

Bangladesh

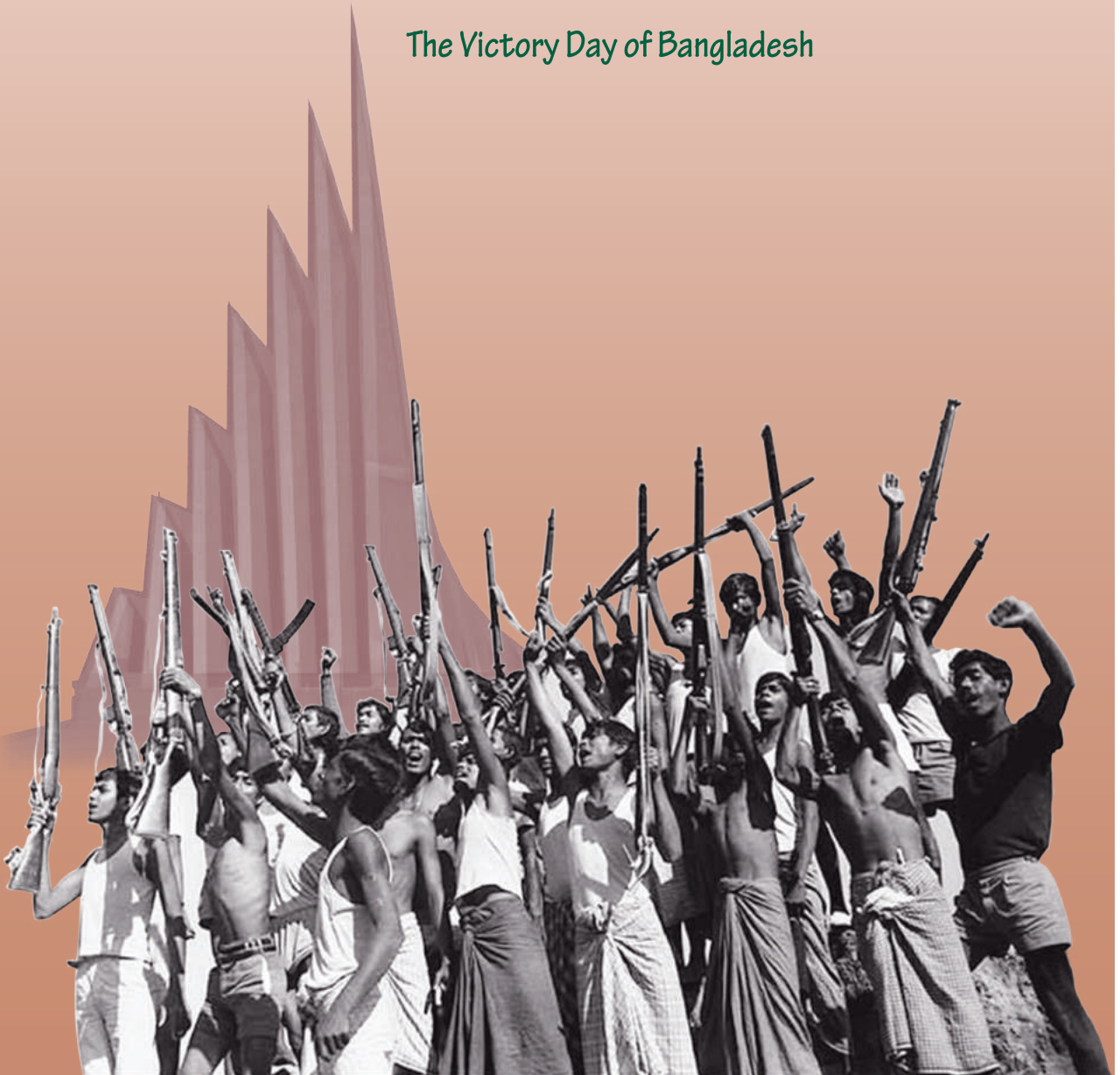
October-December 2020 Quarterly



Bangabandhu's Views on Good Governance

Dream of Victory Day in the Mujib-Year

The Victory Day of Bangladesh



Bangladesh

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Editorial

1 6th December, the Victory Day, is the most glorious day in the history of Bangladesh. On that day in 1971, General Niazi, CO of Pakistan Armed Forces along with about 93 thousand Pakistani soldiers as well as all Para-military forces and civil Armed forces signed the Instrument of surrender after a nine-month long Liberation War. We achieved the Victory of Bangladesh at the cost of millions of life of men and women. It has enormous influence on our national life. This victory helps remove poverty, injustice, social and economic disparity among the people and it inspires us to have the ideal to establish human rights in society.

Throughout his long political career and also as the founder-President and Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had been vocal and outspoken against bad governance and maladministration in society and he created public opinion against corruption and malfunctions of the state machinery.

To celebrate the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman a year long elaborate programmes have been chalked out at home and abroad. The scheduled programmes of '*Mujib Borsho*', however, have to be squeezed in view of the corona pandemic. A special session of the Jatiya Sangsad recalling the splendid political life, works, ideology and philosophy of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was held on 8 to 19 November 2020.

Other than the write-ups on the above subjects, articles on e-Asia, freelancing, quality seeds, poems and story have also been accommodated in this current issue.

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Bangabandhu's Views on Good Governance

Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

Bangabandhu said, 'We inherited a provincial administrative setup which was unfit for an independent nation. Some of the bureaucrats cannot yet shake off their colonial mentality. We are advising them to comprehend the real meaning of an independent nation. We hope their past orientation will change for the better. My government will reorganize the state machinery in line with a new state and a new society. In the proposed structure, attempts will be made to bring the government servants closer to the people. We have chalked out plans to upgrade all the subdivisions into districts'.

During the session of the constituent assembly convened to approve the constitution, Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman said on 4 November 1972, 'We have framed a constitution based on four state principles. Some people say, rights of the government employees have been curtailed. Let them look at the constitutions of other countries. The government employees aren't another nation. They are our brothers. Neither do they belong to another class. They were given excessive protection during British and Pakistani rule. We have hit that bureaucratic bastion, but nothing else. We do not want to maintain that distinctive class, because we seek to establish an exploitation-free classless society'.

