

# Bangladesh

July-September 2020 Quarterly



*A Glimpse of the Achievements and the Reforms of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib*

*Bangali's Dream of Freedom and Immortal Bangabandhu*

*Civil Service Reforms in Bangladesh*



# Bangladesh

## QUARTERLY

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*Mausoleum of the Father of the Nation  
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara*

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Father of the Nation Bangabandhu  
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## Editorial

**T**he National Mourning Day has been observed with due solemnity and fervour at home and abroad on 15 August. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members were assassinated on this night of August 15, 1975. The nation condemned and denounced this heinous act. Bangabandhu is remembered for his struggle that led to the independence of Bangladesh. The Father of the Nation dreamt of a happy and prosperous Bangladesh in his whole life. During his three and a half years' tenure, Bangabandhu made some major administrative reforms. Out of them, framing the Constitution, reconstructing the agriculture sector, forming various corporations, commissions and autonomous bodies, establishing different academies and hospitals, and introducing of new banknotes and currency are remarkable. Besides, more than one hundred new Acts were framed during his tenure. Articles on the life and administrative reforms of Bangabandhu have been accommodated in this issue.

Reformation of civil service is a must for good governance. The Public Administration Reform Commission (PARC) was constituted by the Awami League government led by Sheikh Hasina in January 1997 to recommend policies, programmes and activities for improving the level of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency in public organisations of Bangladesh. The Commission chaired by Dr. ATM Shamsul Haque submitted a comprehensive 3-volume report to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in June 2000. It covered many areas like improvement of public service delivery, civil service reforms, reorganization of institutions and rationalization of manpower, restructure of field administration and decentralization etc. An article is also accommodated in this regard.

Other than articles mentioned above, write-ups on Sheikh Russel, tourism, wildlife and other articles have also been inserted.

# Contents

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A Glimpse of the Achievements  
and the Reforms of  
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib  
*Dr. Md. Matiur Rahman Khan*  
Page- 4



---

Sheikh Russel: A Bullet-hit  
Innocent Boy 30  
*Sheikh Masud Kamal*

Teaching of Eid-al-Adha Sacrifice the  
soul towards peace for mankind 36  
*M. Mizanur Rahman*

Bangali's Dream of Freedom and  
Immortal Bangabandhu  
*Anupam Sen*  
Page- 17

Civil Service Reforms in Bangladesh 32  
*Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed*

Post-Covid Tourism Planning in  
Bangladesh 40  
*Md. Ziaul Haque Howlader*



Bangabandhu and Dhaka University  
'...I 'll Come Back Again'  
*Ajoy Dasgupta*  
Page- 25

Mammals of Northwestern  
Bangladesh 43  
*Professor Dr. A N M Aminoor Rahman*

Development Chronology 55

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## A Glimpse of the Achievements and the Reforms of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib

**Dr. Md. Matiur Rahman Khan**

following his declaration, Liberation War started and Bangabandhu was arrested by the Pak Army on that night and was taken to West Pakistan and was placed in a lock-up there.

This sanguinary Liberation War continued for about nine months and in the end the liberation forces came out victorious. The Pak Army surrendered to the allied forces on 16 December, 1971 at the Race Course Maiden. Thenceforth, Bangladesh became independent. During the whole period of Liberation War Bangabandhu was in the prison of West Pakistan. However, because of continuous international pressure, he was released from the lock-up of West Pakistan on January 8, 1972. He came to Bangladesh on 10 January, 1972 via England and India. At that time Bangladesh was totally a war-devastated mass. Pak army destroyed the roads and highways, houses and buildings, courts and offices, trade and commerce, firms and enterprises, bridges and culverts, schools and colleges, and what not. In a word nothing was left unhurt. There was an orgy of destruction all over Bangladesh.

Amid this miserable condition of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu had to take over as Prime Minister of Bangladesh on 12 January 1972. At that time the country was surrounded by mountain-high problems and difficulties. Problems like reconstruction of the country, revival of economy, achievement of the

**B**angabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is not the mere name of an individual. He is an institution. He is the Supreme Command of the Liberation War, Father of the Nation, ideal of a humanistic and exploitation-free society, architect, and visionary leader of Bangladesh. He himself is a history. This history dates back to a thousand years. That is why the contemporary history has recognized him as the greatest Bengali of the past thousand years.

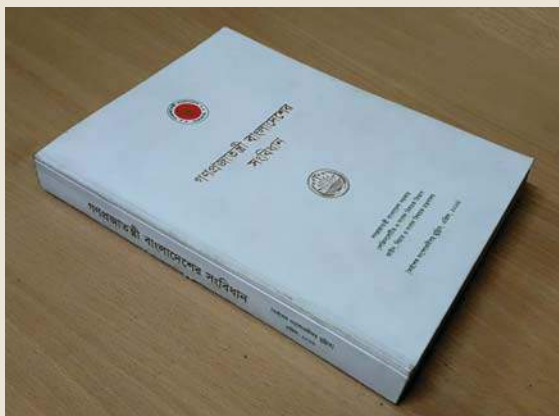
He was an uncompromising and intransigent popular and great leader who struggled to emancipate the people of the then East Pakistan from injustice, exploitation and differential treatment for 24 years of which about 12 years he passed in jail. Such a dedicated leader is rare in the world. For his effective, firm and intellectual leadership, Bangladesh came into being. He declared independence on the night of 25 March, 1971, and

international diplomatic recognition, trial of the killers and collaborators, trial of prisoners of war, repatriation of the Bangladeshi stranded in Pakistan, collection of arms from freedom fighters, return of Indian soldiers to their country and many others.

In order to solve those problems, Bangabandhu continued his hard work to rebuild and reform Bangladesh. He got only about three years and seven months in two capacities as the Prime Minister and the President of Bangladesh. He carried out his responsibilities as the Prime Minister from 12 January 1972 to 24 January 1975. Again the country, for unavoidable circumstances, switched over to presidential form of government and he took over on 25 January 1975 as the President of the country and could carry out his state responsibilities for a brief time till 14th August 1975.

However, during his brief period as head of the government and head of the state, Bangabandhu performed some significant achievements and adopted some major reforms. Some of them are in brief as follows:

**1. Framing and Promulgating of the Constitution of Bangladesh:** The Constitution of a country is the highest law. It is the most sacred and sanctified document that contains the state principles and guidelines for running the country and guarding the rights of the citizens. The constitution determines the responsibilities of the state towards the people and similarly at the same time it fixes its responsibilities towards the citizens. The Constitution is the symbol and hallmark of the separate entity of an independent and sovereign country or nation.



*Bangladesh Constitution*

Framing a Constitution is a very hard and tough task. It takes a long time. But the Constitution of Bangladesh under the government of Bangabandhu was written and adopted only in 6 months and 16 days. The Constitution of Bangladesh was adopted (approved/ ratified) on 4 November, 1972 and was effective from 16 December, 1972. It was a very short time compared to the time of framing and adopting the Constitutions

of other countries. The time for drafting and adopting of Indian Constitution was four years. Pakistan took nine years for drafting and adopting her first Constitution, the second one took four years and the third one took one year and a half. Vietnam took 17 years to adopt her Constitution.

**2. Four Amendments of the Constitution during Bangabandhu's Rule:** The Bangladesh Constitution was amended four times during the rule of Bangabandhu. These amendments are as follows:

**a. First Amendment:** This amendment was made on July 15, 1973 for the trial of the war criminals. Here the Article 47 was amended and 47(3) and 47(a) two new



*Bangabandhu takes oath of office as Prime Minister for the Second time in 1973*

paras were incorporated.

**b. Second Amendment:**

This amendment was made on September 22, 1973. In this amendment a new clause was added to the Constitution empowering the President of the country to declare state emergency whenever he deemed it fit to safeguard the country.

**c. Third Amendment:**

This amendment of the Constitution was made on November 28, 1974 about the land boundary of Bangladesh. Bangladesh and India on May 16, 1974 in Delhi signed agreements on the land

boundary and some other issues between the two countries. In order to make the agreements operative and functional, the Constitution had to be amended.

**d. Fourth Amendment:** This amendment was introduced on January 25, 1975. By this amendment Presidential rule was enforced and the parliamentary government was abolished and scrapped. In this amendment the President was given the real executive powers to rule and select the cabinet including the Prime Minister.

**3. Measures taken for Reconstruction of Destroyed Agriculture Sector:**

Some of the steps and measures that were taken to reconstruct agriculture sectors are as follows:

**a. Exemption from Tax:**

Bangabandhu's government exempted forever the cultivators from paying the land tax up to a ceiling of 25 bighas.



*Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman giving speech in the Parliament, 1973*

**b. Supply of Seeds:** During the crisis of seeds, his government supplied on emergency basis 454 tons of jute seeds, 1037 tons of wheat seeds and 16,125 tons of paddy seeds free of cost or at a nominal cost to the farmers in 1972.

**c. Supply of Pumps and Tube-Wells:** For large-scale irrigation water, his government supplied 40,000 power-driven low lift pumps, 2900 deep tube –wells, and 3000 shallow tube-wells to the cultivators at a highly reduced price before 1972 was out.

**d. Certificate Cases:** About one million certificate cases that were instituted against peasants and cultivators during Pakistan period were withdrawn and the arrear of agriculture loans including interest were waived.

**e. Rationing System:** The rationing system was introduced by his government for the poor farmers to help them.

**f. Free Education System:** Free education system for the children of the poor farmers was introduced by his government in order to facilitate the education of children of the farmers.

**g. Fixation of Minimum Price:** In order that the growers get the minimum fair prices for paddy, jute, tobacco, sugarcane and some other agriculture products, minimum price was fixed for them by the government.

**h. Fixation of Land Ceiling:** At that time 35% of farmers were landless in the country. In order to increase the availability of more land other than the existing Khas land for distribution among the landless farmers, his government fixed 100 bighas of land as the highest ceiling per family.

**i. Water Share:** Bangabandhu in principle agreed with India for distribution of Ganges waters and was able to have a share of 44,000 cusecs of water for Bangladesh.

**4. Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation:** During Pak rule it was established in 1952 and was known as Pakistan House Building Finance Corporation. But later in Bangladesh it was set up as Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation under the Presidential order no 7 in 1973. Its main purpose is to grant loans to people living in different parts of the country for constructing buildings, houses and apartments.

**5. Bangladesh Shipping Corporation:** The Shipping Corporation of Bangladesh was set up on February 8, 1972 by the government in order to import and export goods. The head office is in Chattogram. This corporation made its first Shipping in 1974. The ship was named



*Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation*



‘Banglar Duut.’ The shipping Minister is the ex-officio Chairman of the corporation.

**6. Bangladesh Shilpo (industrial) Bank:** This bank was established in 1972 under the Presidential order no 129. This bank was set up in order to promote industrial sectors of the country by providing financial assistance.

**7. Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management:** This institute was formed on December 31, 1974 in order to train up senior and mid-level officials of the banking and financial sectors. The other activities of the institute are holding workshops, seminars and talks on relevant financial and banking matters and issues.

**8. Bangladesh Insurance Academy:** This academy was founded in 1973 to promote professional efficiency and development of those who were involved in insurance sectors. This academy arranges and organizes workshops, trainings, seminars and symposiums relating to insurance sectors.

**9. Bangladesh Krishi (Agriculture) Bank:** As per the President’s order no 27, the Bangladesh Krishi Bank was formed in Bangladesh in order to grant and provide



*Bangladesh Krishi (Agriculture) Bank*

loans, financial and technical assistance to farmers and rural handicraft industries. In Pakistan it was known as Pakistan Agriculture Development Bank which was set up in 1961.

**10. Declaration of Amnesty:** The trial of the collaborators under the Collaborators Act of Bangladesh began in 1972 and

many prisoners were convicted in the trial of the crimes they committed. But the trial could not proceed and had to be halted in 1973 as Bangabandhu declared general amnesty on November 30, 1973 for the prisoners. It is learnt that this amnesty declaration was not applicable to all. Those who committed crimes against humanity such as rape, arson, murder, loot etc. did not come under the purview of the declaration of amnesty. They had to serve sentence. But minor offenders, old offenders and women were released.

**11. Supply of TV Sets and Radios:** During the rule of Bangabandhu the Television sets and radios were very expensive and not easily available. In the circumstances, he passed several orders to the concerned ministries to make TV sets and radios available and offer them at a low price to schools, colleges, community centers and people. He understood TV sets and radios were essential but not luxury.

**12. Bangladesh Military Academy:** The Bangabandhu government founded the military academy on January 11, 1974 in Cumilla in order to build up a strong and well disciplined army in the country. The core message of the Bangladesh Military Academy ‘Chironnoto momo shir’ (my head ever held high.)



*Bangladesh Shishu (Child) Hospital*

**13. Bangladesh Shishu (Child) Hospital:** This is a specialized hospital for the treatment of children and is located in Dhaka. Bangladesh government first started the child hospital of 50 beds in a house at Dhanmondi in Dhaka, 1972. Later in March 1975 the Prime Minister Sheikh Mujib approved the project for constructing a 250-bed hospital. Then the hospital was shifted from Dhanmondi to Sher-e-Bangla Nagar where it started its operation from June 1977.

**14. Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission:** Bangabandhu took special interest to set up this commission and it was founded on February 27, 1973. The purpose of establishing the atomic energy commission was to serve mankind through research on agriculture, health and medicine sectors and radiation level in different food products.



*Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission*

**15. Bangladesh Atomic Agriculture Institute:** The Bangladesh Atomic Agriculture Institute was founded in the Mymensingh Agriculture University in 1973 with a view to using atomic emissions for inventing better breeds of paddy, jute, pulse, tomato etc.

**16. Bangladesh University Grants Commission:** The University Grants Commission was set up during the Bangabandhu's government in 1973 by the President's order no 10. The main functions of the university grants commission are to receive funds from the government, provide grants to the public universities, carry out development activities, provide funds to universities for research work, advice the government to expand the existing universities, found new universities etc.

**17. Bangladesh Bar Council:** The Bangladesh Bar Council was set up during the Bangabandhu's government by the President's order no 46 in 1972. The main purpose of it is to list the lawyers, conduct tests for their licenses, cancel the registration in case any gross misconduct. Attorney General is the Chairman of the Bar Council.

**18. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics:** The Bangabandhu government founded the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in August, 1974 in order to conduct research in economic sectors, gather and analyze data and carry out surveys on national census, agriculture census, industries census, household census and study. Currently there are offices of Bureau of statistics in all upazilas.

**19. Bangladesh Healthcare Research Council:** As per the order of the Bangabandhu, this organization was established in 1972 under the Health and Family Welfare Ministry. The main purpose of the council was to identify the problems about medical and health care, determine the priority sectors for the healthcare systems, train up public health workers, build up a strong workforce in healthcare system, carry out research and publish results.

**20. Bangladesh-India Friendship Treaty:** The first international treaty between



*Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his Indian counterpart Indira Gandhi signed Bangladesh-India Treaty on March 19, 1972 in Dhaka*

Bangladesh and India was signed by Bangladesh premier Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Indian premier Indira Gandhi on March 19, 1972 in Dhaka. The treaty included issues of bilateral interests such as international relations, defense policy, and economic development, cooperation in science and technology, cultural relationship, electricity, irrigation, flood control and so

on. The 25-year long treaty was considered and proved effective from the day it was signed.

**21. Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation:** After independence the jute sector became very wretched in condition. Jute growers were deprived of fair prices of jute. Bangabandhu took initiatives to make sure of the fair prices for the jute growers. With this end in view, he founded on April 17, 1972 four new corporations. They were: Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation, Bangladesh Sugar Corporation, Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation and Bangladesh Gas and Oil Corporation. Of those Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation was the most important one.

**22. Bangladesh Public Service Commission:** Two separate Commissions, namely Public Service Commission (one) and Public Service Commission (two) were set up during the Bangabandhu's government in 1972 as per the President's order no 34. The chairman and members of the Commission are selected by the President of Bangladesh as per recommendation from the Prime Minister. The Commission is a constitutional body for the recruitment of the government officials. The main functions of the Commission are: to select government officials through competitive examinations and interviews, arrange examinations in order to assess merits, conduct promotion examinations of public service holders, and recommend promotion policy and employment to the government.

**23. Betunia Earth Station:** It is a satellite station with which weather forecast, television pictures can be received and telephone connection can be extended worldwide. Bangabandhu set up the first earth satellite on June 14, 1975. It is situated in Rangamati at a height of 1.16 billion feet above the Indian Ocean.

**24. Status of Beerangona (brave woman):** On February 26, 1972 Bangabandhu went to the Uttar Bashantapur village of Pubna's Nogar Bari to inaugurate the construction of the Mujib Dam. There at the end of the vast rally he began his speech by saying women who were violated by the Pakistani forces were not ordinary women such women were the 'Beerangonas' (brave women) because they sacrificed their honor for the country and their contribution was no less than that of freedom fighters, rather a few levels higher. Therefore, they have to be given the status of 'Beerangona' and be honored.



*Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman officially opening the Betunia Satellite Earth Station by pressing the start button, 14 June 1975*

**25. Development of Telecommunications:** During Liberation War, the Pakistani forces totally destroyed the telecommunication system and burnt documents. After the independence, Bangabandhu had to install 5000 telephone sets, reestablish 31 trunk lines, import telephone equipment and 2000 kilometer-long telephone wire including one hundred skilled workers. And by 1974, his government had completed connections of 55,000 telephones.

**26. Finalization of the National Flag:** In the first meeting of the newly formed cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on January 13, 1972, the national flag of Bangladesh was finalized.

**27. Finalization of the National Anthem:** In the first cabinet meeting with Bangabandhu in the chair held on January 13, 1972, the national anthem was finalized. Ten stanzas of Rabindranath Tagore's song 'Amar Sonar Bangla' was selected as the national anthem. It was also decided that the first four stanzas would be played with instruments on formal occasions.

