Sanctuary, Bandarban. Recently the presence of this rarest rodents in Bangladesh, has been confirmed in Lawachara National Park, Komolgonj, Moulvibazar based on camera-trap study. Although, I never encountered this species in Bangladesh, but seen one in Taiping Night Safari, Perak, Malaysia in December 2014. The species is also known as

Brush-tailed porcupine. Bangla name is Lajuk Shojaru or Burushleji Shojaru. It is distributed across South and Southeast Asia including Bangladesh, India, China, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Asiatic Brush-tailed porcupine is rat-like and quite slender. Body length is 36-60 cm, tail is 10-26 cm and weigh 1-4 kg. Its small and slender body almost entirely covered with Quills, although these are soft on the under parts, head and legs. Longest quills located on the mid upper-side region that can grow up to 10 cm. Dorsal portion is black-brown to grey-brown, while ventral portion is dirty white. The species has short and stout legs with short and rounded ears. Eyes are also small. Fore and hind legs have five toes, partially webbed and possess blunt with straight claws. The soles are naked and fitted with pads, however, the large toe is reduced. A tuft of brush-like bristles, whitish to creamy buff in colour, are seen on the tip of the long tail.

The species prefers to live by plantations or cultivated areas, river forests, forest islands, as well as primary and secondary forests. In Bangladesh, presently it is recorded from the mixed evergreen forests of Chittagong Hill Tracts and Sylhet division. The nocturnal terrestrial mammal rests in self-dug burrows (up to 3.5 metre long), cave or under fallen log during day-time. It can live in elevations up to altitudes of 3000 metres. It moves quickly and can run, climb, and swim well. Usually forage nocturnally alone, but shelters in group during day-time. The herbivorous mammal feeds on vegetables, fallen fruits, grains, roots, barks, tubers, cultivated crops, insects, even melted and rotten meat, sometimes chew bones. If the animal is disturbed or pursued, it can run fast enough to get away from humans.

Asiatic brush-tailed porcupine is monogamous, pair for life and breeds 1-2 times

a year. But with more favourable climates it can breeds year-round. Females give birth to one, sometimes two pups at a time after 100-110 days of gestation. It has two pairs of lateral thoracic mammary glands, and give birth in maternity chambers cushioned with grass or fallen leaves. New born is very active and can moves within hours after birth. It is highly developed nidifugous mammals with eyes open soon after birth. As the pup is very small in size (3% of the mother's body weight) it has to be nursed for a long time. Both parents participate in raising the young that weaned at around two months of age. The juvenile become sexually mature at around two years of age. Lifespan is around 15 years in the wild and 20 years in captivity.

Conclusions

Asiatic Brush-tailed porcupine is very rare and considered data deficient in Bangladesh by IUCN, but Himalayan Crested porcupine is comparatively available. Although porcupines are nocturnal and elusive, it is not easy to encounter them. However, some tribal people still hunt them for their meat. Although, quills of the Himalayan Crested porcupine are used for ornamental purposes in some countries, but in Bangladesh there is no such report. In South Asia, Himalayan Crested porcupines suffer from habitat loss due to construction of dams, human settlements and other infrastructure development. It seems not much researches were conducted with this elusive nocturnal mammals in Bangladesh. Therefore, forest department of Government of Bangladesh, universities and research institutes should take initiatives to study as well as conserve these mammals and their habitat so that they can survive and our future generation can see them in the wild, but not in the zoos or safari parks.

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91st Birth Anniversary of Bangamata observed

The 91st birth anniversary of Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, wife of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was observed on 8 August at Tathya Bhaban. The programme was attended by Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud as the chief guest while State Minister Dr. Md. Murad Hassan and Secretary Md. Mokbul Hossain of Information and Broadcasting Ministry, and Md. Zashim Uddin, Vice Chairman of Bangladesh Film Censor Board attended the function as special guests. Bidhan Chandra Karmakar, Director General of Department of Mass Communication presided over the programme and S. M. Golam Kibria, Director General of Department of Films and Publications delivered the welcome speech.



Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud MP, State Minister Dr. Md. Murad Hassan MP and Secretary Md. Mokbul Hossain of Information and Broadcasting Ministry, Bidhan Chandra Karmakar, DG of Department of Mass Communication and Md. Zashim Uddin, Vice Chairman of Bangladesh Film Censor Board and DG of Department of Films and Publications SM Golam Kibria took part in the discussion

The programme was started with a documentary film show titled 'Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib' followed by a discussion. The speakers highlighted the role of Bangamata, who was the inspiration behind all struggles and movements of Bangabandhu and stood by him like a shadow in his entire political life.

The day's programme was jointly organized by the Department of Films and Publications, Department of Mass communication and Bangladesh Film Censor Board.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting organises programme on National Mourning Day

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting organised a programme marking the National Mourning day on 15 August 2021 at Tathya Bhaban Auditorium with its secretary Md. Mokbul Hossain in the chair. The day's programme included Photo Exhibition, Film Show and a discussion.