Throughout his long political career as the champion of the down-trodden and later as the founder-President and Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had been vocal and outspoken against bad governance and maladministration in society. As a leader of the masses, he created public opinion against corruption and malfunctions of the state machinery. As head of the government, he tried to bring about sweeping reforms in the structures and functions of Bureaucracy for ensuring good governance. Significantly, just when he was on the verge of overhauling the colonial administrative system in the country, the conspirators became active and ultimately brought about his downfall.

The following is a chronological presentation of the public utterances of Bangabandhu on the theme of governance and corruption, which have been quoted from various speeches delivered by him after independence.

Referring to the prevalent administrative structure in his address to the nation on 26 March 1972,



Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin, Artist Hashem Khan, Calligrapher AKM Abdur Rauf and others handed over the original ornamented & handwritten copy of the constitution of Bangladesh to Bangabandhu

‘In the eyes of law, the government employees have similar rights as those of other citizens. They are paid and attired by the money given by peasants and labourers. The government employees should therefore enjoy the same rights as available to farmers–labourers. They cannot demand more rights. Government employees will have to change their attitude; they are not rulers but servants. Some people came to me and sought protection. I told them, my people want protection from you gentlemen. I asked them to change their attitude completely. Actions have been taken against some government servants during the past nine months. Actions against many more may be taken in future. Now promotions will depend on work-output and the liking of the people. The poor and the less-salaried employees will also have similar rights to promotion. Nobody will be allowed to lay their hands on the poor employees. While standing by their sides, I have waged movements for their rights throughout my life. I shall stand beside them in the future as well. They are poor and their rights have been protected in the constitution.’

‘We have formed a Services Reorganization Committee. I told the members of that committee, Dr. Kamal Hossain has also said, we shall not retain the 125 levels of the central government or the 33 levels of the provincial government. There will be no more than seven levels in government service. Some people are making secret noises in their attempt to obstruct the process. They are also contacting the MCAs. We have shown enough clemency. We were born through a bloody war. We did not move around with ‘Tamghas’ from Yahya Khan and Ayub Khan. We arrived here after speaking in the streets and obtaining support from the people. But if some people imagine today that they will get the protection of Yahya and



Dr. Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury hands over the report of Services Reorganisation Committee to Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, 1973

Ayub Khan, they are wrong.’

‘ G o v e r n m e n t employees will have to mix with the people. They are servants and brothers of the people. They are the guardians and sons of the general masses. They will have to work with that attitude. Some people advocate annihilation of corrupt government employees, but when action is taken, they pass opposing resolutions in meetings. Their principle should be consistent. Some

people say the offices are filled up with collaborators who want to destroy the government. It is true there are some collaborators. Action is taken where allegation is found to be true. There is another aspect. Sitting in tables and chairs without working has become a fashion today. Mentality must be changed. CSPs and PSPs cannot continue in Bangladesh. There will be 7 layers in government service. The Services Reorganization committee and the pay commission have been formed. Attempts have been made to obstruct the process. Taka 75 salary for some and Taka 2000 for others – that cannot be allowed any more. Everybody shall have the right to live. The pay commission will determine the maximum and minimum salaries of government servants. The resources will have to be shared equitably.’

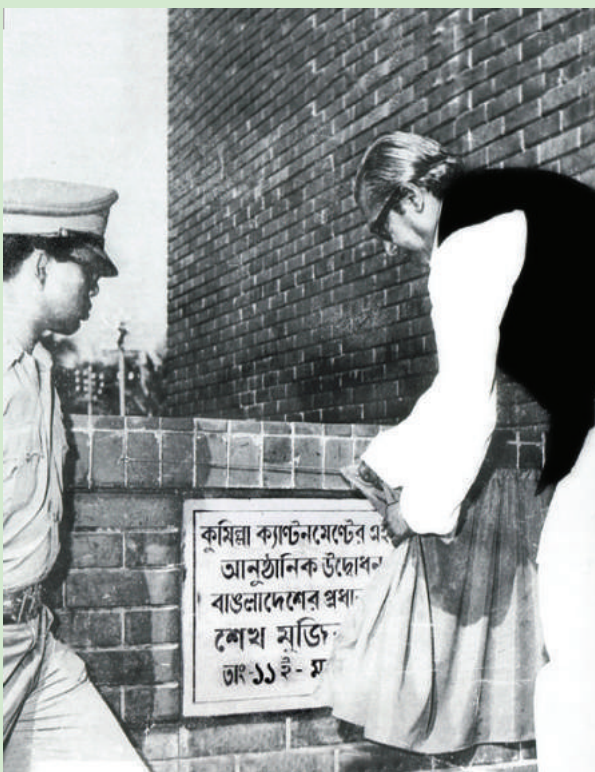
During the biennial council session of Bangladesh Awami League held on 18 January 1974, Bangabandhu came out forcefully against corruption. ‘Why people are mad about money. Their only preoccupation seems to be how to make money. But the peasants of Bengal, the unfortunate lot, they are not corrupt. Who indulges in black marketing? It is those who have some education. Who smuggles? Those who are more educated. Who hijacks? The educated ones. They engage in international smuggling and keep money in foreign soil. Even medicines are adulterated by us the educated and clever ones – who make other people drink even poisonous materials. Definitely, the village-people don’t do it. Definitely my peasant brothers don’t do it. Certainly my worker brothers don’t do it. Those who are naughty in their stomach do black marketing. And who are the foreign agents? Definitely not my farmers, neither my labourers. Those of us who are educated drive cars, visit foreign countries, mix with foreigners, wear good suits—they become agents of the foreigners against the Bengali people.’

‘We are in deep trouble. Those of you, who are intellectuals, educated and are leading the nation—it is your bounden duty to engage in self-criticism. And my colleagues in the Awami League, you please trace out the black-marketers, the

hoarders, the bribe-takers. You acted as per my orders in the past, you please do it again. Corruption cannot be tackled merely through law and enforcement. For this, public awareness has to be generated, similar to what we did between 1st and 25th March, 1971. Public opinion has to be crystallized against the corrupt, the bribe-takers and the exploiters in the same fashion. I firmly believe that corruption will then be eliminated from the soil of Bangladesh.'

In his address to the nation on 15 December, 1974, over Radio and Television on the eve of Victory Day, Bangabandhu declared in unequivocal terms, 'In our new war of resistance, the latest and the principal enemies are smugglers, black marketers, profiteers and bribe-takers. These beasts smuggle out the food of the unfortunate Bengalis even when people die of hunger. They pile up mountains of profit by hoarding goods brought through foreign aid and the resources of Bengal. I seek your cooperation and help in the elimination of these beasts.'