**28. Formation of the National Economic Council:** The National Economic Council was formed in the meeting of the cabinet on Tuesday, January 25, 1972 and Bangabandhu was made the Chairman. This is the highest economic policy making forum in Bangladesh. The Planning Division Minister was to play the role of Vice-Chairman. Its assigned tasks were: to scrutinize all policy recommendations, approve development schemes over tk 2 crore and the five-year plan.

**29. Formation of National Pay Commission:** Right after independence, the government of Bangabandhu formed the national pay commission in 1972 in order to recommend for reformation of salary structure. The commission also recommended that the government employees would be divided in 10 grades. Government implemented the recommendations.

**30. Formation of the Prime Minister's Relief Fund:** Bangabandhu formed the Bangladesh Prime Minister's Relief Fund on March 5, 1972 and urged the wealthy people of the country, local and international organizations to donate to it generously.

**31. Formation of the Planning Commission:** Bangabandhu's government in January 1972 formed the Planning Commission to chalk out the 5-year plan for rebuilding the war-ravaged country. The Commission came up with the country's 5-yr plan in 1973. This 5-year plan was the principal financial document for the development of the country. The main functions of the commission were: to advise, execute and coordinate the goals, priorities, strategies, and policies to be undertaken for pursuing economic growth. Later, in January 1975, a separate division 'Project Implementation Bureau' (PIB) was formed. Some days later, the responsibility of acquiring foreign resources were given to a separate 'External Resources Division' currently 'Economic Relations Division' (ERD.)

**32. Job Priority for Freedom Fighters:** In the weapons surrender ceremony of Gonobahini at Basabo in Dhaka, Bangabandhu declared that freedom fighters would get priority in jobs. The freedom fighters according to their qualifications would be enrolled in the Militia, Police, and the Armed Forces.

**33. Inauguration of Adamjee Jute Mill:** Adamjee Jute Mill was the biggest jute mill in the world. The then government declared it as abandoned in 1971. After the independence, Bangabandhu took steps to reopen the mill. He realized that to

make the economy of the newly independent country prosperous, production had to be increased. That is why he took the steps to reopen the biggest jute mill in the country to enhance production and provide jobs for the workers.

**34. Inauguration of the First Military Academy:** A Military Academy for facilitating modern training for the army was established in Cumilla Maynamati following the order from Bangabandhu Sheik Mujib in 1974. During the inaugural ceremony, Bangabandhu in his speech addressed the Jawans saying they would have to cooperate with the government in eradicating smuggling and other kinds of corruption. In his speech Bangabandhu praised the role of the Jawans and said, 'You are the soldiers of people, you are the national army, and you are not mercenaries.'

**35. Rampura Television Building:** Once Bangladesh Television was at the DIT Building and used to air only 3 hours program a day. It used a mere 300 kilowatt transmitter which covered only 10 miles in radius. The Bangabandhu government shifted the station to the bigger premises in Rampura to make Bangladesh Television equal to the needs of an independent Bangladesh. Bangabandhu was to inaugurate the new TV building on the afternoon of 6 March of 1975. As he was in Khulna and could not make time, Vice-President Syed Nazrul Islam cut the ribbon on Bangabandhu's behalf.



*Bangladesh Television Building– Rampura, Dhaka*

**36. Introduction of New Banknotes and Currency:**

A new type of tk 10 and tk 5 notes were released on June 2, 1972 and were

circulated through Bangladesh Bank's Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Bogura offices. The notes had Bangabandhu's portraits on them.

**37. Liberation War Gallantry Awards:** In recognition of the brilliant and selfless contribution of the freedom fighters during the great Liberation War, Bangabandhu awarded special state titles to a number of valiant freedom fighters. He awarded seven brave freedom fighters the title of Bir Shreshto, 68 of them were awarded the title of the Bir Uttam and 426 freedom fighters were awarded the Bir Pratik title. The list of the awarded freedom fighters was published in the government gazette on January 15, 1973.

**38. Muktiyoddah Kalyan Trust (Freedom Fighters Welfare Trust):** Bangabandhu took special initiatives to form the Trust and it was formed in September, 1972 through the President's order no 95, 1972. The Trust was formed for the rehabilitation and welfare of families of deceased freedom fighters and those injured in the Liberation War. Government handed over 19 industrial and commercial organizations to the Trust to develop a fund. Monthly allowances and medical services were also provided to freedom fighters' families.

**39. Nationalization:** The government of Bangabandhu on March 26, 1972 declared the nationalization of banks, insurance, jute, textile, sugar mills, foreign trade and water transport. Twelve banks were nationalized and amalgamated to form six state owned banks, namely Janata, Sonali, Pubali, Agrani, Uttara and Rupali. Besides, 67 jute mills, 15 sugar mills, 64 textile mills and 6 internal water transport companies were nationalized. A total of 146 industrial firms were nationalized on 26 March alone.

**40. Registration of National Doctors:** Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on January 12, 1973 ordered immediate registration of doctors who had passed from the National Medical Institute. The Prime Minister ordered the Health Minister not to waste any more time to give doctors their registrations.

**41. Formation of Power Development Board:** The Power Development Board was formed for the production and distribution of electricity to all of Bangladesh. In the then East Pakistan it started its journey as the Water and Power Development Authorities.



*Bangladesh Bank (Central Bank of Bangladesh), Dhaka*

**42. Bangladesh Bank:**

After the independence, as per the President's order no 127, Bangladesh Bank was established by the government of Bangabandhu as the central bank of the country with effect from December 16, 1971 and with its journey Bangladesh Bank inherited all the properties of the Dhaka branches of the Pakistan State Bank. The main office of the bank was established in Dhaka. Then its branches were opened in Chattogram, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Bogura, Rangpur and Barisal. The

main functions of Bangladesh Bank are: to mint currency/coins, control monetary policy and credit system, determine exchange rate and keep the currency stable.

**43. Prize Bond Scheme:** Bangabandhu government introduced the Prize Bond Scheme from June 1, 1974, starting with bonds worth tk 10 to encourage low income people in savings. It is a kind of loan to the government which took interest free credit from the people by selling prize bonds. The lottery draws on the prize bonds are held at specific intervals and the winners of prize bonds are given monetary awards. Bangladesh Bank is the government agent for implementing the prize bond scheme.

**44. Uttara Ganobhaban:** Initially, Uttara Ganobhaban was the residence of the royal family in Dighapatia. The residence covers about 43 acres of land. During

the rule of Ayub Khan of Pakistan, it was the ‘Second Presidential Residence.’ Thereafter, the then Governor of East Pakistan Abdul Monem Khan declared the palace ‘Dighapatia Governor House’ on July 24, 1967. After independence, Bangabandhu on February 9, 1972 declared the former Dighapatia Palace as the ‘Uttara Ganobhaban.’ Currently it is known as the official northern residence of the head of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh or the ‘Uttara Ganobhaban.’ Various official meetings are held here.

**45. Formation of Islamic Foundation:** Bangabandhu felt the need to form a religious organization for research and exploration, spread of Islamic ideals and values, morals and ethics. And from those feelings, he set up the Islamic Foundation on March 22, 1975. It needs to be mentioned that Baitul Mukkaram Society and Islamic Academy were established in 1959 in Dhaka. After independence the Islamic Academy was shut down in 1972. Then Bangabandhu renovated and reformed the shut down Islamic Academy and turned it into the Islamic Foundation. This Foundation started its operations from March 28, 1975. Islamic Foundation Act was passed on July 14, 1975 by the Parliament. Currently this Islamic Foundation is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Religious

Affairs. It has its office in each district.



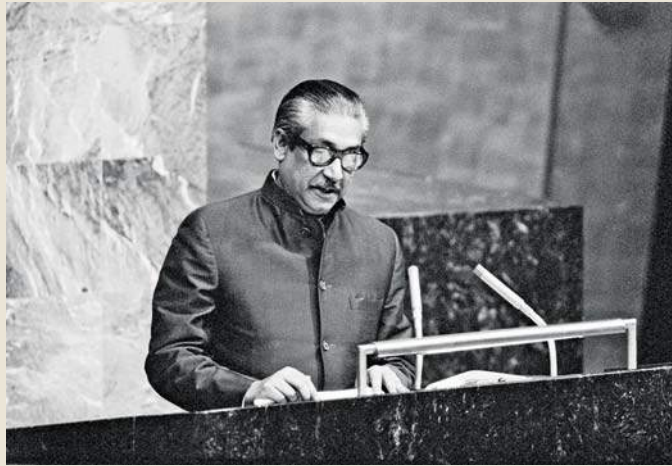
*Islamic Foundation at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque Compound*

**46. Foundation of the Civil Service Training Academy:** The Civil Service Training Academy was founded in 1973 in order to train up the government officials. This academy is the merged form of the former ‘National Institute of Public Administration and Gazetted Officers Training Academy’. During Pakistani rule the training institute for central civil service officers was in Lahore.

But Bangabandhu established the academy for training of the newly appointed officers.

**47. Foreign policy of Bangabandhu:** The foreign policy is the diplomatic strategy of a government in dealing with other nations. The main objective of foreign policy is the use of diplomacy in talks, meetings, making agreements on trade, military defense, sanction, intelligence, foreign aid, global environmental policy etc. with foreign nations instead of using force. Bangabandhu was the founding architect of foreign policy of Bangladesh. He often spoke, ‘Friendship with all and enmity with none’ and often said, ‘I want Bangladesh to be the Switzerland of the East’ By dint of his deft strategy he could manage the recognition of 121 countries within his short tenure. Another side of Bangabandhu was that he became the member of all of UN’s specialized organizations situated in Washington DC, New





*Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman addresses the United Nations General Assembly at New York in Bangla for the first time (September 25, 1974)*

York, Geneva, Vienna, London and Rome before becoming the full member of the United Nations. Thus, he could set up unparalleled examples in the field of foreign policy.

**48. Educational Reforms in Bangladesh:** Education is the backbone of the nation and it is the driving force of people for existence and survival in the world. In the war-devastated Bangladesh, the overall

picture and image of education system was very dismal. Students did not have any benches to sit on, class rooms were shattered, the tin sheet-roofs were broken and rain drops came in. The teachers ever got their salaries. To get rid of those miserable conditions, a high level committee was formed. Bangabandhu took initiatives to bring all primary schools under government control and to pay off all the outstanding salaries of the teachers. During his tenure especially from 1972 to 1973 more than 36000 schools were nationalized. Thus, he introduced a new era in the education sector of Bangladesh.

**49. Membership of Bangladesh to international organizations:** During the tenure of the Bangabandhu government, Bangladesh gained the membership of the UN, the Commonwealth, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the World Bank, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and some other international bodies.

**50. Framing of laws and promulgating of president's orders:** To conduct the state functions, maintain peace and security and promote law and order, Bangabandhu government framed and promulgated about more than 131 Acts, Ordinances and President's Orders within the short tenure of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

**Conclusion:** Bangabandhu had been in power only about 3 years and 7 months. He had to start development activities from zero of the war-devastated country. But within this short time he, as a pioneer, led the country to a stance of considerable development. But he could not get time to realize his full dream. A group of defected and derailed armed forces brutally killed him and other members of his family on the night of 15th August 1975. Consequently, the country lost the Father of the Nation, and the people sustained and suffered an irreparable loss. We pray for the salvation of the departed souls of the great leader and his family members.

*The writer is former Joint Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh*



## Bangali's Dream of Freedom and Immortal Bangabandhu

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**Anupam Sen**

Bangabandhu who had founded a homeland for the Bangalis. It was he who declared for the first time in the country's constitution that the people were the owners of that state. That is to say, the people were the sources of all power, and their vernacular language Bangla was the state language. It was Bangabandhu who had given shape to the first nation-state in the history of the Bangalis. Bangabandhu was also the first to deliver the first constitution for the Bangalis on 4 November 1972. The main language of this constitution is also Bangla. Prior to 26 March and 16 December 1971, the Bangalis had to undergo two colonial rules. The first one was the 190 year-long rule under the British, and the second one was the 23 year-long rule under the civil-military bureaucracy of the Punjabis and Urdu-speakers. These two colonial rules had reduced the most affluent nation in the world (according to the descriptions of travellers like Bernier, Tavernier, etc.) to among the poorest in the globe.

Bangabandhu had spent 13 years of the 23 year-long Pakistani colonial rule behind bars for freeing the Bangalis from subjugation and poverty, and bestowing them with an affluent existence or life, a life bereft of hunger and rich in education and culture. This sincere wish and craving has been depicted in pages after pages of his 'Unfinished Memoirs'. He had written in 1953: 'On the one hand, a group of so-called central leaders of the west and top government employees were secretly working on how to develop West Pakistan swiftly by seizing the assets of East Bengal.....When the Awami League proved through calculations that East

The most glorious days in the thousand year-old annals of Bengali-speaking people have been 26 March, 16 December and 21 February. These three days will keep the Bangalis forever illumined with ultimate glory. And 15 August will be remembered as the inefaceable day of disgrace in the history of the Bangali nation. On this day, some treasonous, tyrannical, cruel men, who were worse than beasts, not only killed the Father of the Nation for covering up the shame of their political defeat, their conscience did not quiver as they did not even hesitate to kill a small child and the newly-wed brides.

The world knows, the Bangalis know, the great hero behind the creation of the above-mentioned dates was the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It was



*Sheikh Mujibur Rahman takes oath as Agriculture and Forest Minister in the Jukta Front Cabinet before the Chief Minister A.K. Fazlul Haq on 15 May 1954*

Bengal was being exploited, they became desperate and started to mete out severe punishments to the Awami League and its leaders' (Unfinished Memoirs).

He further wrote: 'On the other hand, they were helping to build up industries and factories in West Pakistan through programs backed by foreign currencies earned from East

Bengal. As a result, a band of industrialists were groomed, who could extract as much unrestrained profit as they liked from the masses. They became millionaires overnight. Many became industrialists by earning money through selling licences in the name of import-export business while sitting in Karachi. That was a misdeed of the Muslim League government....The so-called leaders of the Bangalis failed to please Golam Mohammad and Chowdhury Mohammad Ali despite handing over to their Punjabi brethren the central capital, military headquarters, all the top government positions, trade and commerce. In the constituent assembly, the Bangalis were the majority despite giving away six seats to their West Pakistani brothers. They could have upheld the interests of the people of East Bengal. But without doing that, they threw down everything to their feet for clinging on to power. In spite of that, they could not hold on to their seats of authority' (Unfinished Memoirs).

Bangabandhu was arrested along with seventy of his associates while observing a strike on 11 March 1948 after calling the first strike in the history of East Bengal as the leader of 'East Pakistan Language Action Council'. At that time, he was in jail for five days. His prison-life had started with these five days of captivity in the first half of 1948 for 'realizing the rights of the Bangalis'. It became three year-long by 1953. He had to repeatedly go to jail during these years. As he had never compromised or displayed softness on the question of rights of the Bangalis, therefore the ruling class of Pakistan and the civil-military bureaucracy had always considered him as a 'terror against the rulers' of Pakistan. They viewed that keeping him in jail was crucial for upholding their class-interests. As Bangabandhu had made the interests of the masses his principal goal in political life, therefore he was even termed as a communist. After watching the state dedicatedly working for the welfare of the people while visiting China in 1953, he had written: 'I myself am not a communist. But I believe in socialism and do not have faith in capitalist economy. I consider that to be a tool of exploitation. As long as this economy of creating capitalists remains in the world, exploitation of the masses cannot be halted' (Unfinished Memoirs).

Although a believer in socialism, he wanted to realize the rights of the people through the masses themselves. The type of socialism he wanted resembled the Scandinavian countries, especially in the shape of socialism established in Sweden over three decades under the leadership of Olaf Palme. While presenting the constitution in the constituent assembly of the newly independent Bangladesh on 4 November 1972, a framework of socialism took shape for the welfare of the mass people. He had described that socialism, and that was incorporated in the constitution.

When the state of Pakistan was created in 1947, 56 percent people of that state were Bangalis. The West Pakistanis accounted for the remaining 44 percent, including the Punjabis, Sindhis, Baluchis and Pashtuns. Despite the Bangalis being the majority population in Pakistan, the capital of Pakistan was at first Karachi, later Rawalpindi, and lastly Islamabad. As a result, the centre of central rule remained in West Pakistan, and the rulers were West Pakistanis. In spite of having the majority population, East Pakistan or Bangladesh was merely a province (like Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan, and the Frontier Province) and its capital Dhaka was a provincial capital; although it deserved the honour of becoming the central capital. About 50-60 percent of Pakistan's central budget was spent for the military, and around 90 percent of this expenditure was incurred in West Pakistan.

About 90 percent of the military officers of Pakistan including Generals, Lieutenant Generals, Major Generals, Brigadier Generals, Colonels, Lieutenant Colonels, Majors, Captains etc. were from West Pakistan, mostly Punjabis. The number of Bangali officers was negligible. There was only one Brigadier, one Colonel, a handful of Majors and Captains from East Pakistan. About 75-85 percent of secretaries, additional secretaries, joint secretaries, deputy secretaries in

the civil bureaucracy were from West Pakistan. The handful of Bangali secretaries who were sent to East Pakistan or Bangladesh had no power.

During the 23 year-long colonial rule of Pakistan, its main foreign exchange earning sector was (like today's readymade garments industry) jute and jute goods. But this foreign currency earned by the jute sector was utilised



*Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with Maulana Bhasani and Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish at Shahid Minar on 21 February, 1964*



*Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announces the 6-Point in Lahore on 5 February 1966*

for the industrialisation, agricultural development and services sector growth of West Pakistan. During the same period, all sectors of East Pakistan or Bangladesh including agriculture, industries and services sectors were hugely neglected. Immediately after the creation of Pakistan, the GDPs of East and West Pakistan in 1949-50 were Rupees 1237.4 crore and Rupees 1209.1 crore respectively. That is to say, the GDP of East Pakistan or Bangladesh was slightly more than that of West Pakistan. But due to the two decade-long exploitation by West Pakistan, the GDPs of East and West Pakistan stood at Rupees 2271.3 crore and Rupees 3156.3 crores respectively in 1969-70. It

can be understood from the foregoing what ruthless exploitations East Pakistan endured over a period of two decades.