Photo Exhibition inspected by Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud MP and Secretary Md. Mokbul Hossain of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, DG of Department of Films and Publications SM Golam Kibria and other heads of the departments

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud MP attended the programme as the chief guest. Md. Mokbul Hossain, Secretary of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Zafar Wazed, DG of Press Institute of Bangladesh, Sohrab Hossain, DG of Bangladesh Television, Ahmed Kamruzzaman, DG of Bangladesh Betar, Shahin Islam, DG of National Institute of Mass Communication and SM Golam Kibria, DG of Department of Films and Publications were also present.

In the discussion, Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud MP said, those who deny Bangabandhu, should not have the right to do politics in the country which became independent under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The speakers paid rich tribute to Bangabandhu in their discussion.



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

Earlier a documentary titled 'Chiranjib Bangabandhu' was screened. At the beginning the minister visited the photo exhibition on the life and works of Bangabandhu.



Officials of the Ministry and the departments attended the programme

Prayer held at Tathya Bhaban marking the National Mourning Day

The Department of Films and Publications organised a Milad and Doa Mahfil at the mosque in the annex building of Tathya Bhaban after Asr prayer on 16 August marking the National Mourning Day and the 46th martyrdom anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The prayer was attended by the officials of DFP and Vice Chairman of Film Sensor Board Jasim Uddin while DG, DFP S.M. Golam Kibria presided over the programme. A brief discussion was followed by offering prayer seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of Bangabandhu and other family members, who faced martyrdom on the fateful 15th August, 1975.



SM Golam Kibria, Director General of Department of Films and Publications delivering speech



Officials of Department of Films and Publications offering special prayer

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Birthday Celebrated



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

The 75th birthday of Prime Minister and Bangladesh Awami League President Sheikh Hasina was celebrated on September 28, 2021.

Sheikh Hasina, the eldest among five children of the country's founding President Sheikh Mujibur Rahaman, was born at Tungipara in Gopalganj on September 28 in 1947.

The Awami League and its affiliated and likeminded organisations celebrated the day through various programmes, highlighting her life and achievements. Various programmes like discussions, prayers sessions and photo exhibitions were organised in the capital and elsewhere across the country marking her birthday.

A nationwide mass Covid vaccination campaign was conducted on the day with a target to inoculate 8 million people on the occasion of Prime Minister's birthday.

As part of party's central programmes, a discussion was held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka in the morning.

Presided over by Awami League presidium member Matia Chowdhury, the



Bangladesh Awami League holds a discussion marking the 75th birthday of Sheikh Hasina at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka on 28th September

discussion was addressed, among others, by General Secretary Obaidul Quader, presidium members Abdur Razzaque, Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Abdur Rahman, senior leader Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, joint general secretaries Mahbubul Alam Hanif, Dipu Moni and Hasan Mahmud and AFM Bahauddin Nasim.

In the morning, the ruling AL and its associate bodies brought out processions across the country and different organisations organised various events marking the day.

Special prayers were offered at different mosques, temples, churches and Buddhist monastery on the day.

The National Implementation Committee on the Celebration of the Birth Centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman organised a discussion and a prayer session in its office in Dhaka.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina assumed her office on January 7, 2019 for the fourth time after her party-led grand alliance won the 11th parliamentary election held on December 30, 2018.

She served as Prime Minister for the first time in 1996-2001, second term in 2009-2013, and the third term in 2014-2018. She also served as the leader of opposition thrice.

Source: BSS, UNB, The New Age

1 July, 2021

China a trusted dev partner of Bangladesh: Hasina

Describing China as a trusted partner in socio-economic development of Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stressed the need for exploring more avenues to take the strategic partnership between the two countries to a new height. "We would like to explore more avenues to take the Bangladesh-China strategic partnership to new heights and also work together to address the regional and global issues for peace, security, stability and development," she said.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina greets the Communist Party of China in a video message on July 1 on the occasion of its 100th founding anniversary

The Prime Minister said this in her prerecorded message shared on July 1 afternoon at a function arranged, marking 100 years of founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

She acknowledged with deep appreciation the cooperation and assistance by China during this Covid-19 pandemic, including the recent gifts of vaccine doses and CPC's gifts of medical equipment to Awami League.

"On the auspicious occasion of the one hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Communist Party of China-CPC, I, as the President of Bangladesh Awami League and on behalf of the government and the people of Bangladesh, would like to convey you and through you, to the government, members of the CPC and the friendly people of China, our heartiest felicitations and warmest greetings," she said pointing at the Chinese President and also CPC General Secretary Xi Jinping.

Source: *The Financial Express*

2 July, 2021

PM stresses bold policy measures, joint actions for gender equality

Stating that the promises made by the global leaders in the fourth world conference on women in Beijing in 1995 are yet to be fulfilled while the participation of women parliamentarians is 25 percent and in workforce less than 31 percent, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that bold policy measures and concerted actions could reverse the situation.

"At Beijing in 1995, the world community made bold commitments for women

empowerment. Many of those promises, unfortunately, remain unfulfilled," she said while addressing an event of the Generation Equality Forum: Paris 2021.

In a recorded statement aired in the event held under the title "Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality" Action Coalition, the Prime Minister also said globally, women's participation in politics, economy and labour force is not encouraging.

Bangladesh is also using many digital apps in addressing violence against women, Sheikh Hasina said, "In the last three years, over 71,000 girls received cyber awareness training leading to their enhanced safety on cyber platforms."