While addressing the cadets at the Military Academy in Comilla on 11 January, 1975, Bangabandhu said, 'Sometimes we become inhuman. We won our freedom at the expense of so much blood, yet our characters have not changed. The corrupt bribe-takers and black-marketers have made the life of our distressed people miserable. For long three years I have appealed to them and warned them of dire consequences. But the thief does not listen to religion. So no more appeals or warnings. This time the people of Bangladesh must be saved.'



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman formally inaugurating Cumilla Cantonment

'The Pakistanis plundered all our resources, did not leave us anything except paper. I have to beg for foreign assistance. But the thieves take away everything I bring causing maximum harm to the poor people. So this time I have not only declared emergency, I have promised that the corrupt bribe-takers, profiteers and black-marketers would be eliminated from the soil of Bangladesh. If we could fight against the Pakistani tyrants for long 25 years, could bravely tackle all starting from Muhammad Ali Jinnah to Ghulam Mohammad, Chowdhury Mohammad Ali, Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan, could win freedom at the expense of three million martyrs, then corruption, bribery, profiteering and smuggling must also be eliminated'.



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman inspecting parade arranged on the occasion of Police Week at Rajarbagh Police Line in Dhaka, July 1975

While addressing the Police at Rajarbagh Police Line on the occasion of Police Week on 15 January, 1975, Bangabandhu said, ‘We should remember that life is short. We cannot take anything with us after death. Then why will you exploit the people and cause misery to them? You will have to explain to Allah any act of torture or repression. I ask all government servants including you to serve those masses properly by whose money we run our families. Deal ruthlessly with those who commit crime. But be careful; do not torture a single innocent person. If you do that, even I shall have to answer to Allah for that. I am your Prime Minister, so I and my colleagues are ultimately responsible for all your deeds’.

Critical of the stagnation in Bangladesh’s judiciary, Bangabandhu said in his address to the Jatiya Sangsad on 25 January 1975, ‘if a case is filed in a civil court, it’s resolution in even twenty years is uncertain. When a father dies, he passes the case on to his son. And the lawyer passes it on to his son-in-law. And when there is a criminal case, there is no justice in the lower courts and judge courts. Justice delayed is justice denied; we have to effect a complete change. The system has to be changed so that people get justice instantaneously. There is need for radical change. The country cannot be run by colonial powers and laws.’

Referring to corruption in the same address, Bangabandhu said, ‘Corruption has to be eliminated from the soil of Bengal. My farmers, my labourers don’t do corruption. It is we the educated class who do corruption. It is we, who were educated by their money. Today, wherever you go, there is corruption; there is corruption when you dig the road, there is corruption when you buy food or any item, there is corruption when you go abroad. Who are the people? It is we the educated class. We are the most corrupt people in the world. But we make speeches, write in newspapers and brag about it. It is time for self-criticism. This cannot go on like this. We have to die one day and go to the grave. Nothing can be



Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman speaking in the Parliament, 7 April 1973

taken there. But people forget. How can they engage in such misdeeds?’

‘Those who smuggle out our goods and indulge in corruption—they should be eliminated from the soil of Bengal. Those who provide money as tax for your salary with which you run your family, you seek bribes from them? Mentality must be changed. We government employees, Ministers,

President—we are all servants of the people—not their masters.’

While announcing the programs of the second revolution in his last address at a public meeting in historic Suhrawardy Udyan on 26 March, 1975, Bangabandhu said, ‘without people’s support, corruption cannot be eliminated by merely framing rules. Today I have a request to make. I told you in the past to undertake Jihad by building fortresses at every home to fight the enemy. Today I shall ask the people of Bengal to eliminate the corrupted from the soil of Bangladesh. I seek your help. How can I do it alone? I shall apply the law and forgive none. Those who will be caught will not be spared. You have to undertake one thing—a mass movement. I shall go to the villages and wage such a movement that the bribe-takers, profiteers and smugglers will be boycotted socially. We should keep this in mind. By organizing meetings in villages, we shall have to identify the thieves, the black-marketers and the bribe-takers. Don’t be afraid, I am with you. Inshallah, I shall not allow any repression on you. But you will have to wage movements in the villages. Who can do it? The student brothers, the youth brothers, the intellectual brothers, you organize yourselves. You will have to build fortresses in each home. That fortress will annihilate the corrupt and lessen the sorrow of our people. If you can finish these corrupt ones, 25 to 30 percent misery of the people of Bangladesh will be gone. So many thieves! I do not know where they were born! The Pakistanis have taken everything, I would have been relieved if these thieves were also taken away. They have left behind these thieves. Some collaborators are gone; we could have been saved if these thieves also left.’

Sadly, the collaborators, the thieves and the conspirators were not all gone, and Bangabandhu’s magnanimity and leniency in pardoning them on so many occasions ultimately led to his downfall.

The speeches quoted in the article have been taken from the book ‘Bangabandhur Bhashon’ edited by Mizanur Rahman Mizan, which have been rendered into English in an edited form by Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed



Dream of Victory Day in the Mujib-Year

Muhammad Zafar Iqbal

crystallised within the confines of tolerance; people have learned to dream about a fresh life anew. Therefore, it can be said with certainty that those who had seen 1971 not only became witnesses of history, they had at the same time observed such a contour of humanity that can never be forgotten. A fundamental transformation has occurred inside those people who had to pass through that episode. At the same time, they can now remain unwavering in any situation as they had witnessed the most terrible period in the world. They can dream about the future, and remain optimistic. Therefore, I consider my generation to be the most fortunate one.

Even after half a century later, I can clearly recall those days close to the Victory day in 1971. We could realize in the besieged city of Dhaka from the start of December that the momentum and nature of war had undergone a change. It was going to end, but none could say how much additional blood would have to be shed. Dog-fights of war-planes could be seen from the rooftops of houses. The night-sky was lit by the synchronous firings from anti-aircraft guns, and places all around trembled due to the harsh sound. Military convoys were passing nearby;

If those who had witnessed 1971 are asked what their most joyous moment in life was, then they would certainly answer '16 December 1971'. In my view, those who had witnessed 1971 with their own eyes are the most fortunate people in the whole world. That was because, they had seen with their own eyes what great sacrifices the ordinary people of this land made by imperilling their own lives during the most terrible episode in life, and how they could give away their lives by loving the country so dearly. Above all, they could observe how the biggest achievement of this country was brought about. If they were not fortunate, then who else were? Again, looking at it from another angle, they might have been another band of unlucky people, because they had witnessed one of the cruellest genocides in world history with their own eyes. Also, it would not have been surprising if they had lost faith in the entire mankind after seeing such brutality of the Pakistani military and their feet-licking adherents.