Bangabandhu put forward the 6-points in 1966 with the goal of freeing Bangladesh from the bondage of this inhuman exploitation.



*The winner of the elections of 1970, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman greets the people at his residence in Dhanmondi*



*Freedom Fighters on the warfront, 1971*

These six-points were the manuscript for an exploitation-free Bangladesh, and the charter of freedom for the Bangalis. The West Pakistani ruling coterie could never accept in any way that Bangladesh would escape from their exploitative net. Therefore, despite the Awami League winning a huge majority in the National Assembly elections of 1970, its session was never summoned. A non-cooperation movement then ensued all over Bangladesh at the call of Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu declared during his address at Suhrawardy Udyan on 7 March that he did not seek to become the prime minister of Pakistan in exchange for the rights of the Bangalis. He also called for building up fortresses at homes to carry forward the struggle for realizing the rights of the Bangalis. Considered to be the greatest speech for independence in world history, he declared in its last sentence: ‘The struggle this time is for our freedom, the struggle this time is for independence’. This sentence carried the connotation of an epic, because these extraordinary words gave expression to the thousand year-old dream for freedom and national aspiration of the Bangalis.

We achieved victory on 16 December 1971 through a nine-month long bloody struggle in exchange for 3 million lives and the honour of 200 thousand mothers and sisters. Bangabandhu returned to a war-ravaged country from Pakistani prison on 10 January 1972. After returning home, he concentrated his efforts on building the devastated country anew and advancing the country on the path of progress by infusing life to its economy. He presented the nation with an extraordinary constitution within ten months. The five-year plan was formulated forthwith. The communication system was restored by building thousands of culverts and rebuilding large bridges. About 10 million refugees were rehabilitated. He arranged shelters for the 20 million homeless and displaced people. Arrangements were also made for the rehabilitation of the tortured mothers and sisters. The Indian allied forces were withdrawn within three months at his request. This type of withdrawal by an allied force is rare in world history (The US soldiers still maintain a presence in Japan’s Okinawa and Germany, despite the end of the Second World War in 1945).



*On the Homecoming Day, Bangabandhu waving at a huge public rally, Dhaka Racecourse, 10 January, 1972*

Bangabandhu was in power for only three and a half years. When he assumed office in 1972, Bangladesh had no foreign exchange reserve, no air force, and the rail and surface communication was in tatters. The Arab-Israeli war took place in September 1973. As a result, OPEC raised the oil price to 17 dollars from 1 dollar per barrel. This created an unprecedented stagflation in world economy; that is, both terrible recession and inflation occurred at

the same time. This had never happened in the world-economy earlier. This stagflation caused a huge economic setback throughout the world, including North America and Europe. Bangabandhu could maintain the mobility of Bangladesh economy even in the midst of this global economic crisis through his wisdom.

During the same time, a devastating flood swept through 23 districts of the country. He could also tackle it very wisely. Besides, apart from the jute industry, there was virtually no industry in Bangladesh then. Bangladesh was previously a market for various consumer industries set up in West Pakistan, in fact a captive market. It was Bangabandhu who had started the real industrialisation in Bangladesh. As a result, the industries sector could achieve a 7 percent growth during 1973-74, which could not be achieved even after eight years of his death. He also attached priority to the agriculture sector in the Five Year Plan. For this reason, Bangladesh could achieve near self-sufficiency in agriculture soon after his death.

Bangabandhu was not only the great hero of Bangladesh's creation, he was also the builder of the basic structures of the Bangladesh state, as well as the great artist of its advancement. But many great people like Lenin, Bangabandhu and Abraham Lincoln became victims of hatred of the tyrannical war-criminals.

The pro-Pakistani war-criminal tyrants not only assassinated Bangabandhu on 15 August, seventeen members of his family including women and children were brutally killed by them. They were such despicable cowards. Two of Bangabandhu's daughters who were abroad could survive the massacre. The elder among them Sheikh Hasina returned to the country in May 1981 and took up the



*Sheikh Hasina taking oath as Prime Minister for the second time on 6 January, 2009*

mantle of Awami League's leadership. The country once again found a new path. Twenty-one years after Bangabandhu's death, the Awami League was once again returned to the chariot of power under Sheikh Hasina's leadership in 1996. Today, Bangladesh has become an extraordinary development model for the entire world since 2009 under her stewardship.

Food-grain production in the country was only 10 million tons when the country achieved independence in 1971. Today; food-grain production has now risen to 38.50 million tons under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina. Besides, almost all industrial commodities are being produced in Bangladesh for meeting the country's needs. Not only readymade garments, many industrial products like medicines, tin, glass, ceramic, small ships, plastic products etc. are being exported outside. There has also been notable progress in the services sector. The seeds of self-reliance, the victory march that we are witnessing today through the economic progress of Bangladesh were planted by the Bangali nation's greatest hero of all times – the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. His death anniversary is a memorable day for all freedom-seeking people of the world. He gave the Bangalis their abode of freedom. He is therefore everlasting, immortal in the lives of the Bangalis.

**Author : Educationist**

**Translation : Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed**

*Courtesy : PID*



# In the Feelings of Millions

Kamal Chowdhury

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**Y**ou have unfurled the sky of red Palash flowers  
You have presented a flag of earth and green  
You have given us an address, a victory-slogan at birth  
Head held high, you are like a trumpet on eternity's shore.

I see you in all the pages of our history  
Standing tall in sun, rain, memory and ethos  
On the monument of Mujib, in luminous light  
The stars have arrived to tell your tales.

There in the memories of my adolescence  
A thousand years arrive walking on feet  
The soil below turns crimson with blood  
A dream of erect heads after so many deaths.

People are coming, the processions follow  
Humans are coming, at the clarion call of Mujib  
Seeking freedom, building resistance atop unity  
You are the awakening, the friend of a nation.

I have seen your humanity, the revolt and bravery  
You are the finger-raising glory of Bangla  
The country became a mass of people at your call  
The people woke up, joined the fight against darkness.

You are the torch-bearer of freedom from shackles  
The sail of a future pulled by the wind of Bhatiali song  
Floating from the Modhumoti to Padma's water  
You remain awake in the riverine rhyme.

I also dedicate my poem to you  
We do not see your demise anywhere  
Crossing the tears, grief, and flow of blood  
You are still alive in the feelings of millions.

**Author : Poet**

**Translation : Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed**

*Courtesy : PID*



## **Bangabandhu and Dhaka University**

### **‘.. I ’ll Come Back Again’**

**Ajoy Dasgupta**

Rahman, a second year student of Law Department of the university disagreed to sign the undertaking or bond. He was arrested on April 19 and sent to the Dhaka Central Jail. With this, he was imprisoned for the second time since the establishment of Pakistan. Earlier, he had to go to jail for the first time one year back, on March 11 during picketing in a hartal which was called demanding the declaration of Bangla as the state language.

Kazi Ahmed Kamal, the writer of the book ‘Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman O Bangladesher Janmo’ (Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Birth of Bangladesh) stayed with Bangabandhu in the Bekar Hostel during the student life in Kolkata. He wrote, ‘ on being frustrated at the behaviour of the university administration, he (Bangabandhu) left the university, saying at the departure, I ’ll come back again, even might not be possible as a student.’

Fazlul Quader Choudhury from Chattogram, who came in contact with and became close to Bangabandhu during the students’ movement in Kolkata, approached him in the Central Jail. As stated in the first volume of ‘Secret Documents of Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’, Fazlul Quader Choudhury met Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a student of the Department of Law of Dhaka University and also a Muslim Chatra

**T**he poorly paid employees of Dhaka University started demonstration at the beginning of 1949 demanding the increase of some benefits including salary. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, admitted to the Department of Law of Dhaka University after receiving BA degree from Kolkata, already formed the East Pakistan Muslim League by that time. In addition to Chhatra League, Chhatra Federation influenced by the Communist Party lent support to this movement. A strike called by the students in support of the employees was going on. On March 26, 1949, the enraged authorities of Dhaka University took punitive actions against 27 students including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Some students were straight ousted and some were fined. A number of students including Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were penalized with a fine of Taka 15 each. They had been asked they might be pardoned if they would sign an undertaking of good manners by 17 April. Most of the student leaders signed the bond complying with the directives of the authorities. But Sheikh Mujibur



*Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (standing, 2nd from left) amongst Huseyn Shaheed Shuhrawardy and the Chhatra League leaders of Dhaka University*

League leader at the Dhaka Central Jail on the 9th of May (1949). During the meet, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman turned down a proposal given to him to compromise with the university authorities. He even did not agree to seek apology. He argued, the students had not committed such an offence for which they should beg pardon. Despite that, as Fazlul Quader Choudhury continued to insist on negotiation, Sheikh Mujib raised four conditions which were- withdrawal of punishments imposed on all the students, release of all the students arrested in the incident, not to harass anybody further and lifting embargo on publishing news in newspapers.

His formal student life came to an end as he did not compromise with the

injustice. But the lesson of life he learnt from the immense love and responsibility for the motherland and its people made him pledge-bound. As he was adamant to fulfill his pledge, the mission of coming back was materialised.

He was freed from jail on June 26. The East Pakistan Awami Muslim League was launched just three days ahead of his release. Issues like democracy, establishing Bangla as the state language, protecting economic interests of 'Purbo Bangla' (East Bengal), autonomy were emphasised. An idea of non-communal organisation also came up. Bangabandhu elected Joint General Secretary though he was in jail under the security law. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani, President of the party, leading a huge procession with band troupe came to the jail gate at Nazimuddin Road on the day he was released from jail. The young leader freed from jail, escorted by procession, was brought to Dhaka University from where he was expelled unlawfully. The political analysts right at that time started to predict that Awami League had cordially received its Grand Leader.

No student-identity, no formal academic life. But Dhaka University remained in the centre of his activities. He was again arrested on the last day of 1949. He was even in jail during the stringing of that very immortal ballad with the blood-shed

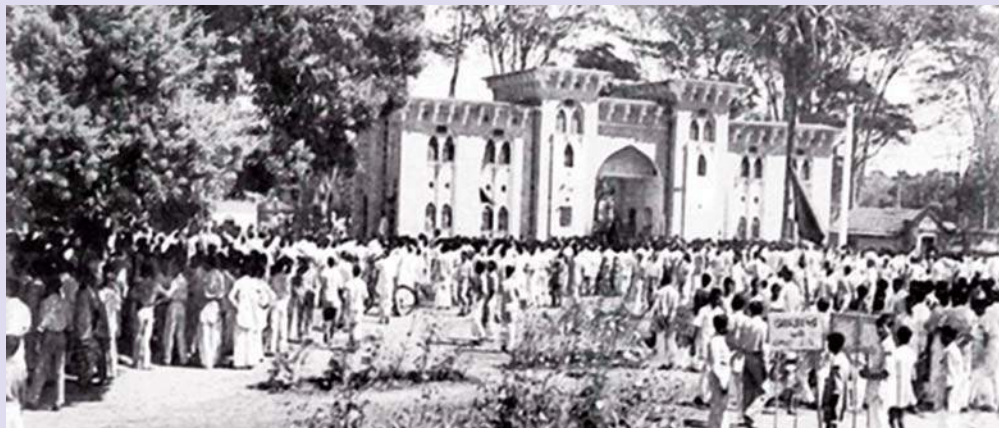


*Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 'Mourning Procession' with Maulana Bhasani, 21 February 1953*

of Rafiq-Salam-Barkat on the 21st February of 1952. He contributed to build up this great movement. Intelligence reports during that time repeatedly stated-- Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, kept in Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment, 'misusing' this opportunity held secret meetings one after another with the leaders of Political parties and students' organisations. He decided to start hunger strike keeping a liaison with the hartal programme of the 21st February. The success of the Language Movement led to his release. He came out from jail on February 27. Just after two months, on April 26, the responsibility of Acting General Secretary of the steadily popularity gaining party, Awami Muslim League was bestowed on him. We can learn from the intelligence reports, the procession brought out from Dhaka University marking the

observance of the first 21st February in 1953 was led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Ataur Rahman Khan. This is how he came back to Dhaka University.

He was the planner of the strong students' movements waged against the martial law rule of Field Marshal Ayub Khan at the beginning of sixties. He discussed strategy of movements with the leaders of Communist Party and NAP. Maintaining regular communication with the leaders of the students' organizations, he used to advise them. As the movement was going on, he was arrested on February 7, 1962 and detained for four months. Like the agitation of



*Students and people preparing to defy Section-144 at Dhaka Varsity campus, 21 February 1952*



*Curzon Hall in 1950s, Dhaka University*

'62, the focal point of the students' upsurge of 1964 demanding solution to the problems prevailing in education was the University of Dhaka. He was not coming to Amtola for delivering speech; but it was known to the masses who was behind. More clear it was to the Pakistani rulers who were always active to hit on the interests of

the Bengali. And on that very ground, he was sent to jail.

To protect interests of the Bengali, he raised the historic 6-point programme at the beginning of February in 1966. The infamous Agartola Conspiracy Case was filed to resist this movement. The University of Dhaka went on upsurge again. A tough students' movement led by Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) with 11-point demands began. The students and the masses of the whole country became violent demanding the release of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman . Piles of conspiracies were wiped out. After release on February 22, 1969, as proposed by DUCSU Vice President Tofail Ahmed, he was greeted with the title 'Bangabandhu' at a reception at the Race Course Maidan on the following day.

He came back to this Dhaka University with a unique stature on March 2, 1971. The movement for establishing Bangladesh was then on peak. There was a huge gathering of students and common people convened by DUCSU and Chhatra League at the BotTola, adjacent to the Arts Building. A red-green-golden coloured flag, recognized as the national flag by the elected people's representatives of Bangladesh was hoisted there. The recognition of ' amar sonar bangla, ami tomay bhalobhashi..... .....(My Bengle of gold, I love you.....) as national anthem was also formally proposed by various students' organizations including DUCSU.

After the Independence of Bangladesh, he was accorded the life membership of DUCSU at a rally on the university play ground on May 7,1972. On that day, a copy of the unfair order expelling him from the university in 1949 was handed over to him. This expulsion order, however, was formally withdrawn after a long time on



*TSC in 1950s, Dhaka University*

August 14, 2010. And thus a blatant fault was averted.

Bangabandhu had to come to Dhaka University once again on July 20, 1972 to amend a major deviation of students' movement. Some students cordoned the Vice Chancellor's Office with an illogical demand of having academic certificates without sitting for examinations. Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, keeping cabinet meeting postponed, rushed to the Registrar Building of Dhaka University and freed the Vice-Chancellor. He rebuked those who raised such suicidal demand.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally assassinated on August 15, 1975. As the President and

Chancellor, he was scheduled to visit Dhaka University to attend a function on that day. The University of Dhaka did not forget its own responsibility. Voices protesting the assassination of the Father of the Nation were raised from this very institution. Slogans --- Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu and Ek Mujib rakto theke lokkho Mujib Jonmo Nebe (with the assassination of an entity of Mujib, hundred thousand Mujibs would come up). On November 4, 1975, beginning from BotTola, a mourning procession carrying banners inscribed 'Kadho Bangalee Kadho' (Cry Bengali Cry) marched to the residential building number 677 at Dhanmondi 32. In the afternoon, the senate meeting took a unanimous motion expressing condolence at the assassination of Bangabandhu and demanding trial of the killers. The three student- representatives of senate—DUCSU General Secretary Mahbubuzzaman, student leaders Ismat Qadir Ghama and Ajay Dasgupta took initiative in this regard. Hartal was observed the following day.

On August 15, 1976, on the first anniversary of Bangabandhu killing, a milad mahfil was arranged in the Dhaka University Mosque. The students, ignoring the ruthless obstacle of the martial law rule, paid homage by offering flowers at the Bangabandhu's residence all the day.

And thus Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman comes back again and again to his heart rendering institution Dhaka University.

*The article is translated by Md. Saifullah, Senior Deputy Principal Information Officer, Press Information Department, Bangladesh Secretariat*

*Courtesy : PID*



*Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on his way to Special Tribunal set up for the Agartala Conspiracy Case, January 1969*



## Sheikh Russel: A Bullet-hit Innocent Boy

Sheikh Masud Kamal

that sent him to jail frequently. It is learnt that his house tutor Gitali said, 'The kid had sympathy for the poor. He used to give away gifts as donations. Whenever he found any poor being cheated, he would take him to his father and complained'.

On 15 August 1975, Russel pleaded to be taken to his mother, not knowing she had already been killed. The killers made him walk past the bodies of his close ones. Finally, when he confronted his mother's body in the lobby, he burst into tears.



*Sheikh Russel with his father and family members at dining table*

It is not easy to come up with the right words to express our sorrow and convey our condolences to the surviving sisters, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana, who have lost their 10 years old youngest brother- Sheikh Russel. It is an irreplaceable loss for them. 'What did my younger brother do that they had to kill him?' Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asks and remembers her loving younger brother whenever she talks about the shameless killing in 1975.

Sheikh Russel, Bangabandhu's youngest son, was born in Dhaka on 18 October 1964. At the time of his death, Russel was a student of Class Four at Dhaka University Laboratory School. Russell did not get much of his father due to his father's political activities

that sent him to jail frequently. It is learnt that his house tutor Gitali said, 'The kid had sympathy for the poor. He used to give away gifts as donations. Whenever he found any poor being cheated, he would take him to his father and complained'. Then he said, 'take me to Hasu Apa'. At that time Sheikh Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana were abroad. That means Russel possibly thought he would survive if he could go abroad to his sisters. But, instead of having a little mercy on an innocent boy they shot him. He was the last person to be killed on that dark night along with his parents and other family members

at the residence of Dhanmondhi 32.