The Prime Minister, in continuation to her earlier pledge at the 25th anniversary event of the Beijing Conference, promised this time to increase women's participation in ICT (Information Communication Technology) sector, including tech start-ups and e-commerce sector to 25 percent by 2026 and 50 percent by 2041. *Source: The Financial Express*

3 July, 2021

80pc will get free vaccines: PM

Admitting the losses Bangladesh's education sector suffered for the prolonged closure of educational institutions, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on July 3 said the government cannot put the lives of students at stake knowing it clearly that Covid-19 will infect them as well.

"Children are also getting infected by coronavirus. [This is good] they'll learn but the question is whether we should force them to the verge of death knowing this virus will infect them, too," Sheikh Hasina said.

The Prime Minister said this while delivering her winding-up speech at the budget session in Parliament as a number of opposition MPs, including deputy leader of the opposition GM Quader. *Source: The Financial Express*

8 July, 2021

Climate, Covid battle needs funding: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on July 8 said the world community should recognize people's vulnerability, common aspirations, need for technology transfer and additional funding to tackle the impacts of climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The international community and the developed countries should play their



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the First Climate Vulnerable Finance Summit, inaugurates joining virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban on 8 July

historical responsibilities and their moral and legal obligations," she said.

The Premier made this remark while opening the First Climate Vulnerable Finance Summit, joining virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban as she is the President of Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF). *Source: The Financial Express*

13 July, 2021

Tk 32b stimulus for low-income people

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on July 13 announced five new packages, involving Tk 32 billion, to assist people with little income or no income.

These packages will be used to assist the low-income group of people who have been hit hard by the restrictions imposed due to the ongoing lockdown amid the alarming spread of coronavirus, said a PMO media release signed by PM's press secretary Ihsanul Karim.

Of the total amount, Tk 4.5 billion will be given to 1437,389 day-labourers, 235,033 transport workers, 50,445 small business-people and 1,603 shipping workers. Some 1724,740 people will get Tk 2,500 each.

To assist the low-income group of people living in urban areas, the government will conduct a special 14-day open market sale (OMS) from July 25 to August 7 across the country through 813 centres. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the Army Headquarters Selection Board-2021 Meeting virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban on July 15

15 July, 2021

Promote right persons to build a strong military, says PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on July 15 said the Army Headquarters Selection Board-2021 needs to pick qualified people for promotion aiming to build a strong military.

"I believe that the selection board will select qualified people for promotion through wisdom and prudent analyses rising above the personal liking and disliking. You'll have to find out the able leadership maintaining neutrality by remaining free from all influences," Hasina said while addressing the meeting of the selection board.

The Prime Minister joined the meeting, held at Army Multipurpose Complex, virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Hasina said she is happy to know that TRACE (Tabulated Record and Comparative Evaluation) Method is followed in the case of promotion of Army officers, which is a manifestation of a comparative assessment of various aspects of their professionalism.

"Right persons will have to be promoted for various important appointments such as command, staff and trainers. This will increase the acceptance to all," she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

18 July, 2021

Govt working to build a fully service-oriented admin: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on

July 18 said the aim of her government is to build a fully service-oriented administration to ensure the welfare of people.

"Our aim is to build an administration that will serve people and ensure its accountability to people," she said at a function marking the signing of the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) of ministries and their subordinate bodies.

The programme was arranged at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium with the PM joining it from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Mentioning that remaining in power does not mean enjoying government facilities, Hasina said, "We've our responsibilities to the people. Our responsibilities are to ensure the welfare of people and their interests and change their fate," she said.

At this time of the Covid-19 pandemic, she said, the government aims to make sure that mass people must not face suffering in any way. So, the government has fulfilled their demand for food and is providing medical facilities and assisting them economically to get rid of the curse of pandemic," she said.

She mentioned that the government from the beginning of the pandemic started giving stimulus packages and announced 28 packages worth Tk 1.32 billion and implemented those.

The Prime Minister thanked the administration, law enforcement agencies and armed forces for their courageous role. "They worked in a very abnormal situation. Or else, the situation could have been much worse." *Source: The Financial Express*

27 July, 2021

PM for massive vaccination

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on July 27 said she has instructed the authorities concerned to inoculate the people massively with Covid-19 vaccines to ensure protection of all.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveiled the commemorative postage stamp, a opening day cover and a special seal marking the 50th birth anniversary of Sajeeb Wazed, the PM's ICT Affairs Adviser at Ganobhaban on July 27

"We have started purchasing vaccines. Inoculation has already started. We have to ensure massive vaccination so that all the people of our country are protected (from coronavirus). We have already given instruction to this end," she said.

The Prime Minister said this in a function on the occasion of the National Public Service Day and distribution of the Public Administration Award 2020 and 2021, organised by the Public Administration Ministry at the Osmani Memorial auditorium.

Joining the function virtually from her official Ganobhaban residence in the capital, she called upon the public servants to work for the welfare of the country and its people, announcing actions for wrongdoings and awards for good works. Source: The Financial Express

3 August, 2021

Homes, loans for slum residents if they return to villages: Hasina

Slum residents of Dhaka who choose to return to their village homes will receive loans and housing as assistance from the government, says Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The government will provide housing to those leaving the unhealthy environment in the slums and returning to villages if they do not own land there, she said, adding that, if necessary, the government will provide free food for six months.