Luckily, that was not how things happened. The memory of terror ultimately got covered by the recollection of joy with the soft touch of time; the intensity of sorrow has



Freedom fighters on the war-front

the stern-looking Pakistani troops were sitting atop those vehicles with stony faces. Those who were living on the borders of Dhaka could see the passing of tanks moving over the pitch-laden roads with groaning sound. There were also the roars of cannons and un interrupted shelling. The BBC reported that the US Seventh Fleet was advancing towards Bangladesh over the Bay of Bengal with hundreds of fighter jets.

Then announcements could be heard after tuning in to the local radio, which urged the Pakistani military to surrender: “Drop the weapons, surrender the arms”. Leaflets were thrown from the sky, relentlessly calling for



Following a tortuous war of liberation spanning nine months, the Pakistan occupation army surrenders at Dhaka Racecourse Ground, 16 December 1971

surrender. We were realizing that a war was not merely exchange of fire; it also exerted tremendous mental pressure. We did not know even then that the Al-Badar forces – the students’ front of Jamaate Islami – had started to kill the illustrious offspring of this land one after another.

It was the month of December. The weather was very cold. There were

some small children at the place where I had taken refuge. We held our breath while we were waiting inside a bunker covered by blankets. There was acute uncertainty. We did not know what would happen and how things would turn out. Suddenly, at that very juncture, we heard somebody shout in an intensely razor-sharp voice, ‘Joy Bangla’. All uncertainties were gone in a moment. All worries evaporated. Nobody told us, but we understood that the day for which we had been waiting had arrived. The days we passed running to nooks and crannies of the country like wild beasts were over. The country for which so many of our near ones had shed blood from their bosom has now materialised.



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



Freedom Fighters rejoicing after the victory

more mirthful than this? But what a surprise! There were tears in the corners of our eyes when we got that news for the first time.

I cannot believe even now that this slogan ‘Joy Bangla’ was in exile in this country for a long time.

The country was born with innumerable dreams. We dreamt about a new life on that

Victory Day. Although the land was rid of enemies, Bangabandhu was still in a Pakistani prison. He returned on 10 January, and we were greatly elated! He put in his efforts for building a Bangladesh of our dreams. At that time, there were lakhs of homeless and uprooted people in the country. There were families without fathers, mothers who had lost their sons, tortured daughters, disabled freedom fighters, and people living in abject poverty. Many of them did not have houses or homes for taking shelter. Many did not have anything to eat. The roads, ports and bridges of the country were destroyed. Many schools and colleges were non-existent as they were turned into military camps by the Pakistanis. Dwelling houses were burnt down; consequently the students did not have books or note-pads. The economy was shattered. But even then people had huge expectations. Surely, this country would stand up by raising its head high. All exploitations and deprivations would then be eliminated. There would be no injustice in this land, no irreligious practices. There would be bountiful love for all people irrespective of their religion or colour.

But Bangabandhu was not granted the required time for building up the country. Within three and a half years, Bangabandhu was assassinated along with his family members in the early hours of 15 August during one of the most gruesome killings in world history. The soil of this forsaken land was coloured by the blood of Bangabandhu. A modern Bangladesh lost her way at that very juncture by moving towards the dark alleyways of hopeless, dreamless religious bigotry. The war criminals kept in jails for trying on charges of crimes against humanity came out of prisons en-masse on 31 December. The country became a safe haven for war criminals.

Then many things happened, and that history was blighted. At one juncture, Bangladesh once again got back that lost path under the leadership of Bangabandhu's worthy daughter Sheikh Hasina. The country has been rid of blemishes by trying the killers of Bangabandhu. The nation got back its lost sense of honour by trying the war-criminals. The children are once again able to know about Bangabandhu, they are learning to take pride in the liberation war. The economic capacity of the country is flourishing with jumps and leaps. Who would now dare to term the country as a 'bottomless basket'?

But has our dream of 1971 been fulfilled? We all know that the real dreams touch the sky, but they never materialise. We continue our work by merely looking at those dreams throughout our lives. But apprehensions develop when we find those dreams absent from our eyes.

We still have many challenges before us. These challenges relate to nature, the environment, economic disparities, education and healthcare. But the biggest challenge is to build a non-communal country. Bangabandhu's lifelong dream was a non-communal Bangladesh. We have not yet achieved that Bangladesh. We still have to listen to the bragging of religious fanatics and fundamentalist groups.

Let our dream be a genuinely non-communal Bangladesh as dreamt by Bangabandhu during this Victory Day of the Mujib-Year.

Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

Author : Educationist , Writer

Courtesy: Press Information Department



The Victory Day of Bangladesh

Dr. Md. Matiur Rahman Khan

the emergence of Pakistan on 14th August, 1947, the despotic and oppressive rulers of West Pakistan had been showing the discriminatory and differential treatment in political, administrative, military, economic, educational, developmental, situational and social and cultural sectors with the Bengali speaking people in the then East Pakistan. The ruling leaders exploited the people of East Pakistan and deprived them of their privileges in various ways. As a result, the sufferings and hardship of the Bengali speaking people grew more and more. On top of it, the Pakistani rulers tried to gag the mother tongue of the Bengali people by imposing Urdu as the state language of Pakistan.

Moreover, the people of West Pakistan did not have any uniformity and similarity in respect of language, history, culture and tradition at all with those of East Pakistan. Over that period, a minority of 3.27% of people spoke Urdu and a majority of 56 % of the total population of Pakistan spoke Bengali. In spite of being the vast majority of the Bengali speaking people, Pakistani rulers imposed Urdu as the state language. The first Governor General of Pakistan Mohammad Ali Jinnah on March 21, 1948, in the Ramna Race Course Maidan and on March

The 16th December is the great Victory Day of Bangladesh. On that day in 1971 General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi, CO of Pakistan Armed Forces along with about ninety three thousand Pakistani soldiers after a nine-month long bloody Liberation War signed the Pakistani Instrument of Surrender, a written agreement and then surrendered themselves to the allied forces of Bangladesh and India in the then Race Course Maidan in Dhaka. With their surrender on that day, we achieved the victory and this victory led to the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent country in the world map. But the victory did not come to our door automatically. In achieving the victory about three million people had to sacrifice their lives and hundreds of thousands of women had to lose their modesty and chastity for the sake of the beloved motherland over the period for nine month long Liberation War in Bangladesh.