Razia Matin Chowdhury, the Principal of University Laboratory School, in a memoir said, 'Russel, the most kind-hearted little boy, that I have ever had the pleasure of teaching. He loved to make everyone laugh. He will be missed by all his classmates. Many of his teachers said, Russel had the biggest heart of any boy they have ever come across'. As his teachers mentioned, Russel cared about everybody and he was loved by everyone at school. Not a single day would go by where he would not glorify his school.

Bangabandhu was a great fan of the eminent thinker and philosopher Bertrand Russell and when he was imprisoned, he spent his time reading the books of Bertrand Russell. As such he named his youngest son Russel after the name of this great philosopher.

The tragic incident led to his death stunned the entire country. The brutal killing has left us speechless. The same has been happening in different forms on the globe during these decades which is not acceptable. John Donne, English poet wrote aptly, 'Death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind.' Like Russel many other little boys and girls, who are free from evil or guilt, are being slaughtered even today.

What a beautiful boy, Russel was! He was adorable to everyone. He might have become a remarkable man with the passage of time. Wiping out Bangabandhu's family bloodline including Sheikh Russel in 1975, was one of the cruelest acts in the world. The conspirators did not show any mercy and did not spare his life.

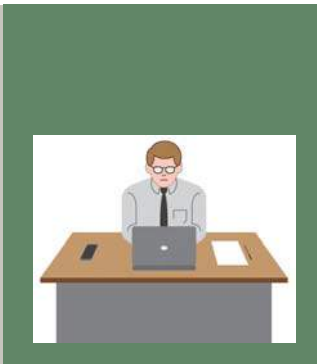
The nation reproaches the heinous act of assassination of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members including little boy Sheikh Russel. Death cannot take Russel away from the memory of his surviving sisters Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, and Sheikh Rehana. He will be remembered by them and us as well. He will be in our mind always. We pray for the innocent soul.

***The writer is Joint Director in BIWTA***



*Sheikh Russel with his parents*





## Civil Service Reforms in Bangladesh

**Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed**

cheaper services. The Commission was headed by a distinguished civil servant and former DG of CIRDAP Dr. ATM Shamsul Haque as the chairman and included luminaries in the field like M. Khalid Shams, Khandakar Asaduzzaman, Quazi Shamsul Alam, Dr. S A Samad, Dr. Akbar Ali Khan, Syed Manzur Elahi and Advocate Md. Rahmat Ali as members.

The Commission submitted a comprehensive 3-volume report to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in June 2000, covering many areas such as improvement of public

**T**he Public Administration Reform Commission (PARC) was constituted by the first Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government in January 1997 to recommend policies, programmes and activities for improving the level of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability and transparency in public organizations of Bangladesh. The then government displayed great pragmatism by setting up the Commission on the eve of the 21st century, when there was a global movement towards adoption of the concept of New Public Management (NPM), i.e. performance-based and result-oriented administration with ‘outsourcing’ and ‘contracting out’ wherever possible by upholding the rights of citizens’ for better and



*Bangladesh Public Service Commission- Agargaon, Dhaka*

services delivery, civil service reforms, reorganizing institutions and rationalising manpower, restructuring field administration and decentralization, combating corruption, reducing wastage and promoting value for money, strengthening parliamentary oversight, facilitating private investment, and devising a mechanism for implementing PARC recommendations. It was a world-class report which synthesised many previous reports on public sector reorganization and reforms since independence and incorporated the latest trends in public management all over the world. The then government was committed to implementing these recommendations, but unfortunately that could not materialise as the subsequent government which came to power in 2001 shelved those on political considerations. Thus ended a brave and bold attempt to overhaul and reform the country's age-old public administrative system.

The present article focuses on the recommendations put forward by PARC on reforming the civil service in Bangladesh. These recommendations were divided into interim, short-term and long-term ones by the PARC. The first interim recommendation called for identification of employees in accordance with their grades and the second advocated raising the merit quota in government services. Increasing the merit quota from 45 percent to 55 percent was suggested in recruitment of class-I and class-II officers.

The first among the short-term recommendations was: 'Merit should be the basis for appointment, posting and promotion at all levels in all spheres of public administration'. This was because quotas were not consistent with the country's Constitution and were a poor substitute for provision of adequate facilities that could result in equality of opportunity for all sections of society. Alongside the central Public Service Commission, the PARC also recommended creation of a Local Government Service Commission for recruitment of personnel in the local government bodies.

The second short-term recommendation of PARC was: 'Discipline should be enforced in all areas of Public Administration', as it considered laxity in enforcing discipline as one of the main reasons for deterioration of the civil service. The third recommendation dwelt on constitution of three clusters of closely related Ministries in the Secretariat, namely, General, Economic, and socio-physical Infrastructure with the posts of Deputy Secretary and above. Ministry or Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs could remain outside the purview of those clusters.

In the fourth short-term recommendation, the PARC proposed that a Senior Management Pool (SMP) should be introduced in the Secretariat, which should consist of the posts of Deputy Secretary, Joint secretary, Additional Secretary and Secretary. Induction into SMP at the level of Deputy Secretary should be on the basis of competitive examination to be conducted by PSC. For the post of Deputy Secretary in a cluster of Ministries/Divisions, officers from all cadres – who are in the senior scale and have completed at least 8 years of service would be eligible for appearance at the examination. This would ensure scope of representation from all cadres at the Secretariat and facilitate fast track promotion for the meritorious officers.

In the fifth recommendation, the PARC opined that existing officers of the Secretariat at various levels should continue to hold their existing positions, and officers up to national grade-3 should be provided an option to choose their



*Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, Savar, Dhaka*

preferred cluster. The Superior Selection Board (SSB) should undertake a review to accommodate existing officers in these three clusters, considering their qualifications, experience and performance. But while appearing at the examination for induction into SMP, all cadre officers should be given option for joining clusters of their preference. Once inducted into SMP, they would lose their lien in previous cadre posts. Officers up to grade-3 and all support staffs should rotate within a cluster of Ministries. If found necessary and to meet special requirements, Ministries/Divisions within a cluster should be allowed to fill up to 10% of their total posts (Deputy Secretary and above) on transfer from Ministries/Divisions belonging to other clusters.

The PARC opined in the sixth recommendation that the Government may allow up to 15% lateral entry in the Secretary-level posts and up to 10% in the posts of Deputy Secretary and above. These posts and the posts of all heads of Corporations and other government Departments/Directorates (subject to provisions in the concerned recruitment rules) could be filled up through open competition for a fixed tenure. All government officers up to two steps below the relevant posts and candidates from the private sector with prescribed qualifications would be eligible to compete for such posts.

In the seventh short-term recommendation, PARC advocated that appropriate steps should be taken for career advancement and equal scope for promotions in all cadres; in case of non-availability of vacancies for the competent incumbents, sanction of selection grade/time-scale should be considered. The eighth recommendation called for a fixed tenure of 3 to 5 years for appointment to any particular post. The ninth recommendation opined that merit, efficiency, integrity, training and service records based on successes or failures in fulfilling performance targets should be the guiding principles for promoting officials. The prevalent Annual Confidential Report (ACR) form should be amended accordingly.

The PARC opined in the tenth recommendation that the Government should

continue to provide more opportunities and encouragement for employment of women. An enabling environment for working women should be ensured through suitable field accommodation, transportation, day-care centres, and separate toilets. The eleventh recommendation called for enhancing the retirement age of public servants from 57 to 60 years and stopping contractual appointments in the duty posts of the Government.

In the twelfth recommendation, the PARC held the view that three Public Service Commissions (PSCs) should be established – one for General services, another for Technical services and the third for Education services – in order to improve the standard of tests and reduce the time for recruitment. Appointment of chairmen in the proposed PSCs should preferably be on the basis of professional experience and skills in respective fields.

The thirteenth recommendation asked the then Ministry of Establishment (now called Ministry of Public Administration) to speedily implement the Action Plan on Training recommended by the Public Administration Training Strengthening Study 1998. The fourteenth recommendation called for recruitment of instructors and heads of all training institutions for training of class I officers through open competition on the basis of job specification and job description both from inside and outside the government.

The fifteenth short-term recommendation asserted that officers as well as support staffs should be given proper training in computer literacy and other skills in the light of changing technology. Such training should be demand-driven and tailored to specific needs and circumstances. The sixteenth recommendation asked for establishing more than one Administrative Tribunal, especially in Dhaka, for expeditious redress of grievances and quick dispensation of justice for the government servants.

The PARC opined in the seventeenth recommendation that the Government should adopt a forward-looking positive pay policy instead of making ad-hoc pay revisions from time to time. Wages and salaries should be linked to Cost of Living Index (CLI) to offset their erosion by inflation. A Pay research/adjustment cell should be created in the Ministry of Finance to adjust the salary to the cost of living index of the government employees on an annual basis.

The PARC made only two long-term recommendations on civil service reforms. The first advocated that quotas in case of all recruitments should be gradually abolished by providing equal opportunity to backward areas and disadvantaged groups. The second long-term recommendation opined that broad-band salary should be introduced on a pilot basis in order to make provision for different steps of pay at the entry level and to link increment with performance.

While looking back, it is found that the recommendations of the Public Administration Reform Commission are still very much relevant in the context of present-day Bangladesh. It can still be profitably implemented for streamlining bureaucracy in the country in order to ensure more transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public services. A reformed civil service can also be the most vital input in the materialisation process of Vision-2021 and Vision-2041 of the present government.

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## Teaching of Eid-al-Adha Sacrifice the soul towards peace for mankind

M. Mizanur Rahman

We remember every year very solemnly the great day of Sacrifice on the day of Eid al-Adha but we are yet to recollect how far we practice the morale of this great auspicious day!

We must have to remember our national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam who gave us a right order of sermon as saying-

*'THIS DAY IS NOT FOR THE  
SLAUGHTER OF BEASTS*

*BUT FOR THE INVOCATION OF  
TRUTH AND STRENGTH'*

Translation: Mizanur Rahman

There is no doubt that every civilized person all over the world like peace but not war or conflict between human beings. This civilized human aptitude must be kept up for the betterment of mankind all over



The Eid congregation of Eid-al-Adha at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, 2020

the world. In this vast emptiness of endless space of the universe along with its super-constellation having planetary complex and wonder of other creations of the unknown being what we call Allah or God or by any name that is professed by any faith on earth human has to live in peaceful co-existence.



*Children embracing after Eid prayer*

Our prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM)

taught us to lead with peaceful life in circumstances. Let us learn the sense of sacrifice from the sacred and auspicious day of celebrating the pleasant air of Eid-al-Adha. Here is none to be called rich or poor, in the truest sense of the term, but the Muslims who practice Islam where everyone is equal in social, economic and political term.

When Allah bade Ibrahim (A.S) to put his most precious thing in life that was his son Ismael as an act of obedience to God's command. Before Ibrahim could sacrifice his son, however Almighty Allah provided a lamb to sacrifice instead. It was a symbol of love and sacrifice. Man can love Allah but why not human; the transient being that is created by Allah after His image? For Ibrahim Allah as dearly loved as his son and vice versa. This is the learning that emanates from Islam. Islam means peace.

‘On the altar of sacrificial stage you put your animal for sacrifice then only

When you will be set free from your oppressors and your faith will be freed.

Let this sacrificial blood be inflamed to fire

burning the oppressors traceless’.

(‘Korbani’ by Kazi Nazrul Islam)

Muslims are expected to dress finest clothing to perform Eid prayer in a large congregating in Eidgah (an open field or mosque). After that affluent Muslims who can afford it to sacrifice their best halal domestic animals as a symbol of Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his only son.

The meat from the sacrificed animal preferred to be divided into three parts. The family retains one-third of the share, another third is given to relatives, friends, neighbours and remaining third is given to the poor needy.



*A limited number of Pilgrimes attended the Hajj maintaining social distance during corona pandemic in 2020*

Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam composed a piece of great poem on Eid-al-Adha as “Sahidi Eid” in which he counselled human being,

‘Slaughter the beast in you at your heart  
for you live and let the animals (others) live’.

In commemoration of the intervention, an animal is sacrificed ritually. One should remember that Eid-al-Adha is not for fashion. It is a ritual performance where saying prayer is also a devotion to praise the Almighty Allah for his magnificent sacrifice for mankind.

Let us hear what poet speaks of that great unselfish sacrifice of Allah, the Almighty -

### **The Sacrifice**

M.Mizanur Rahman

I wonder, whose absolute hands  
work on every soul every day?  
And whose hands laid the constellation  
over the vast firmament?  
How were the land and the ocean  
embedded so wonderfully  
by that time-honoured saint?  
Does the sun  
play the real role?  
That all the rays’ air in the whole!

Who is the herald of this all time sacrifice  
and who's that absolute soul?

What a great virtue adorned nice  
with everything day and night!

Is that He or She or both?  
Of which our fires spring forth?

Is that a great mighty One  
that puts us on the balance of power?  
Under whose eternal guidance  
runs the boundless hour?

We look around with awe and reverence  
in our eyes,  
what a great Soul's sacrifice!

That never asks anything from us  
but renders unbarred light and air  
which everyone of us equally shares!

I wonder, from the mother's womb  
we come empty handed to this light,  
but alas!

Every way we grab something  
and fight each other to place our right.

In our mind if we hold the real sense of sacrifice,  
it is not far at achieving peace of eternal bliss.

(This poem is extracted from the book of verse, 'A  
Heart that bleeds' by M.Mizanur Rahman, page-28)

Your sincerest resurgence to the faith of Islam shall give you the shield of protection to you and your community at every stake. A faithless one can never stand erect to face the challenge of time.

As the staunchest believer of Islam we cannot allow obscenity in our moral physical or in mental culture like our ritual traditionalism as civilized Muslims. We must have eternal vigilance towards such righteousness at every step so that corruption cannot take place in our sacred mind. We must be proud of our Faith in which humanity is the essence above everything else.

This Eid-al-Adha has always taught us to face all odds and ordeals with courage and determination to overcome them. We must win a day no matter come what may.

***The author is a poet, translator, essayist and columnist***





## Post-Covid Tourism Planning in Bangladesh

**Md. Ziaul Haque Howlader**

come forward with proper planning and incentive programmes for this industry. The concerned Ministry and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) – the government tourism organisation – have formulated proper planning and policy

The whole world witnesses a critical juncture with the Novel Corona Virus that has meanwhile taken a great toll on global tourism industry. Here Bangladesh is no exception. The Virus has already taken the much delicate tourism industry of Bangladesh in its all verticals – leisure vacation, adventure or eco-tourism, business or Visiting Friends & Relatives (VFR), Free Individual Travel (FIT) and Group Inclusive Traveller (GIT) etc. The small and medium size tour operators have been facing much challenge as foreign tourists rescheduled their confirmed package tours and bookings in hotels and resorts. The industry also witnessed some retrenchments especially in hotels, motels, resorts, restaurants, bars and picnic spots of Bangladesh. However, the government of Bangladesh has



*Cox's Bazar: The world's longest sandy sea beach*

guidelines that accommodate all the people of this industry – from large investors to marginal service providers. BPC plays an important role and keeps direct and indirect contribution to the development of Bangladesh tourism industry including creating human resource. With the government policy guidelines, this organization has started on-line trainings to create skilled tourism manpower and helping those students



*Parjatan motel at Cox's Bazar*

finding jobs in this juncture. BPC also keeps continuing its ongoing tourism development projects across the country so that the local community as well as tour operators and travel agents of Bangladesh can get benefit. The government also organizes on-line workshops to build up confidence among the tourism investors. The other objectives are to sensitize local people up-keep tourism resources as well as development environment-friendly. Initiative has been taken to offer bank loan for investment in tourism parks, resorts, picnic spot etc.

Among the many other planning of Bangladesh government, more focuses on domestic tourism rather than the long haul in-bound tourists have been made. The government puts in effort to develop environment-friendly and sustainable tourism to achieve SDG by 2030. Eco-tourism infrastructures are being built near the worlds' largest mangrove forest – the Sundarbans, Sylhet and Chittagong Hill Tracts. The government has employed tourism experts to develop 'Bangladesh Tourism Master Plan', which will help development of eco and sustainable tourism in the country.

Besides, proper campaign has been taken to attract foreign tourists to Bangladesh when situation would come normal or deadly Covid-19 is over. Through proper publicity confidence will be built among the foreign tourists to visit Bangladesh. At present limited number of domestic tourists are being encouraged for travel. Experts believe the number of domestic tourists will be higher than previous year when everything will becomes normal as tourism spots appear fresher than ever.

The government has gradually opened up its land mark tourist attractions to tourists. Earlier, hotels, motels and restaurants have been opened up in limited scale to operate with maintaining health, hygiene and physical distance. In this regard, government has developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

As travel is essential for physical and mental health for people, tourists have already started visiting to the tourist destinations. With the movement of tourists, employment started to regenerate. Those who were sitting idle find their jobs and resume earnings for their families. However, government guidelines have to be

followed at each tourist destinations.

During the Covid-19 throughout the period of mid-March to mid-August '20, tourists did not go for recreation to any tourist destination in Bangladesh. As each and every single tourist destination of Bangladesh remains crowd-less and witnesses almost zero visits, these destinations have become crispier, more refresh and rejuvenated. Usually, Cox's Bazar - the world's longest sea beach is visited by 1.5 million tourists per year. The other popular tourist destination such as and Sylhet is visited by 0.5 million and three hill districts altogether about 0.7 million tourist per year. For almost last five months not a single tourist visit any destination means, the destinations have got their glamour. When a destination has to bear tourists beyond its carrying capacity, it loses its beauty and cannot have the capacity of replenishment. These five months offer a very good time to the destinations to be replenished and rejuvenated as we see dancing of Dolphin in the bay of Cox's Bazar. Flora has returned on the beach.



80 km long Cox's Bazar-Teknaf Marine Drive

Tourism industry involves many backward and forward linkages such as – package tours (in-bound, out-bound and domestic), rent-a-car, picnic spots, resorts and hotel bookings, airlines ticketing, tourist transports and vessels, restaurant, travel agents etc. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation runs hotels, motels, bars, picnic spots, rent-a-car and tourism training institute, duty free operations etc. All the activities started resuming with maintain government guidelines.