In a video conference on August 3, the Prime Minister presented over 300 apartments in Mirpur constructed by the National Housing Authority to slum residents, who can live there as tenants.

Hasina mentioned her government's initiatives to address the housing problem for slum residents, highlighting the inhuman nature of lives lived in these areas.

"Today we're handing over 300 apartments to 300 families and we plan to hand over many more in the upcoming days. But they do have to pay rent as long as they live there," she said.

The government is providing the houses for those who do not own land in their home villages but want to return through the Asrayan Project-2. Source: The Financial Express



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joins through a video conference from Ganobhaban a programme at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre where slum dwellers were given allotment papers of flats constructed by the National Housing Authority at Mirpur in the city on August 3

5 August, 2021

Kamal worked on football, cricket, says PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5 said Sheikh Kamal used to lead a very simple life but faced a malicious campaign after surviving a futile assassination attempt in 1974.

"Kamal was shot on December 16, 1974 following a conspiracy. An ill-attempt was made to kill him. When he survived it, various negative campaigns were carried out against him," she said.

The Prime Minister said this while addressing a function arranged to confer Sheikh Kamal National Sports Council (NSC) Award-2021 on its recipients marking the 72nd birth anniversary of Shaheed Sheikh Kamal.

Hasina joined the function, held at Shaheed Sheikh Kamal Auditorium of the National Sports Council, through a virtual platform from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The Prime Minister said Sheikh Kamal had led a very simple life despite being a son of the President, Prime Minister or Father of the Nation. *Source: The Financial Express*

8 August, 2021

91th birth anniversary of Bangamata observed

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 8 wondered why the August-15 carnage was carried out in cold blood and what the crimes of her father Bangabandhu, mother Bangamata and brothers were!

"One question always crosses my mind -- what actually had driven the killers to stage these killings, what were the crimes of my father, mother and brothers?" she questioned while addressing a programme arranged marking the 91th birth anniversary of Bangamata Begum Fazilatun Nesa Mujib.

The theme of the day this year is 'Bangamata: a fearless companion in the crisis and struggle'.

The Prime Minister joined the virtual programme from her official residence Ganobhaban, while other participants got connected from the Osmani Memorial Auditorium and Deputy Commissioner's Office of Gopalganj.

She said Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib and her brothers sacrificed their lives for peace and



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveils a commemorative book on Shaheed Sheikh Kamal marking his 72nd birth anniversary through a video conference from Ganobhaban on August 5



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joins a programme on Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Padak- 2021 at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium from Ganobhaban through a video conference on August 8

happiness and the independence and economic freedom of the nation.

Hasina, the elder daughter of Bangabandhu and Bangamata, recalled that Bangamata contributed a lot towards advancing the struggle of independence with patience, courage and right and timely decisions and implementing those. "My mother contributed a lot to every movement."

She also said Bangamata encouraged Bangabandhu throughout her life enabling him to devote himself to work for the country and the nation. *Source: The Financial Express*

9 August, 2021

Cabinet approves three bills

The Cabinet on August 9 approved the drafts of three bills, including Bangladesh National Museum Bill, 2021 and Bangladesh Zoo Bill, 2021 to make the country's museums dynamic and vibrant.

The approval came from the virtual Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who joined it from Ganobhaban. Others concerned attended the meeting from the Cabinet Room of the Bangladesh Secretariat.

The meeting gave the final approval to the draft of the Bangladesh National Museum Bill, 2021 to replace an ordinance of the 1980s, said Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam at a press briefing.

He said the highest punishment of museum-related crimes is 10 years' jail, Tk 1.0 million fine or both in the proposed law which would be effective for other museums alongside the national museum.

The Cabinet approved in principle the draft of Bangladesh Zoo Bill, 2021 to modernise the animal collection, rearing and conservation processes as well as the management of zoos. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid rich tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing wreaths at his portrait at Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi marking the National Mourning Day on August 15

15 August, 2021

Nation pays homage to Bangabandhu

People across the country on August 15 paid rich tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the occasion of his 46th martyrdom anniversary and National Mourning Day.

In a somber mood and a befitting manner, the country observed National Mourning Day, the darkest chapter in the history of independent Bangladesh.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid rich tributes to Bangabandhu by placing wreaths at his portrait in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi Road-32.

Besides, distinguished personalities including Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and several judges of the Supreme Court, Ministers, State Ministers, MPs and Awami League leaders placed floral wreaths at Bangabandhu's portrait.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman -- the architect of the country's independence -- was assassinated along with most of his family members at the dawn of August 15, 1975 by a cabal of army personnel following a deep-rooted conspiracy against the country and its independence.

His two daughters -- Sheikh Hasina, now the Prime Minister, and Sheikh Rehana -- survived the massacre as they were abroad at that time.

Eighteen members of the family along with Bangabandhu's wife Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, three sons -- Captain Sheikh Kamal, Lt Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russell, two daughters-in-law -- Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal, brother

Sheikh Naser, peasant leader Abdur Rob Serniabat, youth leader Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and his wife Arzu Moni, Baby Serniabat, Sukanta Babu, Arif and Abdul Nayeem Khan Rintu were killed on the fateful night.