Background of the achievement of the Victory Day:

Since the

24, 1948 at the Convocation Ceremony of the University of Dhaka declared, 'Urdu, and only Urdu shall be the state language of Pakistan' This declaration angered and enraged the students and the people alike.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, one of the greatest leaders in the world, and greatest Bengali of the past thousand years, Supreme Command of the Liberation War, Father of the Nation, sculptor of Bangladesh organized the movement against that declaration. But on October 14, 1949, Sheikh Mujib was arrested on a charge that he led a procession of hungry people. He was confined in jail for more than two years and five months.

However, thereafter an All-Party State Language Struggle Council was formed to resist the imposing of Urdu as a state language. In 1952 the movement was intensified to establish Bangla as the state language. Student community organized protest processions, rallies and meetings in demand of Bangla as the state language. On 21 February, 1952, in defiance of the ban imposed under section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code, students held rallies and demonstrations in front of the Medical College Hostel in Dhaka and blocked the legislators' way. The Pakistani barbaric Armed Police forces opened fire where the students held demonstrations. In consequence, a number of students including Abdus Salam, Rafiq Uddin Ahmed, Abul Barkat, Abdul Jabbar and others were martyred by the bullets of the Pakistani forces. Actually since then the seed of the movement



21st February, 1952: Part of the historic meeting in front of old Arts Faculty Building of Dhaka Varsity (Now Dhaka Medical College)

against the Pakistani rulers for a separate land was s o w e d . Thenceforth, the Pakistani rulers were involved in criminal and political conspiracies one after another against the Bengali speaking people. But as luck would have it for the Bengali people, the landslide victory of the United Front and the debacle of the Muslim League in the election of 1952 made the power base of the ruling people of Pakistan shaky. In 1965 Ayub Khan in the



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Awami League leaders listen to election results over the Radio, Tajuddin Ahmad sitting beside him

name of basic democracy held a fraudulent election and stripped of the political rights of the people. In 1968, Sheikh Mujib was implicated as the accused on a charge of sedition and was put on trial in the historic Agartala Case in which there were 35 accused of which he was number 1. The case led to mass upsurge in 1969 and the government was forced to withdraw the case and release him on February 22, 1969. On the occasion of his release, a grand public reception rally was organized on the Racecourse Maidan on February 23, 1969. In that

big rally, the appellation of 'Bangabandhu' was conferred on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Thereafter, came the election of 1970, Awami League emerged as a single largest party in the National Assembly and Provincial Assembly by winning absolute majority. But the then military ruler of Pakistan dictator Yahya did not hand over the power to the elected representatives of Awami League. The common people of East Pakistan including students, workers, government and nongovernmental officers, and employees burst into violent protest.

However, in that situation, Bangabandhu's historic speech on March 7, 1971 at the Racecourse Maidan came to the agitating and wrathful people as a guideline for the nation to strengthen and promote the movement. He in his historic speech said, '... if moves are made to exterminate the people of this country, Bengalis must act with caution. In every village, and in neighborhood, set up Sangram Parishad under the leadership of Awami League. And be prepared with whatever you have. Remember: Having the master of the lesson of sacrifice, we shall give more blood. God willing, we shall free the people of this land. The struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation. The struggle this time is a struggle for independence' His speech is a 'Thunder voice' which inspired the Bengalis to get engaged in the freedom struggle. Massive movement and non-cooperation started throughout the eastern part of the country. Shrewd Yahya, the military ruler in the name of holding talks came to Dhaka and ended the talks with no fruitful result. But before he left Dhaka on March 25, he gave the soldiers directives to annihilate the people of East Pakistan.

The nation passed through critical time: On the midnight of 25 March, the invading army launched attacks in different places of Dhaka on the unarmed and

the innocent sleeping people. The Pakistan army committed random acts of assassination and mass killing throughout Dhaka. Bangabandhu could sense the brutal and atrocious nature of the invading army. He declared the independence in the early hour of 26 March, 1971 in the following way:

'This may be my last message, from today Bangladesh is independent. I call upon the people of Bangladesh wherever you might be and with whatever you have, to resist the army of occupation to the last. Your fight must go on until the last soldier of the Pakistan occupation army is expelled from the soil of Bangladesh and final victory is achieved'.

However, the invading soldiers of Pakistan army attacked Bangabandhu's house and arrested him, then took him to West Pakistan and put him in a lock-up there. His trial was held in a court martial and a grave was dug by his lock-up to bury him there. But he did not yield to any fear or favour.

In order to lead the liberation struggle effectively, the first provisional government was formed on April 10, 1971, and the formal swearing in ceremony was held on April 17, 1971, at Vaidynathtala in Meherpur district. The Liberation War continued for about nine months. The invading army killed three million people and ravaged the whole of the country into a mass or heap of ruins. The valiant freedom fighters fought against them and ultimately came out victorious. With the surrender of Pakistani soldiers on December 16, 1971, Bangladesh became independent. This has been possible because of the sacrifice and great leadership of the Bangabandhu.

However, following the independence, the Bangabandhu was released from Pakistan's prison on January 8, 1972, and he came to Bangladesh on January 10, 1972 via England and India. On January 12, 1972, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was sworn in as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. After some years the country switched over to the presidential system of governance, and Bangabandhu became the President of Bangladesh on January 25, 1975.