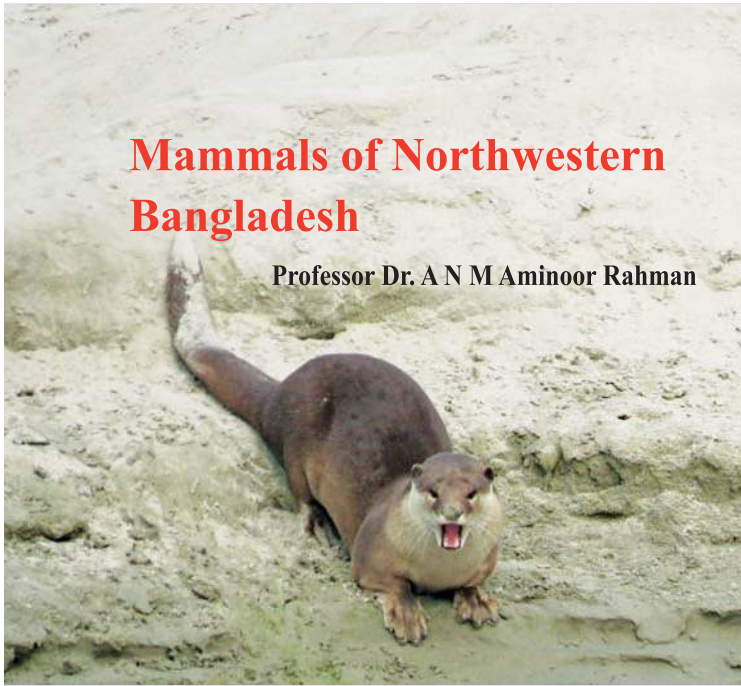
Private tour operators, resort and picnic owners, travel agents and restaurant owners who have close connections with BPC and contribute to the tourism development are also gradually opening up with their businesses.

With the declaration of incentive packages by the Prime Minister, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, all the tourism stakeholders including BPC becomes rejuvenated with different plans and programmes. With the government fund, BPC is carrying out its on-going development projects. The private tour operators of Bangladesh are offering its package tours and started bookings to different hotels and motels of BPC and other organizations across the country. Though, the tourism industry of Bangladesh faces many challenges in different times owing to natural disaster or global economic recession, this year it witnesses the greatest challenges. But with the proper guidance of the government and proper incentive packages and planning, this industry has started to bounce back. We all know that tourism is a resilient industry that can rebound with a little incentives and congenial atmosphere. With the government guidelines and incentive packages, tourism industry will get back of its stronger foot again.

***The author is tourism analyst and Manager (Public Relations), BPC***

## Mammals of Northwestern Bangladesh

Professor Dr. A N M Aminoor Rahman



Mammals are the most intelligent animals that are most adeptly flourished and widely distributed throughout the world including Bangladesh. Among the total of 5,416 species of mammals found worldwide 472 species are recorded from South Asia of which 400 species are found in India and 139 species occurred in Bangladesh. They belong to 35 families under 9 orders of the class Mammalia.

Zoo-geographically Bangladesh can be divided into seven regions that has referred in the distribution of different species of wildlife including mammals (Fig. 01). These regions are: 1. Central (Greater Dhaka, Tangail and Kumilla districts), 2. North (Mymensing division), 3. Northeast (Sylhet division), 4. Southeast (Chittagong division excluding Greater Kumilla and Noakhali districts), 5. South (Barisal division plus Greater Noakhali district), 6. Southwest (Khula division plus Greater Faridpur district) and 7. Northwest (Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions).

Once Northwestern region was enriched with forests (deciduous and rural groves) and wetlands where a number of rare mammals were roamed around including Nilgai, Striped Hyena, Grey Wolf, Blackbuck, Swamp Deer and Indian Rhinoceros.



Zoo-geographical regions of Bangladesh

Some of these mammals, viz. Nilgai and Striped Hyena, were unique in that they were found only in Northwestern region. Unfortunately, most of these forest have been degraded and being converted into crop fields and used for human settlements. Deforestation, forest degradation, fragmentation and shrinkage of forests, conversion for cultivation and human settlements, habitat destruction, over exploitation and hunting extirpated these rare and unique mammals not only from the Northwestern part but also from the country.

**Nilgai or Blue Bull** (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*): locally known as *Nilgai* or *Chamri Garu* once only found in Tetulia of Panchagarh district. But after 1940s, this unique mammal of Northwestern Bangladesh became extinct and Bangladesh lost a large wild ruminant species. From 2000 to 2018, a few Nilgai were captured at different bordering points of Northwestern region that were actually Indian Nilgai. Some of these animals are now kept in Ramsagar National Park at Dinajpur and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park at Gazipur. Striped Hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*- local name Dora Hayena or Naukra-bagh), another glorious unique mammals of Northwestern Bangladesh, occurred in the dry areas of the region until the end of 19th century. Now it is an extinct mammal of Bangladesh.

Along with Southwestern part the Grey Wolf (*Canis lupus*- local name Nekrey-bagh) had existed in Northwest until 1940s. The Blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*- local name Krishnamriga, Krishnashar or Kalshar) occurred in Northwest and Southwest probably until the end of the 19th century. Except Southern Bangladesh Swamp Deer (*Cervus duvaucelli*- local name Barasinga horin) had distributed widely in the rest of the country including Northwest. But after 1950s the animal was never seen in the country. Indian Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*- local name Gandar or Gara) occurred in the forested and grassy areas of Northwest, North, Northeast and Central regions that also existed until the 19th Century.



*Blue Bull (Nilgai) in Ramsagar National Park, Dinajpur*

The mighty Royal Bengal Tiger, currently a Critically Endangered mammal of Bangladesh, was once inhabited in all forested areas and even in some village groves of the country including the Northwest. However, the village-grove-dwelling tigers completely disappeared when the last tiger was shot at Bangladesh, Panchagarh in 1962. Currently this species is confined only to the mangrove forest of the Sundarbans. After the extinction of these rare and unique mammals, presently only one

Critically Endangered mammal named Smooth-coated Otter, two Endangered mammals including Rufous-tailed Hare and Fishing Cat, and two Vulnerable mammals namely Bengal Fox and Ganges River Dolphin are found in Northwestern Bangladesh. Besides, a few Near-threatened mammals including Jungle Cat, Leopard Cat, Large Indian Civet and Small Indian Civet are distributed all over Northwestern Bangladesh.

Forests of Northwestern Bangladesh is mainly composed of patches of deciduous or Sal forests and rural groves. The most abundant mammalian species of Sal forest are Golden Jackal, Irawaddy Squirrel, Northern Palm Squirrel, Jungle Cat, Civets, Mongooses and Bats. Bats constitute the largest mammalian community and country's largest fruit bat colony ( $\pm 3000$ ) is recorded in Birampur of Dinazpur district. Traditionally the villagers of Bangladesh including Northwest planted fruit yielding plants around their homes and hence, flourishing vegetation in the backyards of village homes often create perfect habitat for the small mammals. Homestead vegetation and surrounding crop fields are good habitats for many small mammalian species including Jungle Cat, Fishing Cat, Large Indian Civet, Small Indian Civet, Palm Civet, Small and Common Mongooses, different species of rats and other small mammals. Some of the important mammals found in Northwestern region of Bangladesh are discussed here in short.

**Smooth-coated Otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*):** Aquatic mammal Smooth-coated Otter, also called Smooth Indian Otter or Indian Smooth-coated Otter, belongs to the Mustelidae family is distributed in and around the wetlands and forested areas of Bangladesh including Northwestern region. This rare species is considered as Critically Endangered by IUCN Bangladesh. Locally it is called Baro Ud, Mosrin Ud, Udbiral, Bhondor, Machh-neul or Dhere. Its population has declined more than 90% due to hunting and poaching, loss of natural habitat and severe conflict with commercial fish farming. Except Bangladesh, the animal is also native to Iraq, Indian Subcontinent, Myanmar and Southeast Asian countries. Globally it is considered as vulnerable.

It is the largest otter in Asia having a body length of 59-79 centimetre (cm) with a 37-50 cm long tail. Weight is 7-11 kilogram (kg). Body is long and thick with short legs, webbed feet with sharp claws. Neck is as wide as the body and head. Fur is shorter and smoother than other otters and appears velvety



Smooth-coated Otter (Ud) in the Padma charlands near Rajshahi City

and shining. Dorsum is light to dark brown and ventral portion is light brown to almost grey.

Smooth-coated Otter inhabits in lowlands, coastal mangrove forests, peat swamp forests, freshwater wetlands, charlands of rivers, lakes and rice paddies. This diurnal mammal occurs in small family groups. Food is composed of insects, earthworms, crustaceans, frogs, water rats, turtles, birds and fishes. The species breeds year round, but mostly between August and December. After 60-65 days of gestation female delivers 1-5 pups. Young open their eyes after 28 days and weaned after five months. Lifespan in the wild is 4-10 years; but in captivity can survive up to 20 years.

**Rufous-tailed Hare (*Lepus nigricollis*):** Rufous-tailed Hare, also called Indian Hare or Black-naped Hare, belongs to the family Leporidae is widely distributed in their patchy habitats throughout the country except the Sundarbans. The species is rare and presently considered as Endangered in Bangladesh. Locally it is known as *Shashak*, *Khorgosh*, *Shosa*, *Lafa* or *Lafaru*. The mammal is native to Indian Subcontinent as well as Indonesia.



*Rufous-tailed Hare (Khorgosh)*

Rufous-tailed Hare is a long-legged small mammal. Male is usually longer than the female. Body length is 40-70 cm with 10 cm long tail and weight is 1.35-7.0 kg. Upperpart is a mixture of grey and brown, sometimes with black markings. Legs and belly are yellowish, rest of the body is white. Rufous patch on dorsal side of the tail and black patch on the neck.

Eyes are large eyes, ears are long and tail is short.

The species lives in grasslands, bushes, cultivated lands, tea gardens as well as forested areas. The nocturnal and diurnal animal is very shy and occurs singly or in pairs. Diet consists of grass, leaves, roots, tubers, fruits, seeds, crops etc. Breeding occurs year round but is highest between October and February. Female gives birth to 1-4 offspring at a time in a hol-low made in the grass after 41-47 days of gestation. Young are precocious at birth, born with well furred and open eyes. Become mature in the following year. Lifespan is unknown.

**Fishing Cat (*Prionailurus bengalensis*):** Fish eating mammal Fishing Cat belongs to the family Felidae is widely distributed throughout the country with low population density both in the countryside or homestead woodlands and in all kinds of natural forests and wetlands. According to IUCN Bangladesh it is suspected that more than 50% of its population has been declined during the last two decades and, therefore, it is now regarded as Endangered in Bangladesh. It is



Fishing Cat (Mekhho Biral / Mekhho Bagh)

locally known as **Mekhho Biral**, **Mekhho Bagh**, **Mekhhi Biral**, **Baghaila** or **Dash Bagh**. Globally it is found in Pakistan, China, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and Indonesia.

Fishing Cat is much larger than the domestic cat. Body length is 78-86 cm

with 25-33 cm long tail. The height and weight are 38-47 cm and 7-15 kg, respectively. It has a stocky body and short tail. Coat colour is olive-brown. Black elongated spots run in parallel lines over back which form longitudinal lines on the neck.

This nocturnal felid stays in the forests, bushes and wetlands. It is a solitary hunter and hunts fishes, frogs, crabs, snails, snakes, birds and small mammals. Although it's breeding season is from March to June, but can breeds year round. Female delivers 2-3 kittens usually in dense reed thickets after 63-70 days of gestation. Kittens mature in 15 months. Lifespan is nearly ten years in captivity.

**Bengal Fox (*Vulpes bengalensis*):** Bengal fox or Indian Fox belongs to the family Canidae that was once abundant all over the country except the Sundarbans, is now restricted to Northwest with a small population in Northeast. The mammal is uncommon and considered vulnerable nationally. Locally it is known as **Khekshial**, **Kheki**, **Baoral** or **Baral**. Globally it occurs in Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bangladesh.



Bengal Fox (Khekshial)



It is much smaller than the Golden Jackal. Body length is 45-60 cm with a 25-30 cm long tail. The height and weight are respectively 26-28 cm and 3-4 kg. Bengal fox has elongated muzzle and long pointed ears. Upper coat is reddish-grey, spackled with white. Under coat is paler. Large bushy tail has reddish above with black tip.

Bengal fox lives in the open country, scrubs, cultivated land, and rarely in forests. This nocturnal mammal can also be seen during the day. Diet consists of small mammals, reptiles, birds, eggs, crabs, insects, fruits, even poultry. Breeds in November to February and female deliver 2-4 pups after 50-53 days of gestation. Breeds once a year. Pups mature in 1-2 years. Lifespan is 10-12 years.



Ganges River Dolphin (Shushuk)

**Ganges River Dolphin** (*Platanista gangetica*): Aquatic mammal Ganges River Dolphin, also known as South Asian River Dolphin, Indus River Dolphin or Blind River Dolphin, belongs to the family *Platanistidae*. Although, the species is fairly common in the country but its number is decreasing rapidly.

Therefore, IUCN Bangladesh categorised it as Vulnerable. Locally it is known as **Shushuk, Nodir Shushuk, Shishu, Huchchum, Hoom** or **Hungmachh**. Besides Bangladesh, it also occurs in Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bhutan.

The species is stocky and soft bodied mammal with a very long snout. It measures 2.2-2.6 metre (m) in length. Weight is 51-89 kg. Newborn is 70-90 cm long. Coat colour is grey or earthy-brown, often with a slightly darker dorsal surface. Rounded belly and low-humped back. Long beak bearing sharp teeth. Mouth curved upwardly, flippers paddle-shaped and heavily reduced dorsal fin.

Ganges River Dolphins are widely distributed in the large rivers and their branches like Ganges, Brahmaputra, Meghna, Kornofuli, Sangu and different rivers of the Sundarbans. These diurnal aquatic mammals occurs single, in pairs or family groups. The blind mammal's diet mainly consists of fishes, shrimps and crabs. The species breeds year round, but mostly in October to March. Female delivers a calf after nearly ten months of gestation. Calves mature in ten years. Lifespan is 10-20 years in the wild and 18-22 years in captivity.

**Jungle Cat** (*Felis chaus*): The Jungle Cat, Swamp Cat, Small Asiatic Wild Cat or Reed Cat belongs to same family Felidae like the other cats. Once abundant throughout the country, the population trend is now decreasing due to continual habitat destruction, poaching and human-cat conflict. Therefore, IUCN



*Jungle Cat (Bon Biral)*

Bangladesh considered this uncommon felid as Near-threatened in Bangladesh. The species is locally called ***Bon Biral, Wab, Jangli Biral*** or ***Bon Bilai***. Along with Bangladesh it is a resident mammal of Southern and Central Asia as well as Africa.

Similar to the domestic cat it weighs nearly double (4-9 kg) to the cat. Body length is 50-94 cm with a 20-31 cm long tail and height is 36-40 cm. Coat colour is grey-brown or grey-yellow. No

stripe on the body. Some black ring present on the tail. Few stripes are seen at inner side of the fore and hind limbs. Kittens are greyish with black stripes, which disappear with age.

Jungle Cat lives in the open country, scrubs, cultivated land, and rarely in forests. It is a nocturnal mammal; but become very active at dawn and dusk. The solitary mammal hunts rodents, birds, frogs, insects, fish, poultry etc. Breeds in December to March and queen delivers 3-5 kittens after 63-66 days of gestation. Eyes of the kittens open in 12-15 days. Breeds 1-2 times a year. Kittens are mature in nearly 11 months. Lifespan is 10-12 years in the captivity.

**Large Indian Civet** (*Viverra zibetha*): Large Indian Civet is a terrestrial and nocturnal mammal that belongs to the family Viverridae. Except the Sundarbans, although the species is widely distributed all over the country in diverse habitats, the population has been declining day by day due to retribution killing, hunting for meat, road-side killing and



*Large Indian Civet (Bagdash / Khatash)*

other anthropogenic factors. Therefore, IUCN Bangladesh categorised the mammal as Near-threatened. Locally it is known as **Bagdash, Baghdasha, Boro Khatash, Bagkhondash, Boro Bham** or **Huicha**. The animal is a resident of South and Southeast Asia including China, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.

It is the largest civet in the country with longer head and body. Its length is 80-86 cm and tail is 45 cm. The height and weight are 38 cm and 5-11 kg, respectively. Black legs are short and stumpy. Body is covered with greyish-black hair with black spots and stripes. Three black and two white bands are seen on the sides of the neck. Long tail has a number of black and white rings around it. Males are slightly larger than females.

The species lives in grasslands, scrubs, densely forested areas, abandoned brick fields, houses, abandoned burrows etc. The nocturnal mammal occurs solitary, can climb trees. The carnivorous animal eats snakes, frogs, small mammals, birds, poultry also eats fruits, roots, insects, fishes, eggs etc. Breeds twice a year. Female delivers 3-4 pups after 70-80 days of gestation. Survive 15 years in the wild and 20 years in captivity.

**Small Indian Civet (*Viverra indica*):** Small Indian Civet, also called Lesser Indian Civet or Lesser Oriental Civet, belongs to the family Viverridae is widely distributed in a diverse habitat throughout the country, but the population has been declining due to different anthropogenic factors. Therefore, IUCN Bangladesh categorised the mammal as Near-threatened. Locally it is known as **Chhoto Khatash, Ghoilo, Chhoto Bham** or **Kolkut**. The animal is native to Pakistan, China, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

It is much smaller than the Large Indian Civet that is 53-58 cm long with a 38-43 cm long tail. Weight is 2-4 kg. Body is covered with brownish-grey to pale yellowish-brown fur. There are longitudinal black or brown bands on back and longitudinal rows of spots on the sides. Head is brownish-grey and chin is brown. Legs are brown or black. Black tail with white rings.