Bangabandhu's military secretary Col Jamil Uddin Ahmad (Bir Uttam), who was later promoted posthumously to the rank of brigadier general, was also killed during the massacre.

The day is a public holiday. Meanwhile, tributes were also paid to Bangabandhu by placing wreaths at his mausoleum at Tungipara in Gopalganj.

The government, different sociocultural, political and professional organisations, including AL and its associate bodies, observed the day with various programmes, maintaining health protocols.

Special prayers were offered at all mosques across the country as well as in temples, pagodas, churches and other places of worship.

Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television and private TV channels and radio stations aired special programmes highlighting the life, struggle and achievements of the great leader while newspapers published supplements on the occasion.

The national flag was hoisted half-mast at government, autonomous, semi-autonomous, educational institutions, private buildings and Bangladesh missions abroad, marking the day. *Source: The Daily Star*

17 August, 2021

BD to be developed, hunger-free nation as dreamt by Bangabandhu: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 17 said her prime goal is to build a happy and prosperous Bangladesh and uplift the people by transforming the tragedy of August 15 into a source of power.

"Inshallah, Bangladesh will become a developed and prosperous Sonar Bangla (Golden Bengal) free of hunger and poverty as dreamt by my father. Inshallah, that dream will be implemented," she said.

The PM said this in her pre-recorded speech that was played at a programme on the occasion of 46th anniversary of the martyrdom of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members and the National Mourning Day.

The programme was organised by the National Implementation Committee for Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's 100th birth Anniversary Celebration. *Source: The Financial Express*

18 August, 2021

PM voices tough against graft by public servants

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 18 said public servants would face tough punishment if found indulged in corruption.

"As we're providing various facilities, we won't tolerate any corruption," she uttered. She says her government wants to build a skilled, pro-service and accountable administration which will accelerate the country's development.

"That will be much more effective as we want to establish good governance in the country."

From her official residence Ganobhaban, the premier said this while virtually addressing a meeting with secretaries of different ministries and divisions. The meeting was hosted at the NEC auditorium at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area. *Source: The Financial Express*

23 August, 2021

PM orders speeding up vaccination of industrial workers, families

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 23 directed the authorities concerned to design a separate programme to bring the industrial workers and their families under the Covid-19 vaccination coverage soon.

She also asked to consider whether it would be possible to shorten the existing two-month gap between two vaccine doses.

The Prime Minister made the directives while chairing the Cabinet meeting held through a virtual platform.

Sheikh Hasina joined the meeting from her official residence Ganobhaban and others from the Cabinet Room of the Secretariat.

"A special discussion was held over the industrial workers (in the meeting)... Since Bangladesh would get 60 million doses of vaccine from Sinopharm as per an agreement signed by the Health Ministry, the Prime Minister gave the instruction to vaccinate the workers quickly bringing them under a separate programme," said the Cabinet Secretary. *Source: The Financial Express*

24 August, 2021

PM pushes for equitable access to antibiotics

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 24 stressed the need for transfer of technology and partnership in investment to ensure equitable access to effective antibiotics and other medical facilities and to contain antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

"Let us continue to collaborate meaningfully and keep momentum for ensuring equitable access to affordable and effective antibiotics and other medical facilities through technology transfer and sharing of ownership," she said.

In a pre-recorded speech aired in the second meeting of the Global Leaders Group (GLG) on AMR, the Prime Minister also said, "At the same time, let us work for partnership for investment in AMR containment". *Source: The Financial Express*

29 August, 2021

BD to become a global aviation hub: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina says her administration plans to make Bangladesh a global hub of connectivity to reflect its geographical location by expanding aviation routes.

"We want to turn Bangladesh into a global hub of connectivity, to take advantage of its geographical location and financially benefit our country," Hasina said, while inaugurating the extension work of Cox's Bazar Airport runway via video-conferencing on August 29.

She joined the programme from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The project will complete a 10,700-foot runway, the longest in Bangladesh. Some



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, virtually inaugurating the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Cox's Bazar Airport runway expansion project from her official residence Ganobhaban on August 29

1,300 feet of it will be built on land reclaimed from the sea.

Tk 15.68 billion project is funded by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh. Chinese company ChanXiang Yachang Water Engineering Bureau and the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation will jointly handle the construction.

After the expansion of Cox's Bazar Airport, Hasina mentioned, this will emerge as a suitable place of refuelling of aircraft from the East and West, and put emphasis on enhancing communication with South East Asian countries apart of Western countries. *Source: The Financial Express.*

31 August, 2021

PM alerts people to conspiracy

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 31 urged the countrymen to remain alert as "defeated forces are still hatching conspiracies" against Bangladesh with their foreign collaborators.

"...defeated forces always remained active. Still the war criminals, defeated forces and killers of August 15 carnage, especially their descendants, have been intriguing against Bangladesh," she said while addressing a discussion marking The National Mourning Day.

Virtually joining from Ganobhaban as the chief guest, the PM said, "And they (local conspirators) are still getting shelter from some of the international forces which had opposed Bangladesh during its War of Liberation. So, the nation has to be alert about it (conspiracy)."

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of Awami League, hosted the discussion to observe the 46th martyrdom anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib at Krishibid Institution Bangladesh.