Significance of Victory Day: The Victory Day has a tremendous influence on our national life. It is the shining day of cherished freedom and commitments of long time of many people. This victory helps



Rejoicing of freedom fighters at a zone just liberated from the clutches of the enemy



Commander of the Pakistani occupation army General Niazi in presence of General Arora Commander of the joint forces, signing the instrument of surrender on 16 December 1971 in Dhaka

remove poverty, injustice, social and economic disparity among the people and it inspires us to have the ideal to establish human rights in society. This day is bright and great in the glory of our self-identity, self-sacrifice, and self-pity. While observing the day every year, it becomes our duty to realize and think how fast we can fulfill the commitments, how far we have been able to

materialize the desire and the dream of our victory and how much our achievement is in our national life and where our position is in the world forum. From this point of view, this day is a day of self-criticism, self-understanding and self-questioning. The celebration of the Victory Day rouses and keeps our spirit of Liberation War undiminished. It encourages holding our spirit high for the Victory Day every year. It refreshes our memory and reminds us of our heroic activities. This day enhances our feeling for the motherland and strengthens our patriotism for the country. We can remember and offer prayers for our heroic people who laid down their lives for the cause of the victory. On that day we pray for the salvation of the departed souls of the martyrs and renew our vows to finish their unfinished tasks for the peace of their souls. Participation in the celebration of the victory day brings a close bond of love and affection among the people and makes us understand one another and their pain and pleasure from the closest proximity. The celebration of victory fortifies the relations with one another in the society. More importantly, it consolidates the national feelings and unity, and strengthens solidarity from top to bottom.

Celebration of the Victory Day (*Bijoy Dibos*): Bangladesh has been celebrating the Victory Day since 1972. The Victory Day is a public holiday. Commemorations to mark the Victory Day begin with a 31 gun salute-ceremony at the National Parade Ground at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. Honourable President and the honourable Prime Minister give messages to the people of the country. They pay tribute at dawn to over three million martyrs of the Liberation War by placing wreaths at the foot of the National Mausoleum located at Savar.

On the day the national anthem is played and national flags are hoisted atop the government, semi-government and private offices and houses across the country. Important government buildings, establishments, big hotels and private houses are illuminated at night. Big roads and city streets are decorated with miniature national flags and bunting across the country.

The state owned and the private televisions and the radios broadcast special programmes highlighting the significance of the Liberation War. Special prayers are offered in mosques and other places of worship, seeking the salvation and well-being of the souls of the martyrs of the Liberation War.

Improved diets are served in hospitals, jails and orphanages across the country.. In the rural areas boat races and games and sports are arranged, fairs are held at different places.

Mass media highlight the importance of the day. Different political parties and socioeconomic organizations undertake various programmes to mark the day in a befitting manner. Discussions and meetings are held on the significance of the day.

Dream of Victory Day and existing reality: It is a fact that we achieved the Victory Day of Bangladesh at the cost of millions of life of men and women. It is our duty to establish Bangladesh as a peaceful, prosperous and flourishing country in the world. This Victory Day cannot be the day only for handful persons for enjoyment and merriment. Our main aim of victory is to establish our own country where human rights and justice will be ensured without social and economic discrimination and where all the rich and the poor, the weak and the strong, the young and the old can enjoy the victory of the country alike. We must have such mentality and morality so that this victory becomes enjoyable and significant to all equally, otherwise this victory will remain incomplete and unfruitful to the people of the country. But it is the time to consider how much this victory has been meaningful and how much poverty has been eliminated and how much the dream of victory of people has been fulfilled.

However, it is next to impossible for any government to develop the country overnight. People from all walks of life are needed to contribute something to the development of the country. And we have to remember 'Many a little makes a mickle'.

We have to be more patriotic and dutiful to the country. We have to perform our duty with sincerity and honesty. Corruption, bribery and extortion have to be eradicated from the country to make it a prosperous and welfare state.

The victory of Bangladesh is a very expensive one. Pools of blood have been shed to achieve this victory. We must keep this enshrined victory and the Victory Day of Bangladesh well guarded and protected. We must hold the flag of the country high at any cost. But if we fail to make the Victory Day equally meaningful, enjoyable and sweet to the ordinary people, the bloodshed and sacrifices of innumerable lives of martyrs will be meaningless and perhaps the departed souls of the martyrs will not find peace and will move around us in the air telling us to complete the incomplete tasks they left for the living to complete. So, we have to work hard to make Bangladesh a prosperous country where there will be no poverty, deprivation, unemployment, hunger, crisis, want, illiteracy, ill education, inhumanity, corruption, bribery but where peace, prosperity, justice and humanity will reign. Otherwise, the souls of the martyrs will be displeased with us for the negligence of our duty and responsibility. Hence, let us honour and firm our promise to make Bangladesh a Bengal of gold.

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



Mujib Birth Centenary Special Session of Jatiya Sangsad

Md. Saifullah

Year long elaborate programmes have been drawn to celebrate the birth centenary of Visionary Leader and Architect of the Independent Bangladesh, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at home and abroad. The scheduled programmes of 'Mujib Borsho', however, have to be squeezed in view of the coronavirus pandemic. A special session of the Jatiya Sangsad recalling the Father of the Nation was due in March. Finally that special session was held on 8 to 19 November 2020, maintaining strict health guidelines considering the pandemic. The splendid political life, works, ideology and philosophy of Bangabandhu

thoroughly discussed in the session that formally began with President Md. Abdul Hamid addressing on November 9. As the address of the President over, Leader of the House and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placed a resolution in the session under the section 147 of the rules of procedure for holding a general discussion, highlighting the life and works of Bangabandhu and thus paying a rich tribute to the Great Leader. The House unanimously adopted the resolution by voice vote after a five day hectic discussion participated by MPs of all the political parties.

The President at his address in the special session said, there is no scope to see Bangabandhu and Bangladesh separately and 'if you want to know Bangladesh, you have to know about the country's Freedom Struggle and the Liberation War of the Bangalis and also Bangabandhu'. He said those who tried to separate this entities-Bangabandhu and Bangladesh- has failed ultimately. Today's reality is the most vivid proof and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is not merely a name; Bangabandhu is an institution, an entity, a history. He also said, invisible Bangabandhu is as much as powerful as a living Bangabandhu. As long as Bangladesh remains, the Bangalis remain, the people of this country remain, Bangabandhu shall remain as a source of inspiration for all, the President said adding Bangabandhu will continue to illuminate the world as a luminous torch of freedom for the oppressed people of the world. The president called upon all to take initiatives so that the future generation can grow being imbued with the principles and ideologies of Bangabandhu and the spirit of the War of Liberation.