*Small Indian Civet (Chhoto Khatash)*

Small Indian Civet lives in thick bushes, burrows in the ground, abandoned brick fields, houses, etc. This nocturnal and terrestrial mammal occurs solitary. It can climb trees and make its own burrows. This carnivorous mammal eats snakes, rats, mice, birds, poultry, fruits, roots, insects, carrion etc. Breeds

twice a year. Female delivers pups after 60-70 days of gestation. Survive 8-9 years in the wild.

**Indian Crested Porcupine** (*Hystrix indica*): Indian Crested Porcupine or Indian Porcupine belongs to the family Hystriidae is widely distributed in the patchy areas of North West, Northeast, Central,



*Crested Porcupine (Shojaru)*

Southeast and Southwestern regions of the country. Although the species is considered as Least Concern in Bangladesh, but the mammal is becoming rarer day by day. Locally it is called **Shojaru, Deshi Shojaru, Hazar** or **Chhada**. Globally it is found in the Middle East as well as Central, South and Southeastern Asia including Bangladesh.

The length of Indian Crested Porcupine is 70-90 cm with 8-10 cm long tail and weight is 11-18 kg. Hair is highly modified to form layers of longer, thinner, shorter and thicker spines. Each quill is brown or black with alternating bands of white. Spines vary in length, with the neck and shoulder quills being the longest, measuring 15-30 cm. Head with long crest. Tail is covered with shorter spines that appear white.

This porcupine lives in forested, bushy and grassy areas along with cultivation in the vicinity. This very shy and nocturnal mammal rests in self-dug burrows during the day time. Usually seen alone, in pairs or small family groups. Eats vegetables, fruits, grains, roots, tubers etc and sometimes chew bones. Usually breeds twice a year. Give birth to 2-3 offspring after 112-118 days of gestation. Pups are born with soft quills that harden after a few hours. Lifespan is around 20 years in captivity.

**Common Mongoose** (*Herpestes edwardsii*): Common Mongoose, also known as Common Grey Mongoose or Indian Grey Mongoose, belongs to the Herpestidae family is distributed all over the country. This common and Least Concern mammal is absent from the offshore islands and the Sundarbans. Locally it is known as **Boro Beji, Neul** or **Neil**. Globally, the animal is found in the Middle Eastern countries, Afghanistan, Indian Subcontinent and Indonesia.

Common Mongoose is a medium sized mammals with long body and short legs. Body length is 37-48 cm with 33-45 cm long tail. Body weight is 0.9-2.0 kg. Dorsal surface is covered with tawny or yellowish-grey fur with a lighter ventral surface. Reddish tinge present on the head. Feet are darker. Tail tip is dark red. Males are significantly larger than the females.



Common Mongoose (Boro Beji)

The mammal inhabits in the open forests, scrublands, cultivated fields and close to human habitation. It usually lives in burrows or inside tree holes. The diurnal and terrestrial mammal is usually seen singly or in pairs. It can climb trees well. Diet consists of rodents, snakes, bird's eggs and hatchlings, lizards, reptiles, invertebrates, fruits etc. The species breeds 2-3 times a

year. After 60-65 days of gestation delivers 2-4 pups during May to June or October to December. Lifespan is usually seven years in the wild and up to twelve years in captivity.

**Five-striped Palm Squirrel (*Funambulus pennantii*):** Five-striped Palm Squirrel, also known as Northern Palm Squirrel, belongs to the family Sciuridae. This very common small mammal is widely distributed in the west of Jamuna river mainly Khulna (except the Sundarbans) and Rajshahi divisions; also found in the Dhaka city. Locally it is called Panch *Dora Kathbirali*, *Dora Kathbirali* or *Kathbirali*. Except Bangladesh the animal has a wide distribution ranging from Iran, through Afghanistan, Pakistan and Northern India to Nepal.

Body length of Five-striped Palm Squirrel is 15 cm with a 15-17 cm long tail. Weight is 135-147 g. Hair of the back is dark reddish-brown. Five whitish stripes run from neck to the base of the tail. Ventral surface is whitish. Head, legs and ears are light brown. Ears are distinct and triangular.

The small squirrel inhabits well wooded villages, towns, parks, garden etc. The diurnal, arboreal and terrestrial mammal found singly or in pairs. Its diet consists



Five-striped Palm Squirrel at Rajshahi (Kathbirali)

of fruits, vegetables, nuts, barks, small insects etc. The squirrel can breed year round. However, each time female mates with a different male. It makes roughly rounded nest with leaves and small twigs on the trees and give birth to 1-5 offspring after 40-45 days of gestation. Male and female matures at 10 and 7-8 months, respectively. Lifespan in captivity is 5 years.

**Golden Jackal** (*Canis aureus*): The Golden Jackal, also known as Common Jackal, Jackal or Asiatic Jackal, is the member of dog family Canidae. This species is a very common with widespread distribution throughout the country except the Sundarbans interior and has a presumed large population. Locally it is known as **Shial, Pati Shial, Srigal, Shial Pondit** etc. Globally this Jackal is distributed in the Middle East, Turkey, Central Asia, the entire Indian subcontinent, Myanmar, Thailand and parts of Indo-China

The body length is 60-75 cm with 20-28 cm long tail. The height and weight are 35-40 cm and 7-11 kg, respectively. At a glance it looks dark brown animal. Upper coat is blackish and under coat is light brown or whitish. Whitish beneath the face to throat. A white necklace like patch present on throat.



*Golden Jackal (Pati Shial)*

Golden Jackal lives in homestead vegetation, cultivation, bushes as well as in and around the forests. Although they are mainly nocturnal mammal, but can be seen during the day. Usually occurs in groups, but also seen solitary or in pairs. The omnivorous mammal's diet consists of rodents, poultry, crabs, fishes, dead-rotten animals, fruits, sugar cane and vegetables. Jackal reproduce twice a year. It breeds year round and female deliver 4-6 pups in the burrows after 57-70 days of gestation. Eyes of pups open in 8-12 days. Male and female matures in 10 and 18 months, respectively. Lifespan is 10-15 years in the captivity.

**Flying Fox** (*Pteropus giganteus*): Flying fox, also known as Indian flying fox, Indian Fruit Bat or Greater Indian Fruit Bat, is the member of Pteropodidae family that is very common and Least Concern species in Bangladesh. It occurs in almost all habitat ranges. Its local name is **Boro Badur, Badur** or **Chompa Badur**. The species is largely found in South Asia, but also occurs in adjacent China and Southeast Asia

It is the biggest and most conspicuous of all bats found in the country. Body length



*Flying Fox at Rajshahi (Badur)*

of flying fox is 23-25 cm, forearm is 17 cm and wingspan is 1.2-1.5 m. It has no tail and weigh 0.6-1.6 kg. Head is deep chestnut-brown, neck and back are chestnut-brown and belly is dark yellow-brown. Wings are huge and black, a long claw in the first digit of forearm. Feet are large with claws in all five digits. Long

ears are black.

Flying fox is widely distributed throughout the country. The nocturnal and crepuscular mammal lives in colonies of hundreds or thousands of individuals. Roosts in large trees such as banyan, fig or tamarind during the day. Diet includes fruit juices like litchi, mango, guava, fig etc. Breeds year round; but most of the mating occurs from July to October and births from February to May. They are polygynandrous that is female mate with different males. After 140-150 days of gestation female gives birth to 1-2 offspring. Young become mature after one and a half years of age. Lifespan is up to 31 years in captivity.

**Conclusion:** Unlike other regions of the country, it seems not much researches were conducted with the mammals of Northwestern regions of Bangladesh. Although, more than a century earlier Northwestern region was flourished with plenty of mammalian species and was home to some rare and unique mammals like the Nilgai and the Striped Hyena, however, due to deforestation, fragmentation and shrinkage of forests, conversion for cultivation and human settlement, habitat destruction, over exploitation, urbanization as well as developmental activities wild mammals habitat shrinks day by day. Presently, mammals of Northwestern regions predominantly composed of common mammals of the country and there is no unique animals left. Along with other regions a few rare mammals are still surviving which need special attention for conservation. Their habitat also need to be conserved. Therefore, we need to take necessary steps to conserve mammals of the Northwest Bangladesh with care.

***The writer and photographer of this article is a Wildlife Biologist, Veterinarian and Professor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, Gazipur-1706.***

## DEVELOPMENT CHRONOLOGY

# Major National Events

July-September

6 July, 2020

### PM favours forex reserves lending

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on July 6 ordered the central bank to explore the possibilities of lending out foreign exchange reserves to public sector development projects, Planning Minister MA Mannan said.

He argued that the additional reserves after the 3-month equivalent import payments could be used for lending to the development projects of the government, the planning minister said after the meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC).

Referring the PM, Planning Minister said since the Bangladesh's forex reserves have hit new highs of over US \$36 billion, the PM gave the direction to the Bangladesh Bank to study the option of lending.

He agreed with the PM and requested her that it could be lending in US Dollar so that the borrowers can repay the money in greenback. *Source: The Financial Express*

8 July, 2020

### PM for worldwide response to offset COVID-19 fallouts on migrants

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on July 8 called for a 'vigorous worldwide response' with the participation of all countries to combat the adverse impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the migrants as she placed a three-point suggestion to this end.

'The virus does not discriminate but its adverse impacts severely discriminates against the vulnerable, especially the migrants and women workers,' she told a virtual global summit of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva, Switzerland.

The three point- suggestion placed by the prime minister at the event titled 'ILO's Global Leaders Day' are:

Firstly: Jobs of migrant workers at the overseas markets must be retained during this crisis.

Secondly: In case of lay-off, compensation and other dismissal benefits must be paid



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the Global Leaders' Day virtual summit of the International Labour Organization (ILO) hold in Geneva on July 8*



in full along with ensuring their safety and health benefits.

Thirdly: After the pandemic, these workers would have to be recruited for reactivating the economy. *Source: The New Age*

### **Jatiya Sangsad passes bill to run courts online**

#### **Law Minister says regular court to resume next week**

A bill was passed in parliament on July 8 to empower courts of the country to run trial proceedings through videoconference.

Law Minister Anisul Huq moved the 'Adalat Kartik Tathya Projukti Bebohar Bill 2020' in the House and the bill was passed by voice vote.

The law was already promulgated by the president to reduce backlogs in the courts during the general holidays enforced due to the coronavirus spread risks as an ordinance as the parliament was not in session.

The ordinance was approved by the cabinet on May 7 while the country was observing general holidays since March 27.

By the ordinance, it was possible to run the proceedings during the COVID-19 period when social distancing was a must.

It was possible for the judges to run the trial proceedings of the cases through videoconferencing and other digital means keeping the accused in jails, the lawyers in their residences, and the witnesses in other places during the coronavirus crisis. *Source: The New Age*

**9 July, 2020**

### **Action against corrupt people to continue: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on July 9 said action against the corrupt people will continue irrespective of their identities as the government will not tolerate irregularities. She commented this while addressing the 8th session of the 11th parliament.

'We won't allow these irregularities, surely not. We're taking action, no matter who he or she is. And it'll continue,' she said.

The Prime Minister said the military dictators had polluted this society by destroying the character of people to prolong their power after 1975.

Returning to power, the Awami League government started taking action against those engaged in corruption and irregularities without considering their political identities.

'It matters little (to us) who belongs to which party.'

But, she said, the government faces corruption blame for going to stop corruption. 'We caught (detected corruption). So, we're becoming thieves going to catch thieves,' she added. *Source: The Financial Express*

**16 July, 2020**

### **Bangladesh's forestland to be raised to 25pc: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on July 16 said the government has been working to raise the country's forestland to 25 percent as forestation is very essential to protect the environment.

'When we formed government in 1996, the country's forest coverage was only 7 percent and then we raised it to 17 percent. Now, our target is to enhance the (forest) coverage to 25 percent and we're working relentlessly to achieve the goal,' she said.

The Prime Minister said this while inaugurating the plantation campaign of one crore saplings as part of the celebration of 'Mujib Year' marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. *Source: The Financial Express*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurating the campaign of planting ten million saplings as part of celebration of 'Mujib Year' on July 16*

**21 July, 2020**

### **PM to give Tk 281.8m to teachers, employees of non-MPO edn institutions**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has decided to provide financial assistance of over Tk 281.8 million (Tk 28.18 crore) to the teachers and employees of the non-MPO educational institutions.

'The prime minister took the decision considering the financial hardship of the teachers and employees of the non-MPO (monthly pay order) technical, madrasas and independent ebtedayee madrasas as their educational institutions remained closed,' PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told the news agency on July 21.

As many as 51, 266 teachers and 10,204 employees of the institutions would get Tk 5,000 and Tk 2,500 each respectively amounting a total of Tk 282 million from the Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund, the press secretary said.

The premier, he said, earlier gave financial aid of Tk 169 million to orphans and destitute of 13,929 qaumi madrasas and Tk 466 million to 80,747 non-MPO teachers and 25,038 employees under the Secondary and Higher Education Division. *Source: The Financial Express*

**22 July, 2020**

### **Use modern methods to save local varieties of fishes from extinction: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stressed the need for using developed and modern methods to save the local varieties of fishes from extinction.

'Coming out of the traditional methods, we have to adopt developed and modern ones to protect local species of fishes from extinction,' she said after inaugurating the National Fisheries Week, 2020.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina releases fish fry into the Ganobhaban Lake marking the National Fisheries Week 2020 on July 22

The premier formally opened the week by releasing fish fries into Ganobhaban lake on July 22.

The theme of the week is 'Machh Utpadan Briddhi Kori, Shukhi Samriddha Desh Gori (Let us increase fish production and build a happy and prosperous country).'

The premier pointed out that the country has 475 varieties of sea fish and 250 species of freshwater fish alongside lobster, crabs

and snails which have a huge demand at local and international markets.

Bangladesh ranked second position in growth rate of producing freshwater fishes according to a report of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), she mentioned.

The premier highly appreciated all concerned for their efforts to increase fish production alongside continuing its distribution and export despite the health risk amid the coronavirus pandemic.

'Bangladesh is now self-reliant in fish production. We, per head, are currently taking 62.58 grams fishes daily against the demand of 62 grams,' she added.

In this context, the premier recalled the remarks of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that fisheries would be the second main sector in earning foreign currencies.

She said Bangabandhu first released fish fries into the lake of Ganabhaban in 1973 to encourage the countrymen in raising fish production. *Source: The Dhaka Tribune*

**23 July, 2020**

### **Housing for all climate refugees: PM**

Climate housing scheme starts in Cox's Bazar

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on July 23 said the government will arrange housing for those losing their homes in flood and riverbank erosion alongside rehabilitating the landless and homeless people across the country.

'This time the flood looks to be serious... more floods are likely to occur in August and September. We've preparations to face these.' she said.

The Prime Minister said this while opening the special structures built under 'Khurushkul Ashrayan Project' in Cox's Bazar for 600 climate refugees.

Sheikh Hasina inaugurated 20 five-storey structures constructed in the first phase of the world's biggest climate refugee rehabilitation project at Khurushkul on the



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina opened the special structures built under 'Khurushkul Ashrayan Project' for 600 climate refugees in Cox's Bazar through videoconference on July 23*

outskirts of Cox's Bazar through a videoconference from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The 600 families are getting their new abodes with all modern facilities in 20 structures, each having 32 flats, constructed on the bank of the Bakkhali River, just three kilometres off the beach town.

At the inaugural function, some beneficiaries were handed over the keys of the 456-square foot flats.

The Prime Minister said the government is taking measures for the rehabilitation of landless and homeless people throughout the country. *Source: The Financial Express*

**28 July, 2020**

### **Keep up progress in agriculture for food security**

Putting emphasis on keeping up Bangladesh's progress in the agriculture sector, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the government has been providing all kinds of assistance for ensuring food security amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

The PM was speaking at the weekly meeting of the Executive committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on July 28 through videoconference from Ganobhaban.

Prime Minister said the government has reduced the prices of fertilisers, and has been distributing quality seeds and other agricultural inputs. The government also provided some 2 crore agriculture cards to avail of agricultural inputs and created scope for farmers to open a bank account depositing Tk 10. Now more than one crore farmers have such bank accounts.

Sheikh Hasina said leaders and activists of Awami League and its associate bodies -- Chhatra League, Jubo League, Krishak League and Swechhasebak League -- stood beside the farmers by joining their paddy harvesting amid the Covid-19. 'Joining the harvesting work, many leaders and activists even got infected with



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the weekly meeting of the National Economic Council through a videoconference while she unveils the cover of two publications of the Agricultural Ministry on July 28*

coronavirus and some of them also died.'

Talking about the 2030 sustainable development agenda, the premier said the government would continue pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve the targets which are particularly effective for Bangladesh. *Source: The Daily Star*

**5 August, 2020**

### **Sheikh Hasina recalls Sheikh Kamal with emotional eulogy**

Describing Shaheed Sheikh Kamal as a versatile person, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5 said he could have contributed a lot to society had he been alive today.

'This multifaceted talent in one person is really rare...had Kamal been alive now, he could give many things to this society. He could have contributed (more) to all sectors of the country through development of his talents. He had contributed, too,' she said.

The Prime Minister said this while addressing a virtual discussion arranged marking the 71st birth anniversary of Shaheed Sheikh Kamal, the eldest son of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveils the cover of a memorial book on Sheikh Kamal on the occasion of his 71st birth anniversary at a virtual discussion from Ganobhaban on August 5*

Sheikh Hasina joined the discussion from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports arranged the discussion-cum-Doa Mahfil on the 71st birth anniversary of Sheikh Kamal, the pioneer of modern sports in Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina said Kamal was two years junior to her but he was mature in the case of knowledge, wisdom and many other things. 'His talents were multifaceted. He was a sports organiser on one hand and had multifaceted potentials in the cultural arena on the other.'

Sheikh Hasina said Kamal had actively participated in the Liberation War after having proper training. She said the strange matter is that the birthdays of Kamal and her mother Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib are respectively the 5th and 8th August, the month she lost most of her family members.