AL presidium members Jahangir Kabir Nanak and Abdur Rahman also spoke as the special guests reminiscing their days as former BCL leaders. With BCL

President Al-Nahian Khan Joy in the chair, its General secretary Lekhak Bhattacharya moderated the discussion.

The PM also unveiled the cover of the BCL's regular publication "Matribhumi" and its monthly mouthpiece "Joy Bangla". *Source: The Financial Express*

1 September, 2021

Govt to arrange 1 crore doses every month

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 1 told parliament that the government has made arrangements to get more than one crore doses of Covid-19 vaccines every month.

The Prime Minister said this in response to a query from Awami League lawmaker Shahiduzzaman Sarker.

It was the 14th session of the eleventh Jatiya Sangsad which began around 5:00pm, presided over by Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury.

In the scripted answer, PM said: "Steps have been taken to ensure more than one crore vaccine doses every month."

According to the schedule received from Sinopharm, two crore shots will be available every month from October onwards and six crore shots by December, she added.

So far, 1,82,89,018 people have got the first Covid dose and 78,40,169 people have been vaccinated with the second dose. In total, 2,61,29,187 doses of Covid-19 vaccine have been administered, the PM told parliament.

Hasina said the country has a stock of 1,18,96,343 doses of Covid vaccine right now. *Source: The Daily Star*

2 September, 2021

Directive given to reopen schools, colleges soon: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 2 said the government is taking measures to reopen educational institutions across the country soon.

"We've been able to control the coronavirus to a large extent. There's no more problem regarding vaccines...I've already directed (the authorities concerned) to reopen schools and colleges soon," she said.

The Prime Minister said this when she joined a discussion over a condolence motion placed in Parliament to condole the death of Awami League's MP Hasibur Rahman Swapan (Sirajganj-6).

Hasina said teachers have already been vaccinated and now steps are underway to vaccinate other staff of the educational institutions.

"Since there're some WHO guidelines for school students, we're taking measures to vaccinate the students following the guidelines," she said.

The government is also taking steps to vaccinate the family members of health workers along with their domestic-helpers and drivers so that the virus cannot be transmitted, she said. The Prime Minister asked all people to follow the health protocols even after getting vaccinated. *Source: The Financial Express*

5 September, 2021

PM for considering competent officers for promotion in Navy, Air Force

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, joining virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban, addressing the first session of Navy and Air Force Selection Board-2021 on September 5.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 5 laid emphasis on considering the competent officers for promotions in Bangladesh Navy and Air Force to safeguard the country's independence and sovereignty in future.

"In future, those skilled in defending our independence and sovereignty should be promoted and given the responsibility of commanding the force and taking the country forward," she said, addressing the first session of Navy and Air Force Selection Board-2021 at the Navy and the Air Force Headquarters.

Joining virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban, the premier said that Bangladesh is proud of its armed forces, adding, "The country will continue moving ahead with the ideology of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the spirit of the War of Liberation to become a developed and prosperous 'Golden Bangladesh' in the future". *Source: The Financial Express*

8 September, 2021

Govt wants to make land services hassle-free: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on September 8 the government wants to develop a hassle-free land-management system in the country so that mass people do not suffer in any way.

"We want to develop a system so that people must not face unnecessary harassment and sufferings, and don't have to move from one office room to another," she said.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurating the 'Bhumi Bhaban' of Land Ministry at a function at Osmani Memorial Auditorium virtually from Ganobhaban on September 8

The PM was inaugurating the Bhumi Bhaban of Land Ministry and upazila land-office buildings.

The programme was organised at Osmani Memorial Auditorium when she joined the programme from her official residence Ganobhaban.

She said the government has taken initiatives to construct 139 upazila land offices and 129 of which have been completed.

To provide services to people, Hasina said the government is implementing a project to construct 1,498 land offices at the union level and 995 of those have been completed.

The projects are Land Management Automation project, Strengthening Capacity of the Land Record and Survey Department project and Plot and Mouja-based National Digital Land Survey project.

"On completion of the projects, there'll be an epoch-making change in the land management system and a complete digitisation of the overall management will be possible," she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

12 September, 2021

Taking Development Projects Keep environment in mind: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 12 stressed the importance of considering the impact on the environment while taking any development project.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated five power plants through a video conference from her official residence Ganobhaban on September 12

"We always focus on the environment while taking any project. We always take measures to protect the environment while taking any step," she said.

The Prime Minister said this while speaking at a programme to inaugurate five power plants with a total electricity generation capacity of 779 MW.

Hasina inaugurated the power plants through a video conference from her official residence the Ganobhaban as the programme was held at the Bijoy Hall of Bidyut Bhaban.

The five power plants are the Bibiyana-III 400MW Combined Cycle Power Plant in Habiganj, Zulda, Chittagong 100MW Power Plant Unit-2, Meghnaghat

104MW Power Plant in Narayanganj, Modhumoti 100MW Power Plant in Bagerhat and upgradation of Sylhet 150MW Power Plant to 225MW Combined Cycle Power Plant in Sylhet. *Source: The Daily Star*

13 September, 2021

PM for more modern edn framework

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 13 underscored the need for modernising the national education framework further to cope with the technology-driven competitive world.

She came up with the views while witnessing a power-point presentation on the draft outline of the 'National Education Framework' at her official Ganobhaban residence. Education ministry has prepared the outline.