The President calling for building unity against those who create confusion among the common masses said, the benefit of independence would have to be delivered to every doorstep. He also said, unity is needed most for building the 'Sonar

Bangla' as pledged Bangabandhu. It needs unity of the people, specially unity of those who were on the side of the War of Liberation. The unity that brought us together in 1971, that unity has to be forged against communalism, undemocratic behaviors and violence, he added.

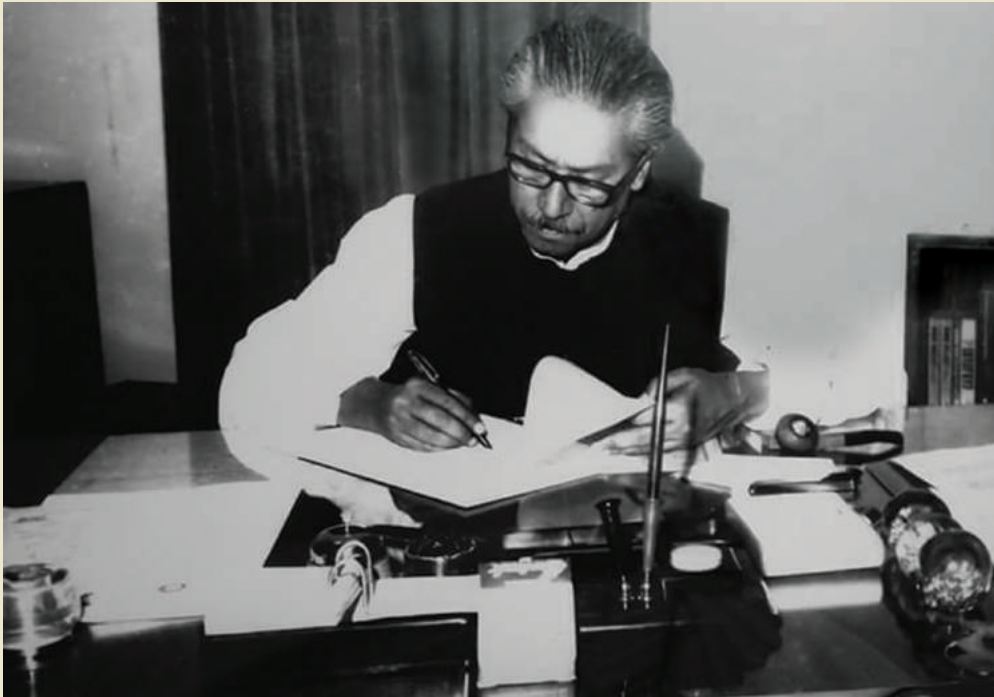
The President said, the political parties shall have to nurture the culture of being accommodative to others opinion and showing mutual respect. He said, by getting imbued with the spirit of 1971, resistance has to be built against those who want to hinder the trend of advancement in the country through mongering confusion and derailing the simple-minded people by denying the reality and concocting imaginary stories and situations. Only then the Golden Bangla as dreamt by Bangabandhu would be materialized and the celebration of his birth centenary would be meaningful, the President added.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while moving the resolution to pay homage to the Father of the Nation said, Bangabandhu gave us an independent country, a red-green flag and a constitution. He contributed to build up an environment so that the Bangali, as a proud nation, can stay in the world community keeping head high with self-identity. The Leader of the House said, after the independence Bangabandhu got only three and a half years to build up a war-ravaged country. By that span of time, she took a comprehensive plan for the development of the country and its implementation.

Sheikh Hasina said, had the Father of the Nation not been heinously killed on the fateful night of 15 August, 1975, Bangladesh could have emerged as a developed country much before. The Premier termed the celebration of birth centenary of Bangabandhu with the Awami League led government running the country as a matter of being fortunate. For this, she expressed her gratitude to the countrymen. Sheikh Hasina referring to the scenario after the assassination of Bangabandhu



Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban (National Parliament Building), Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman working at his office

said, during that time, the name of Bangabandhu and his contribution to different movements including the Language Movement had been erased from history. Even the Historic 7 March Speech had been banned after the assassination of the Father of the Nation on August 15, 1975. This is our bad luck. The Speech has now become World Heritage, she continued adding 'it is not easy to wipe out history, even history itself takes revenge. From now on, that name (Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman) can not be erased from history, this is the reality', she added.

The PM said people can know the real history by reading Bangabandhu's 'Oshomapto Attojiboni' (Unfinished Memoirs), 'Karagarer Rojnamcha' (Prison Diary) and 'Amar Dekha Naya Chin' (The New China as I Saw). 'Pakistani intelligence report on Father of the Nation' can be another source of knowing true history, she added. Work on publishing one more book written by Father of the Nation 'Smritikatha' is going on, she informed.

Mentioning that Father of the Nation had a belief that people of the country loved him very much and they could not kill him, the Prime Minister said, 'It was unfortunate that the Bangali nation could not keep up his trust.'

'He (Bangabandhu) saw the traitors (before death), but could not see the people who were behind the scene,' she said, adding that only a few people, not in a huge number were behind the heinous act.

Referring to Bangabandhu's maiden speech in an independent country on his arrival on January 10, 1972 from the Pakistani jail, Sheikh Hasina said, Father of

the Nation asked all to stay united as conspiracy was going on. But they failed to remain united against the plot, the Premier added.

The PM went on saying, 'Today Father of the Nation is not with us. But his ideology, his every word and line is very significant for us as these are lessons for us.' Bangabandhu wanted to bring a smile on the face of the countrymen by changing their lots since his childhood, she said, adding, 'We are committed to build a prosperous and developed Bangladesh free from hunger and poverty envisioned by Father of the Nation.'

Bangladesh Awami League General Secretary and Minister for Road Transportation and Bridges Obaidul Quader in his address in the special session said, in the thousand year old history of Bangladesh, Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah, Fakir Majnu Shah, Titumir and many others called for liberation, but had not been successful. Only Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman became successful and presented us an independent country.

Senior MP Tofail Ahmed taking part in the discussion on the second day (10 November) said, Bangabandhu after declaring the historic 6-point in 1966 held 32 public meetings within 35 days. During attending these programmes, he was arrested 8 times. Tofail Ahmed said, many leaders would come in the world, but a leader like Bangabandhu would never come. He was one of the most admired leaders of the world. He can not die. He is with us; he will always be with us.

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon MP said, the historic 6-points turned Bangabandhu into a unique leader. 'Bangabandhu does not belong only to Awami League. Bangabandhu is not a property of any party. He is the Father of the Nation.' Menon added.