At the function, Sheikh Kamal's friends recalled their memories with Kamal and focused on his works and life. *Source: The Financial Express*

**6 August, 2020**

### **Bring more investment despite pandemic problem, says PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 6 asked the authorities concerned to work for making the investment environment in the country more attractive overcoming the problems caused by the Coronavirus pandemic.

'Now an investment-friendly environment is there in the country. But all countries of the world are now facing problems due to coronavirus. We'll have to pay attention to how we can take the economy of our country forward amid the problem. We'll have to work and make our investment atmosphere more attractive,' she said.

The Prime Minister issued the directive while addressing the governing board meeting of Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA).

The Prime Minister said Bangladesh achieved 8.1 per cent GDP growth and was on the way to attain 8.2 per cent. Unfortunately, the coronavirus has stalled this progress.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveils the cover of a book titled ' Bangladesh Investment Handbook: A Guide for Investors' at a meeting of the governing body of BIDA through a videoconference from her official Ganobhaban residence on August 6*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveiling a memorial book on Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib on the occasion of her 90th birth anniversary at Ganobhaban on August 8

Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh achieved the MDGs, announced by the United Nations, with competence and is now making efforts to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *Source: The Financial Express*

**8 August, 2020**

**Bangamata's rejection of Bangabandhu's release on parole changed political history: PM**

Mentioning that her mother Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib could have taken a right decision in any critical juncture of the nation, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on August 8 her (Bangamata's) decision to reject Bangabandhu's release on parole changed the course of the country's political history.

'The most desirable thing regarding my mother's contributions to the political arena was that my mother had taken correct decisions at the right time. But, I'm sorry to say many

big leaders had failed to do it or approached the wrong decision at that time,' she said.

While addressing a programme marking the celebration of the 90th birth anniversary of Bangamata, organised by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, from her official residence Ganobhaban on virtual platform.

The Prime Minister pointed out 'That correct and timely decision had forced Ayub Khan to withdraw the (Agartala Conspiracy) case and changed the course of Bangladesh's political history as well. *Source: The Financial Express*

**10 August, 2020**

**Welfare of artistes to be ensured**

The Cabinet on August 10 approved in principle the draft of Bangladesh Film Artistes' Welfare Trust Bill, 2020, aiming to ensure welfare of the actors and actresses and to provide financial support to insolvent and ailing artistes.

The approval came from the weekly cabinet meeting held with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The Prime Minister joined the meeting through a videoconference from her official residence Ganobhaban, while other cabinet members were present from Bangladesh Secretariat.

'The main objectives of the bill are ensuring the welfare of film actors and actress, providing financial support to insolvent and incapable artistes, financial support to

ailing artistes, necessary assistance to the family members in case of death of an artiste, and implementing other programmes to be taken by the trust,' said Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam at a press briefing after the meeting. *Source: The Financial Express*

**12 August, 2020**

### **Per capita income rises to \$2,064**

Bangladesh's per capita income (GNI) went up by US\$ 155 to US\$ 2,064 in the final quarter (April-June) of the last fiscal year, official data released on August 11 showed, despite severe adverse impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the country's economic activities during the period.

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) data showed that the country's total GDP stood at \$300.11 billion in the last fiscal year (FY 2019-20).

However, the per head earnings of the population at current price was lower than the preliminary target of \$ 2,173 estimated before the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the FY2019, the per capita GNI (Gross National Income) was recorded at \$ 1,909 and in FY2018, it was \$ 1,751.

Meanwhile, the per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the FY2020 had also been estimated at \$ 1,970 from that of \$ 1,828 in the FY2019.

In FY2018, the per head GDP earnings was recorded at \$ 1,675.

In the FY2020, the GDP growth increased by 5.24 per cent, according to the BBS estimate.

Meanwhile, the government has targeted the per capita GNI at \$ 2,326 for the current FY2021, despite the economic impact of the pandemic. *Source: The Financial Express*

**15 August, 2020**

### **National Mourning Day observed**

Bangladesh mourned Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of the nation who was assassinated along with most of his family members in one of the worst political massacres in world history 45 years ago.

The assassination of the independence hero on that dark night also opened a dark chapter in Bangladesh's history with around one and a



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina pays homage by placing a wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu at Dhanmondi Road No.32 on August 15*



half decades of military dictatorship marked by bloody coups and counter-coups.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid her homage by placing a wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi Road No. 32 on August 15 morning.

Sheikh Hasina, also the eldest daughter of Bangabandhu, then stood in solemn silence in front of the portrait for sometimes. She was accompanied by her daughter Saima Wazed Hossain.

A contingent of Bangladesh Armed Forces gave the state salute at that time, while the bugle played a tune of grief. A special prayer was offered along with the recitation of the Quran seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of the Aug 15 carnage victims.

In 1975 a handful of renegade army officials killed the Father of the Nation along with his wife Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib, sons Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal, younger brother Sheikh Abu Naser, nephew Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni and brother-in-law Abdur Rab Serniabat, Moni's wife Begum Arju Moni and Serniabat's daughter Baby, son Arif and grandson Sukanto Babu.

Bangabandhu was buried at his birthplace Tungipara in Gopalganj but other family members have been buried in Banani graveyard in Dhaka.

Like the previous years, the government, Awami League and different political and socio-cultural organisations, educational institutions and professional groups chalked out elaborate programmes to pay the utmost respect to the greatest son of the soil on the day of his martyrdom.

After paying tributes to Bangabandhu, the Premier along with her daughter Saima Wazed Hossain visited the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum which witnessed the world's most barbaric carnage on this day 45 years ago.

From Dhanmondi, the Prime Minister later went to Banani Graveyard where her mother Bangamata Fazilatun Nesa Mujib, brothers Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russell and other martyrs of August 15 were laid to eternal rest.

She placed floral wreaths and spread flower petals on their graves. She also offered Fateha and doa seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of the martyrs of August 15, 1975. *Source: The Financial Express*

**16 August, 2020**

### **President urges youths to know about Bangabandhu**

President Md. Abdul Hamid asked on August 16 the youths of the country to learn about Bangabandhu and the actual history of struggle for independence and the Liberation War, in order to become worthy citizens.

The President said this while recalling Bangabandhu and the aftermath of his killing in a recorded interview given to the state-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) marking the National Mourning Day.

'Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is not only a name . . . He is an institution, a timeless history and an entity. Bangabandhu is not with us but he left a political philosophy, policy and ideology which will show a light from generation to generation on the way to progress and development,' the President observed.

Urging all to come forward to materialise the dream of the Father of the Nation, the President said, 'I just want to long live the ideals of Bangabandhu from generation to generation as Bangabandhu has immense contributions to our national history.'

Terming Bangladesh now a 'role model' of development and progress in the world, Hamid said the country under the efficient and charismatic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the worthy daughter of Bangabandhu, is moving towards development and progress in all sectors- trade, investment, social, cultural, science and technology.

The President also prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul of Bangabandhu and all other martyrs of August 15. *Source: The Financial Express*

**18 August, 2020**

### **ECNEC meeting approved at a total cost of Tk 34.62 billion**

The Planning Commission (PC), in the ECNEC meeting - presided over by Sheikh Hasina, placed the RHD's two road widening projects for getting approval, where the state-owned road developer proposed to construct two rest-houses.

RHD proposed to construct a rest-house at a cost of Tk 27.9 million under the 'Baroiarhat-Heiako-Ramgarh road widening project' and another rest house at a cost of Tk 40 million under the 'Construction of concrete bridge under replacing the older ones under the Khulna road zone project.'

Meanwhile, the ECNEC meeting on August 18 approved six fresh projects and revised one ongoing project at a total cost of Tk 34.62 billion.

Of the total cost, the government will provide Tk 26.20 billion from its internal resources, while the remaining Tk 8.42 billion will come from external sources as project aid, Mr Mannan told.

Among the projects, the ECNEC approved the 'Widening of the Baroiarhat-Heyako-Ramgarh Road Project' at a cost of Tk 8.45 billion in a bid to boost foreign trade with neighbouring India.

The minister said the RHD will implement the road widening project in Ramgarh upazila under Khagrachhari by June 2022.

Of the total project cost, Tk 5.81 billion will come from the Indian Line of Credit, and the rest Tk 2.64 from the government's internal resources, he added.

It also approved the 'Widening of Doudkandi-Goalmari-Srirayerchar (Cumilla)-Matlab Uttar (Chhengarchar) road project' at a cost of Tk 5.24 billion, the 'Construction of concrete bridge under replacing the older ones under the Khulna road zone project' at Tk 5.26 billion, the 'Tentulia River erosion protection from the Dhulia Launchghat under Baufol upazila of Patukhali to Dharmapasha of Barisal area' at Tk 7.12 billion.

Besides, the 'Removing of water-logging by the Kapatakkha River project' at Tk 5.31 billion cost, and the 'Fishing of tuna and pelagic fishes at the sea pilot project' at Tk 610.6 million cost were also approved in the ECNEC meeting.

The ECNEC revised the 'Emergency multi-sector Rohingya crisis response project', increasing its cost by Tk 2.61 billion to Tk 5.99 billion. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveiling the cover of the book titled 'Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Industrial City' through a videoconference on August 20

20 August, 2020

### PM asks BEZA to attract youth folk

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 20 asked the Bangladesh Export Zone Authority (BEZA) to promote small entrepreneurs, particularly the young generation, alongside attracting foreign investment.

'It (BEZA) will have to work in a way so that foreign investment comes on one hand and local people can invest on the other, or we can promote small investors. That means we need to attract and promote our young generation,' she said

while addressing the 7th meeting of the BEZA Governing Board.

She joined the virtual meeting from her official residence Ganobhaban through a videoconference, while other participants were connected from the Prime Minister's Office and the Cabinet Division office. *Source: The Financial Express*

21 August, 2020

### AL pays homage to August 21 grenade attack victims

The Awami League (AL) paid tributes to the victims of August 21 grenade attack by placing wreaths at the memorial in front of the party's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue in the city.

The AL leaders, led by General Secretary Obaidul Quader, on behalf of the party President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placed a wreath at the memorial built in commemoration of the victims of the grenade attacks in 2004.

Placing the wreath, the leaders observed one-minute silence in respect to the memories of the grenade attack victims.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the party leaders at Awami League HQ at Bangabandhu Avenue on the occasion of 16th anniversary of the victims of 2004 grenade attacks through videoconference on August 21

Later, associate bodies of AL, its left-leaning allies and other political parties paid homage to the victims of the brutal grenade attack that killed 24 people and wounded nearly 500 others. *Source: The Financial Express*

**24 August, 2020**

### **Cabinet approves Bankers' Book Evidence Bill**

The cabinet gave on August 24 approval in principle to the Bankers' Book Evidence Bill 2020 to replace the old Bankers' Book Evidence Act 1891.

The approval came from the regular weekly meeting of the cabinet held at the Bangladesh Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair. She attended the meeting virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam said this law will be a new one as the ground reality has changed a lot given the reality of 1891.

The new law also states some offences, punishments and trial to prevent unauthorised and the behind-scene leak of any information.

The cabinet has decided not to formulate new laws scrapping the old ones either enacted or promulgated from January 1, 1972 to August 5, 1975, during the rule of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. *Source: The Financial Express*

**25 August, 2020**

### **ECNEC nod for DPDC project, four others**

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on August 25 approved a Tk 14.54 billion project to upgrade the power distribution system of the Dhaka Power Distribution Company Limited (DPDC).

At a meeting presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the ECNEC also approved four other projects.

Emerging from the meeting, Planning Minister MA Mannan told that the ECNEC approved a total of five projects involving a combined cost of Tk 25.70 billion.

Of the total cost, Tk 14.85 billion will come from internal resources of the government, Tk 10.02 billion from external resources as project aid and the remaining Tk 826 million from the implementing agencies' own fund.

At the meeting, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked the authorities concerned to work out ways to ensure social dignity of the freelancers (independent IT professionals).

She said this when the meeting approved the setting up of Sheikh Kamal IT training and incubation centre project involving Tk 7.99 billion.

The ECNEC also approved Buffalo research and development project at a cost of Tk 631.7 million. *Source: The Financial Express*

**26 August, 2020**

### **Six-Point Demand Bangabandhu's brainchild: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 26 said the historic Six-Point Demand was solely the brainchild of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as no-one else was involved in formulating this crucial political



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivering speech as the chief guest at a prize giving ceremony of the online quiz competition event on the 6-point to mark the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 26*

programme that led the county to its Independence.

The Prime Minister said this while distributing awards among the winners of quiz competition, which was organised marking the historic Six-Point Demand (June 7).

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Birth Centenary Celebration National Implementation Committee organised the programme at International Mother Language Institute in the capital.

The Prime Minister joined the programme from her official residence Ganobhaban virtually. *Source: The Financial Express*

**27 August, 2020**

### **Every house to be lit up by 2021: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 27 reaffirmed her government's goal of illuminating every house of the country by next year and urged the people to be frugal with electricity use.

'We have taken up massive programmes to celebrate the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 2020 and the golden jubilee of the country's independence in 2021. Our goal is to light up every house of the country by 2021,' she said.

The PM was addressing a programme marking the inauguration of cent percent electrification in 31 upazilas of 18 districts.

She also opened two power plants, 11 grid sub-stations and six new transmission lines through videoconferencing from the Gonobhaban.

The premier said the government has already been able to provide electricity to 97.5 percent people of the country and it was hopeful about giving power to 100 percent people by 2021.

Government has planned to generate 24,000 MW electricity by 2021, 40,000 MW by 2030 and 60,000 MW by 2041 for the overall economic development of the country.

The PM said her government's development works were not only capital- or town-centric. 'We want to transform every village into a town by reaching civic amenities to the houses of rural people.'

Sheikh Hasina later exchanged views with cross section of people, including public representatives, deputy commissioners, superintendents of police, teachers, students, imams, housewives as well as users of electricity from five districts -- Noakhali, Patuakhali, Cumilla, Gopalganj and Manikganj.

Earlier, the PM opened cent percent electrification in 31 upazilas of 18 districts.

*Source: The Daily Star*

**31 August 2020**

### **Newspaper, TV, radio need registrations to run online news portals**

#### **Cabinet approves changes to 2017 policy**

All newspapers, television channels and radio stations will need to obtain separate government registration for running online news portals.

The cabinet on August 31 approved the draft National Online Mass Media Policy 2017 (Amended 2020), making the mandatory provision.

The approval came just a week after the Editors' Council opposed the government move to make the registration mandatory.

'The licensed television channels and radio stations will need to get registered to operate online news portals as they are not entitled to run online news portals as per the licences they have taken from the government,' cabinet secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam said at a briefing after the cabinet meeting.

As per the 2017 policy, all media outlets already registered for publication of newspapers or licensed for broadcasting did not require further registration with the proposed National Broadcast Commission or information ministry to run their online news portals.

The information ministry proposed the changes in the weekly cabinet meeting held virtually with prime minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair at her residence Ganobhaban. The cabinet members attended it from the Cabinet Division.

The government has already granted primary approval for registration of online portal of 92 daily newspapers. The countries major dailies have been included on the list. *Source: The NewAge*

**1 September, 2020**

### **ECNEC nod for two new, four revised projects**

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on September 1 approved the revision of costs of four ongoing projects, a couple of them had revised their cost once earlier.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina early last month expressed her dissatisfaction over the repeated revision of the projects, in terms of both cost and time.

The total cost of the revised projects and new ones, approved by the ECNEC meeting, stood at Tk 66.29 billion. The prime minister presided.

Tk 20.71 billion of the aggregate cost of the projects will come from the government's internal resources while the remaining Tk 45.94 billion from the external sources as the project aid.

Among the projects, the ECNEC revised the construction of modern food storages (2nd revision) project, extending the cost by Tk 16.48 billion, 86 per cent from that of the original cost of Tk 19.19 billion.

The meeting also revised the expansion of a fishing technology project in the rural areas for the second time, extending the cost by more than double to Tk 3.78 billion from the original estimate of Tk 2.42 billion.

Besides, the ECNEC revised the development of ponds and canals project across the country (1st revision) project, extending the cost by Tk 4.22 billion to Tk 17.57 billion, and the improvement of the sewerage facilities at Dhaka-Narayangaj-Demra area Phase-II (1st revision) project, increasing the cost by Tk 7.42 billion to Tk 12.99 billion.

The approved fresh projects were: Meghna-Matlab-Dhonagoda Beribandh (Z-1069) road widening project at Tk 1.22 billion and widening of Sylhet-Tamabil highways into 4-lane project at Tk 35.86 billion. *Source: The Financial Express*

**2 September, 2020**

### **PM for building a knowledge-based, poverty-free society**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 2 said the aim of her government is to build a poverty-free, educated, developed, qualified and prosperous nation.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inspects the architectural design of 20-storey Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Academic and Administrative Building of BPATC at Ganobhaban on September 2*

'We'll build a poverty-free, educated, developed, qualified prosperous Bangalee nation and fulfil the dream of the Father of the Nation,' she said while speaking at a meeting.

The meeting was arranged to approve the design and plan of a 20-storey Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Academic and Administrative Building to be constructed at Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) at Savar and the plan for constructing Mymensingh Divisional Headquarters.

The Prime Minister joined the event through

videoconferencing from Ganobhaban. *Source: The Financial Express*

**3 September 2020**

### **Website Registration: Govt gives pry approval to 92 dailies**

The government has granted primary approval for registration of online portals of 92 daily newspapers. The country's major dailies have been included in the list.

Of the 92 dailies, 57 are published from Dhaka, two from Mymensingh, 10 from Chattogram, four each from Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna and Barishal and seven are brought out from Sylhet.

The information ministry issued a gazette notification in this regard on September 3.

The gazette said portals of 92 daily newspapers were primarily given permission to register as part of the ongoing registration process of news portals.

The cabinet at a virtual meeting on August 31 this year approved the draft of National Online Media Policy, 2017 (Amendment 2020). Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting.