The PM says technology is advancing and Bangladesh must move ahead keeping pace with the advancement of the world and technology.

She said the government earlier introduced pre-primary education to attract children to schools through games and amusement. Necessary steps have also been taken to build roads and paths towards schools in villages to ensure students' easy communication, she adds.

In the past, Hasina said, children were not interested in science education, and her government took steps to establish 12 science and technology universities to attract them to such education. In addition, the government established specialised universities on some specific subjects, she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

14 September, 2021

PM reiterates call to follow health safety guidelines

Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina reiterated her call to the countrymen, particularly the lawmakers, to follow the health guidelines properly as she joined a discussion on an obituary motion at parliament.

"It is truly a matter of shock that we have lost so many lawmakers of the parliament. We don't want to take any such condolence motion," she said.

Taking part in the discussion on the obituary reference to the death of Jatiya Party lawmaker from the reserved seat for women Prof Masuda M Rashid Chowdhury on September 14, the PM said, "Two lawmakers passed away at the first two days of this parliament session and on September 13 another parliamentarian died."

A one-minute silence was observed at the Jatiya Sangsad to show respect to the deceased lawmaker. *Source: The Daily Star*

15 September, 2021

Will jab 50pc by year-end

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 15 in parliament said efforts were underway to vaccinate students aged 12 and above as she spoke about a government plan to gradually inoculate 80 percent of the country's population against Covid-19.

The government wants to jab 50 percent of the population by December and it is taking measures in this regard following the World Health Organization guidelines, she said.

The PM said the age bar for receiving the jabs was lowered to 18 for university students and the government now plans to vaccinate all citizens above that age.

“Arrangements have already been made to collect more than 24.65 crore vaccine doses. Steps have been taken to get more than one crore doses every month,” she added. *Source: The Daily Star*

19 September, 2021

Hasina seeks stronger steps to address 'planetary emergency'

Renewing her call for strict implementation of the Paris Agreement, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked global leaders to take stronger steps urgently to address the planetary emergency of climate change.

Sheikh Hasina also placed six-point proposal before the global leaders as the COP-26 is just few months away.

Addressing a closed-door leaders' meeting arranged for a small group of heads of state and governments on Climate Change held at Trusteeship Council of the UN Headquarters

The proposal include strict implementation of the Paris Agreement to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5 degree Celsius, realisation of annual \$100 billion climate fund from the developed countries, 50 per cent of this fund should go to adaptation and resilience, especially to climate vulnerable countries.

The other proposals are: Forging new financial mechanisms and transfer of green technology to the developing countries, addressing loss-and-damage issue, and displacement of large-scale population due to climate change and capacity building of CVF countries to tackle the double jeopardy of pandemic and disaster, particularly with the increased frequency of climate-induced disasters.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres convened the meeting. *Source: The Financial Express*

20 September, 2021

Chart roadmap for the ones left behind

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stressed the need for charting out a bold and ambitious global roadmap to put the world back on the SDGs track so that no one is left behind as the pandemic has pushed many countries way behind from the goals.

“We have already entered the Decade of Delivery and Action of the Agenda. Yet the goals seem to be far away for many countries... the pandemic has pushed them further behind. We need to chart out a bold and ambitious global roadmap to put us back on the SDGs track,” she said.

The PM was addressing the 9th Annual International Conference on Sustainable Development virtually on September 20.

Earth Institute, Columbia University, Global Masters of Development Practice, and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network organised the event.

Hasina said no country can achieve SDGs alone. “We need enhanced global collaboration and solidarity to advance this agenda.”

To pull back the countries which are way behind the track of attaining SDGs in



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received 'SDGs Progress Award' virtually arranged by UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network in New York on September 20

right time, Hasina put forward a five-point proposal in this regard.

The proposals are: Ensuring vaccines for everyone, everywhere, closing the huge resource gap in implementing the 2030 Agenda, focusing on job creation, social protection, women empowerment, and science, technology, and innovation to deal with the impacts of the pandemic, making Covid-19 recovery measures complementary with climate actions and focusing on enhanced monitoring and support mechanism for SDGs implementation.

The PM also mentioned that Bangladesh's achievements in MDGs were highly significant and it was recognised by the international community as a "development miracle". "Our SDGs journey builds on the successes of MDGs."

SDGs PROGRESS AWARD

Hasina was honoured with the "SDGs Progress Award" in recognition of Bangladesh's achievements in sustainable development from 2015 to 2020.

The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and other organisations, including the Earth Institute of Columbia University and the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, jointly gave the award.

Hasina accepted the award at the 9th Annual International Conference on Sustainable Development (ICSD). She dedicated the award to the people of Bangladesh.

The PM also extended her sincere thanks to ICSD for honouring the people of Bangladesh with the award. *Source: The Daily Star*

22 September, 2021

Sheikh Hasina offers more sectors for US investments

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sought US investment in various potential fields apart from the existing energy, banking and insurance sectors as Bangladesh is developing its infrastructure and power supply systems to facilitate FDI.

"The US is, of course, the largest investor in Bangladesh with stakes in energy, banking and insurance sectors. We invite US investment in other lucrative sectors like ICT, renewable energy, shipbuilding, automobile, light engineering, agro-processing, blue economy, tourism, knowledge based hi-tech industries," she said.

She was presenting the keynote speech at a business roundtable joining virtually from her palace of residence in the Lotte New York Palace here on September 22 (New York Local Time).

The US-Bangladesh Business Council organised the virtual roundtable titled "Bangladesh Forward: The Frontier for Growth" in honour of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The Prime Minister hoped that the US-Bangladesh Business Council may continue to play a catalytic role in raising the present annual bilateral trade of US\$ 9 billion to higher figures.

She also expressed her expectation that Bangladesh's trade relations can be further strengthened with duty free access and other trade privileges in the US market. US-Bangladesh Business Council president Nisha Biswal presided over the event. Hasina said Bangladesh is investing heavily on infrastructure development and power supply to facilitate FDI in those areas and other promising sectors in Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh is ready to start Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with the US at an appropriate time.

She said Bangladesh is ready to offer from its 100 Economic Zones, one exclusively for American companies, and also invites US investment in its 28 High-Tech Parks. *Source: The Financial Express*

22 September, 2021

Sheikh Hasina wants action on Rohingya return

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the global community to turn their "words and rhetoric" over the Rohingya crisis into actions to reach a desired solution to the protracted problem.

"We need to go beyond words and rhetoric to have tangible actions to reach a desired outcome which is also the cherished desire of the Rohingyas. Bangladesh will continue to work with all until this solution comes," she said.

The Prime Minister said this while speaking at a High-Level Side Event on "Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (Rohingya) crisis: Imperatives for a Sustainable Solution" on September 22.

Bangladesh arranged the event, while eight other countries, including the UK, Ireland, Turkey and Saudi Arabia cosponsored it.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivers a recorded speech on High-Level Side Event on 'Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals' (Rohingya) crisis: Imperatives for a Sustainable Solution' held virtually in New York on September 22

A total of 23 speakers from cross-regional countries spoke at the event moderated by Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations Rabab Fatima. All the speakers extended their solidarity with Bangladesh over the solution to the Rohingya crisis, Rabab Fatima, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, said at a press briefing after the event.

Hasina mentioned that she repeatedly said that these displaced people are Myanmar nationals and they must go back to their homeland, Myanmar, in safety and dignity.

"We all, especially the international community, must do everything possible to make this happen."

She reiterated her call to Bangladesh's international friends and development partners to support its efforts in this regard.

"The Rohingyas themselves also wish to return to their home. "Resolving this humanitarian crisis is a collective responsibility as its implication goes beyond borders. Delaying this crucial problem jeopardizes our collective security." *Source: The Financial Express*

24 September, 2021

UN chief lauds development miracle of BD

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has highly praised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for the development in Bangladesh, calling it a 'miracle'.

"The UN chief commended Bangladesh for its development in different sectors and humanity...he thanked the Prime Minister for achieving a development of miracle," said Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen.

The Foreign Minister was briefing reporters after a bilateral meeting held between Sheikh Hasina and António Guterres at the UN Secretariat Building in New York on September 24.

As the Bangladesh Prime Minister arrived at the meeting venue, the UN Secretary-General said, "Welcome to your home."

He said both the UN and Bangladesh shared common priorities in different areas,



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and UN Secretary General António Guterres held talks at Lotte New York Palace on September 24.

including climate, financing and SDGs. "We share common priorities. Whether it's climate, financing and SDGs. Those priorities in the UN are also the priorities of Bangladesh," Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations Rabab Fatima, who was at the briefing, quoted António Guterres as saying.

Sheikh Hasina urged the Secretary-General to appoint more Bangladeshis to higher posts in the United Nations since Bangladesh plays a significant role in the United Nations.

In this regard, the Foreign Minister told reporters that Bangladesh and the UN are very closely linked. Bangladesh is the number-1 troops-contributing country to its peacekeeping mission. All the UNDP projects are fulfilled (implemented) in Bangladesh, he said.

Source: The Financial Express

24 September, 2021

Hasina places six proposals before world to fight Covid

Terming Covid-19 a common enemy, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has placed six proposals before the global leaders to fight the deadly virus with fresh, inclusive and effective ideas.

"Sadly though, this malaise (Covid-19) seems to be here for a while, and therefore, as we had in the past, must come forth with fresh, inclusive, and global ideas to fight this common enemy. Let me highlight a few specific issues in this regard," she said.

The Prime Minister said this while delivering her speech in the UN General Assembly (UNGA) debate at the UN Headquarters on September 24.

In her first proposal, Hasina said for a Covid-free world, "We must ensure universal and affordable access to vaccines for people across the world."

In the last UNGA, Hasina said, she called for treating Covid-19 vaccines as a 'global public good.' This was echoed by many other leaders. "Yet these calls remain largely unheeded. Instead, we've seen growing 'vaccines divides' between the rich and the poor nations."



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at the 76th UN General Assembly at the UN Headquarters in New York on September 24

According to the World Bank, she said, 84 percent of vaccine doses have so far gone to people in high and upper middle-income countries, while the low-income countries received less than 1 percent.

"This vaccine inequality must be urgently addressed. We cannot chart out a sustainable recovery and be safe by leaving millions behind," she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

Report Compilation: Mazharul Hoque, Mamun Hossain, Umma Halima