The draft policy says from now on, a newspaper will need registration to run its online version if its contents in the online and the print editions are different.

Licensed television and radio channels will also require the registration to run their news online. *Source: The Daily Star*

**5 September, 2020**

### **Govt. opens Gumti river route for trade with India**

The government on September 5 launched the River Gumti route for trade with India under the inland waterway protocol connecting Daudkandi in Cumilla to Sonamura in Tripura, India.

Bangladeshi vessel MB Premier carrying 10 tonnes of cement reached Sonamura port in a test run crossing 93 kilometres along the river Gumti.

The Protocol for Inland Water Trade and Transit was signed between India and Bangladesh in 1972 to provide inland waterways connectivity between the two countries, particularly with the north eastern region of India and also to enhance bilateral trade.

In the last one year, approximately 3.5 million tonnes of cargo were transported between Bangladesh and India on the protocol routes, according to Indian external affairs ministry. *Source: The NewAge*

**8 September, 2020**

### **Bangladesh unique in vulnerability, resilience**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 8 said Bangladesh is a unique example of climate vulnerability and resilience.

'People here time and again have shown their resilience against natural or man-made disasters. Yet, a lot of things need to be changed,' said Sheikh Hasina.

Sheikh Hasina was addressing a programme marking the launch of the regional office of the Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) in Dhaka.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and GCA Chairman and former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon jointly opened the GCA regional office in Bangladesh on September 8*



She expressed optimism that the GCA regional office would serve as a 'Centre of Excellence' and a solution-broker for climate adaptation measures in the South Asia region.

Noting that climate change is a global affair, the Bangladesh PM called upon all countries to enhance their nationally-determined contributions by December 31 this year in tackling the menace as well as executing the 2015 Paris Agreement.

'We established Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund in 2009 and so far allocated \$430 million from our own resources to implement the action plan.'

The government has also been spending about 1 percent of GDP equivalent to \$2 billion per year since 2010 for adaptation purposes, Sheikh Hasina said.

The PM urged the GCA to explore the opportunity of supporting the Delta Coalition on a long-term basis.

The Covid-19 pandemic fallout calls for greater cooperation and collaboration among the nations, she added.

Ministers from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal and the Maldives as well as GCA Chief Executive Officer Patrick Verkooijen also spoke on the occasion. *Source: The Daily Star*

**14 September, 2020**

### **BD keen to deepen ties with Turkey, says PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 14 said Bangladesh is keen to boost its relationship with Turkey for mutual benefits as it is deeply rooted in shared history, faith and traditions based on trust and confidence.

The Prime Minister said this while virtually opening Bangladesh's Embassy complex in Ankara from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen also spoke at the programme.

On behalf of the Bangladesh government and herself, Sheikh Hasina thanked the



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the newly-constructed Bangladesh Embassy Complex in Ankara of Turkey through videoconference from Ganobhaban on September 14*

government and the people of Turkey for extending support to Bangladesh on various issues, including the Rohingya crisis.

'All the support you extended for (resolving) the Rohingya crisis, we also thank you for your support.... I think it has been nearly three years [since the crisis broke out]. So, Rohingya people should go back to their own country. I feel Turkey can play a pivotal role in this regard,' she said.

The Prime Minister also commended Turkish leadership for its success in fighting the deadly pandemic and appreciated its initiative to dispatch medical supplies to different countries, including Bangladesh. *Source: The Financial Express*

**15 September, 2020**

### **PM seeks global support for climate victim countries**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 15 sought a strong support from the international community and G20 to increase adaptation finance for the climate-vulnerable countries.

'We seek strong support from the international community and G20 to increase adaptation finance for the climate-vulnerable countries,' she said.

While delivering keynote speech virtually at a high level event on the occasion of the F20 Climate Solutions Week that began on September 14, the prime minister also placed three priority issues.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivering the keynote speech at the seminar on 'Resilience and Recovery: Highlighting Solution for the G-20 on climate and Sustainability' on September 15*

The F20 and King Khaled Foundation have jointly organising the week. The title of the event was

'Resilience and Recovery: Highlighting Solutions for the G20 on Climate and Sustainability'.

In this connection, she placed three issues of priority. Firstly, for successful implementation of 2030 Agenda, addressing climate change is fundamental as both have symbiotic relationships with each other;

'Secondly, we need greater collaboration from international community for unified, stronger and green mechanism to tackle the negative impacts of climate change and uphold sustainability. G20 countries have specific roles to play here.'

'And thirdly, Global financing mechanism must be replenished as promised in a true spirit of responsibility sharing and partnership.' *Source: The Financial Express*

**15 September, 2020**

### **ECNEC approves four projects worth Tk 5.34b**

The government on September 15 approved four projects including one for

conservation and development of local species of fishes and snails in the country at a combined cost of Tk 5.34 billion.

Presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) endorsed the projects at a meeting.

After the meeting, Planning Minister MA Mannan said the ECNEC endorsed the conservation and development of local species of fishes and snails project at a cost of Tk 2.02 billion.

Department of Fisheries under the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock will implement the project in some 49 upazilas under 10 districts in the south-western region of the country by June 2024.

'Out of total Tk 5.34 billion, Tk 4.41 billion will come from the government's internal resources and the remaining Tk 934 million from external resources as the project aid for the four projects.'

The revised projects are: Urban resilience project: Rajuk (1st revised) increasing the cost by Tk 1.06 billion, infrastructure development of Rajshahi University project (1st revision) increasing the cost by Tk 1.47 billion, and widening of approach road and other necessary infrastructure development at Bangabandhu Safari Park project (2nd revision) increasing the cost by Tk 784.3 million.

The Prime Minister, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal and MA Mannan attended the meeting from Ganobhaban through a videoconference while other ECNEC members were connected from the Planning Commission in Dhaka.

*Source: The Financial Express*

**17 September, 2020**

### **Sheikh Hasina vows to build graft-free administration**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 17 vowed to build a corruption-free administration in the country, asking the government officials and employees to undertake their own plan on 'shuddhachar' (integrity) and implement it effectively.

'We want to establish a graft-free administrative system in the country and you've to undertake your own plan on integrity and how you'll execute it (plan),' she said.

While addressing as the chief guest the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) Signing Ceremony-2020, the prime minister joined the function held at the conference room of the Public Administration Ministry through a videoconference from her official Ganobhaban residence.

About the coronavirus pandemic, the prime minister said the health ministry has showed enough efficiency and the government has been able to keep under control the COVID-19 as the primary works that were supposed to be done at that time were implemented properly.

'We'll have to keep in mind that health professionals including doctors, nurses and health workers don't sit idle, they are working with efficiency risking their life to combat the COVID-19, she added. *Source: The Financial Express*

**21 September, 2020**

### **Cabinet okays bill to establish Sheikh Hasina Medical University in Khulna**

The cabinet on September 21 approved the 'Sheikh Hasina Medical University, Khulna Bill 2020'.

Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam told a press briefing at the secretariat, all government and private medical colleges, dental colleges and nursing institutes would come under the proposed medical university, which would also offer higher medical degrees like those medical universities being established in Rajshahi, Chattogram and Sylhet under similar laws.

The cabinet meeting also approved the 'Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation Order-1973 (Amendment-2020)' for amendments necessary to promote tourism in the country for developing the tourism sector and creating job opportunities.

As per the draft, the BPC board of directors would be formed with 16 members repealing the existing system of forming the board with at least three members or maximum five members to widen its activities in the tourism sector.

The cabinet endorsed two separate proposals on joint declaration regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and Saint Kitts and Nevis, a dual-island nation situated between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, and Commonwealth of Dominica, a mountainous Caribbean island nation, to facilitate Bangladeshi workers staying there and also to get their support in the international forums when necessary, the cabinet secretary said. *Source: The New Age*

**22 September, 2020**

### **Pandemic shows nations need UN more than ever: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the coronavirus pandemic has shown that both developed and developing nations need the United Nations more than ever.

And multilateralism is the way forward, she said.

The Prime Minister said this while delivering her speech virtually in the early hours on September 22 (Bangladesh Time) at the high-level event arranged to mark the 75th anniversary of the United Nations at its headquarters in New York.

World leaders have come together, virtually, to mark the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, amid the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

As COVID-19 began to spread around the world earlier this year, forcing millions of people to shelter at home and devastating economies, countries turned inward and reflected on the way forward.

The prime minister commended the UN secretary-general for keeping the flag of multilateralism high and also paid her tribute to all frontline UN staff and agencies for their tireless efforts and dedication.

'The challenges of our time, including the current pandemic, go beyond borders.'

*Source: The Financial Express*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivering speech at the special session on the occasion of 75th founding anniversary of the UN through videoconferencing from Ganobhaban on September 22*

**23 September, 2020**

### **ECNEC approves project to boost Hilsha production**

The government on September 23 approved a Hilsha development project of Tk2.46 billion to increase production of the fish.

Presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) approved five projects at a total cost of Tk 12.66 billion at its meeting in Dhaka.

The main objective of the project is to boost the fish production to 0.62 million tonnes from the existing level of 0.53 million tonnes.

Besides, creating alternative employment opportunities for some 30,000 fishermen families engaged in catching Hilsha fish and distributing some 10,000 legal fishing nets among the fishermen are also the targets of the project, which is scheduled to end in June 2024.

According to the project proposal, it will be implemented at some 134 Upazilas under 29 districts of six divisions.

The ECNEC revised the establishment of 40 technical training centres at 40 upazilas and one institute of marine technology in Chattogram (1st revision) project, increasing the cost by Tk 3.36 billion to Tk 16.67 billion.

The other approved projects are: Construction of 73 Composite/Modern Border Observation Post (BOP) of BGB at the bordering areas at Tk 2.33 billion, establishing 25-bed Shanti Nibash at eight government sishuparibar at Tk 739.9 million, and widening of Digpait-Sarishabari-Tarakandi road under Jamalpur district at Tk. 3.76 billion cost. *Source: The Financial Express*

**25 September, 2020**

### **Gear up diplomacy to expand trade**

PM asks diplomats at virtual discussion commemorating Bangabandhu's historic Bangla speech at UNGA in 1974

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 25 asked Bangladesh's diplomats to reinforce economic diplomacy for expanding trade and business to achieve economic self-reliance for the country.

'Diplomacy has transformed into almost economic diplomacy. Now we need to see how we should expand trade and business to achieve economic self-reliance by maintaining good relations with all, to achieve development, and bring peace through collaborating with one another. We will have to carry out diplomacy in such a way,' she said.

The PM was addressing a discussion virtually from the Ganobhaban.

The discussion was arranged by the Foreign Ministry at the Foreign Service Academy in the city commemorating the historic Bangla speech by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the United Nations General Assembly in 1974.

Mentioning that the maiden speech of Bangabandhu in the UNGA is still relevant, the Prime Minister said, 'If we review the speech the Father of the Nation delivered in the UN on September 25, 1974 [also on Friday], we would see we're still dealing with the same issues in the international arena.'

In his speech, Bangabandhu had focused on the environment, how to prevent damages caused by natural disasters, changing the fate of the poor, ensuring human rights, justice and socio-economic development, Hasina said, adding that he had called upon the whole world to protect the people from diseases.

At the function, Sheikh Hasina also opened the newly constructed Foreign Service Academy Building digitally in Sugandha on Bailey Road in the capital.

The PM unveiled the covers of two books titled 'Bangabandhu, Sheikh Hasina and the United Nations: Bangladesh at the World Stage' and 'Bangabandhu: The People's Hero' published by the foreign ministry on the occasion of the Mujib Borsho (Mujib Year). *Source: The Daily Star*

**26 September, 2020**

**PM seeks equitable access to vaccines**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 26 stressed timely and equitable access to prospective COVID-19 vaccines while addressing the



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the newly constructed Foreign Service Academy Building marking the historic speech given in Bangla by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the UN General Assembly in 1974 through videoconference from Ganobhaban on September 25*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivering speech virtually at the general debate session of the UNGA on September 26*

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) amid a visible trend of "vaccine nationalism" when developed countries are prioritizing their access to prospective inoculates ahead of others.

'We hope that the COVID-19 vaccine will soon be available in the world. It is imperative to treat the vaccine as a 'global public good',' she said in her UNGA statement this year through virtual media.

The Bangladesh premier's pre-recorded speech came as United Nations stages its 75th UNGA session while the global COVID -19 pandemic forces the global forum to hold the annual assembly of world

leaders through the virtual media in New York this year.

She delivered the speech in Bangla as she did in previous UNGA sessions as the premier, following Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's footprint.

Sheikh Hasina informed the UNGA about of higher infrastructural capacity of Bangladesh pharmaceutical industry and said if Bangladesh was provided with the technical know-how and patents, it could launch mass-scale productions of inoculates.

The Bangladesh premier's 17- minute speech simultaneously featured largely the Rohingya crisis while she also highlighted issues of climate change and migrant workers' plight due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Sheikh Hasina reiterated her call to the world community to play a more effective role in solving the protracted Rohingya crisis saying 'more than three years have elapsed (but) regrettably, not a single Rohingya could be repatriated' as Bangladesh provided makeshift shelter to over 1.1 million forcibly displaced Myanmar people. *Source: The Financial Express*



*Outgoing Indian High Commissioner Riva Ganguly Das called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban on September 27*

when outgoing Indian High Commissioner Riva Ganguly Das called on her at the Ganobhaban.

Hasina added that the neighbouring countries can use Chattogram, Sylhet and Saidpur airports for their convenience.

The Covid-19 situation and the Rohingya crisis also came up during the talks. Riva said the two countries are working together to combat the virus.

She also appreciated the steps Bangladesh has taken under the leadership of Hasina to contain the spread of coronavirus.

The high commissioner lauded Bangladesh's economic development under the PM's leadership amid the pandemic.

**27 September, 2020**

### **PM for better co-op with neighbours**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on September 27 stressed the need for better cooperation with neighbouring countries for the development of the people of this region.

'We always think that better cooperation is needed with the neighbouring countries firstly for the development of the people of the region as our foreign policy is 'friendship to all and malice towards none', she said.

The PM made the remarks

Hasina said people of all classes and professions are working together during this crisis. *Source: The Daily Star*

**28 September, 2020**

### **PM's 74th birthday celebrated**

The 74th birthday of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was celebrated across the country on September 29 reiterating the vow to rally round the Awami League president in turning the country into a developed one by 2041 under her dynamic leadership.

On September 28 in 1947, Sheikh Hasina, the eldest of the five children of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib, was born at Tungipara in Gopalganj district.

The celebration of the birthday of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina this year got a momentum as the global pandemic COVID-19 created the scope for her to stay home on her birthday.

The premier usually stays in the United States of America (USA) during the time to attend the annual United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session every year.

Like previous years, AL and its affiliated organisations celebrated the day through various programmes, including discussions, doa-mahfils, special prayers and so on programmes. *Source: The Financial Express*

### **Cabinet okays bill to bring pvt medical institutes under law**

The Cabinet on September 28 in principle approved the draft of 'Private Medical and Dental College Bill, 2020' in order to bring the private medical institutions under a law instead of two separate guidelines.

The approval came from the weekly Cabinet meeting held virtually with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The PM joined the meeting through a videoconference from her official residence Ganobhaban, while other cabinet members remained connected from the Secretariat.

The private institutes are now run under the Private Medical College Establishment and Operation Guidelines 2011 and Private Dental College Establishment and Operation Guidelines 2009, she mentioned.

As per the bill, a college will have to have at least 50 students, its teacher-student ratio will have to be 1:10 and 75 per cent teachers will have to be permanent,' said the Cabinet Secretary adding the number of part-time teachers can't be exceed 25 per cent of the teachers. The colleges will be affiliated to the divisional medical universities concerned. *Source: The Financial Express*

### **PM joins hands with global leaders to endorse 'Pledge for Nature'**

Global leaders including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina launched 'Leaders' Pledge for Nature: United to Reverse Biodiversity Loss by 2030 for Sustainable Development' demonstrating their commitment for nature, biodiversity and global goals by a pre-recorded video on September 28.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is a signatory to the initiative with other global leaders including Emmanuel Macron, Angela Merkel, Justin Trudeau, Jacinda





*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the 'High-Level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of Covid-19 and Beyond' held at the UNGA in New York by a pre-recorded video on September 28*

included-Bhutan, Canada, United Kingdom, Belgium, Denmark, EU, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

The global leaders will join forces in the run up to the key international events and processes taking place throughout 2021, including the G7, the G20, the IUCN World Conservation Congress, the fifth UN Environment Assembly, UNFCCC COP26 and the UN Ocean Conference, aiming to achieve ambitious and realistic outcomes to pave the way for a strong Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

*Source: The Financial Express*

**29 September, 2020**

### **ECNEC okays Tk 3.37b land database project**

The government will prepare a digital database for ensuring a transparent land management system, as it approved a Tk 3.37-billion project in this regard on September 29.

Presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) endorsed the project along with three others at a combine cost of Tk 7.96 billion. *Source: The Financial Express*

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

Ardern and Boris Johnson.

Political leaders participating in the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity representing countries from all regions and the European Union, have committed to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030.

The signatories to the Leaders' Pledge for Nature have committed to putting wildlife and the climate at the heart of post-pandemic economic recovery plans, promising to address the climate crisis, deforestation, ecosystem degradation and pollution.

The other countries signed, so far, on this issue are

The Martyrs of 15th August



Bangabandhu  
Sheikh Mujibur Rahman



Begum Fazilatunnesa



Sheikh Kamal



Sheikh Jamal



Sheikh Russel



Sultana Kamal



Parvin Jamal Rosy



Sheikh Abu Naser



Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni



Begum Arzoo Moni



Abdur Rab Serniabat



Baby Serniabat



Col. Jamiluddin Ahmed



Shahid Serniabat



Arif Serniabat



Sukanto Abdullah



Abdul Naim Khan Rintu



Department of Films & Publications

Ministry of Information

Bangladesh