Minister for Liberation War Affairs A K M Mozammel Haque told the House, it was very clear to the killers that if any descendent, whatever the form, of Bangabandhu can survive, Bangladesh may turn around centering him or her. And that is why, they even did not spare minor boy Russel. Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana escaped, thanks to fortune. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has relentlessly been working to complete the unfinished works of Bangabandhu.

Taking part in the discussion on the third day (11 November) Deputy Speaker Fazle Rabbi Miah demanded the inclusion of the Historic 7 March Speech of Bangabandhu in the school and college level academic curriculum.

Advocate Abdul Matin Khasru MP demanded the trial of the 'masterminds' of the Bangabandhu killing through forming a commission. Ranks like Brigadier or Colonel should not be allowed to use with the names of the killers of Bangabandhu, he added.

Taking part in the fourth day (12 November) of discussion of Jatiya Sangsad's special session marking the 'Mujib Borsho', Awami League Leader Amir Hossain Amu MP said, although Bangabandhu could not turn the country into 'golden Bengal' as he was assassinated on August 15, 1975, his dream is being fulfilled now by his competent daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu MP said, Bangabandhu is a flag, a country, a movement, a revolution, a history, a poet of politics and a great

hero of history. He said, Bangabandhu is the world's sharpest politician and a strategist. He turned every Bangalee into a Mujib.

Opposition Whip Moshir Rahman Ranga said, the killing of Bangabandhu is a terrible incident in history. The whole nation was orphaned through this killing. Although the killers were tried, the conspirators behind the killing have not been brought to justice.

Harun-ur-Rashid MP from BNP while speaking at the special session read out a write up by Bangamata Fazilatunnesa Mujib detailing the arrest of Bangabandhu in the night of 25 March, 1971. Harun-ur-Rashid MP said, the decision of Bangabandhu on the 25 March was very much right. Had he gone absconding, or had he taken shelter in India, then he had been blamed as a separatist-leader. The BNP leader said, there is no way to ignore the long struggle of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for establishing the rights of the people.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Roushan Ershad taking part in the last day (15 November) of discussion said, those who wanted to erase the name of Bangabandhu from history; they themselves had been erased from history. Lauding the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Leader of the Opposition said, 'We get the reflection of Bangabandhu in his daughter Sheikh Hasina.'

Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Choudhury while presiding over the session said, a hunger and poverty free Bangladesh will be forged following the Constitution of 1972 formulated by Bangabandhu upholding the ideology of the Great Leader and the spirit of the War of Liberation.

Just before the passage of the resolution paying solemn tribute to the Father of the Nation in parliament by voice vote, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina taking the floor said, Bangabandhu formed Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League (BAKSAL) in a bid to make the whole nation united, but the whole idea was misinterpreted. The Leader of the House said, the Father of the Nation announced the programme of the Second Revolution for rapid socio-economic emancipation of the common masses. Sheikh Hasina said, he amended the constitution and took a five-year programme. Sheikh Hasina said, 'I believe, had he been able to implement that programme, Bangladesh could have been established as a developed country in the present world.' But, unfortunately he was not made able to do so, she added.

The name of Bangabandhu will shine as long as Bangladesh exists. The nation will recall Bangabandhu for decades and centuries. The special session of Jatiya Sangsad commemorating the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is the first special session in the history of Jatiya Sangsad of Bangladesh. The parliament had never gone into special session before. The parliament, however, went into special sittings on two occasions— January 31 and June 18 in 1974- which were addressed by former Yugoslav President Marshal Josip Broz Tito and the then Indian President V. V. Giri.

PID Feature

The writer is serving Press Information Department as Senior Deputy Principal Information Officer



Ballad of Victory

Mohammad Nurul Huda

Bangla is my mom's idiom, my mother's country
Bangla is my father's mystic mingling, his strolling free.
In the silt and water and currents of her numerous rivers
Free people of this free land voyage by boats as sailors.
Father of the Nation Sheikh is the charismatic boatman here,
O the sons and daughters of the Nation, keep vigil with care.

The final call came on March Seven, 1971, from Mujibor,
And the victory crowned us all exactly on 16 December.
Since that day all homes of brave Bengalees are liberated,
In a free land everyone is free, none as another is treated.
We are prepared for this victory for centuries together,
For time eternal the glow of this victory shall glitter.

Marking his birth centenary, the free father of the free land
Mujib is blessed with multiplying births without any end.
His forefinger is the scepter of justice, freedom of winners,
Humans are born-free, the essence of all mundane creatures.
Nationality, Democracy, Equality, Individuality, Nation,
Fraternity and Justice are protected in our Constitution.

Mother Bengal gave us all her milk and gifts affectionate,
Human-birds are all flying on their mind's wings enchanted.
The years shall pass, and the decades, and the countless centuries,
People of Bengal shall live happily with their parents, without worries.
In a free universe Bengal is free, victory shall continue here as well,
Bengalees are now world-people, daring and fearless they do dwell
Daring and fearless they do dwell, daring and fearless they do dwell.

Translation: Poet himself

Courtesy: Press Information Department

Solemn pledge

M. Mizanur Rahman

It were horrid and horrendous night and day
that overshadowed the sky of Bangladesh
with military marauders of killing squads
led by the Hitleriete-demons Yahya- Tikka and their henchmen
that made the blood-bath by torturing and killing
millions of Bangalees in genocide hands;
and they raped mother Bangladesh;
their hungry swelling mouths and ugly faces smeared blood
of men women and children
between the month of March 25 and December 16, 1971.
Our freedom fighters stubbornly and heroically fought the enemy
and our valiant people supported them by all means and
we shed enough blood and tears to make our country
free from the shackls of dependence and
the yoke of domination from the foreign nation.

But those brutish and force of cowards
Yahya-Tikka gang could not withstand the heroic Bangla nation.

The moral of this nation was stronger than
those forces of the brutes. They had to surrender
to our allied Indo-Bangladesh liberation force
on the sixteenth day of December 1971.

We fought the enemies and won the freedom of our country.
The writing of the history of those fateful days in blood is done.
We are now an independent and sovereign nation.
We rejoice today that crowned Bangladesh with victory.
Our green land and the red sun on our sovereign standard
symbolies our sprite of life and strength of mind
ever inscribing harmonious and peaceful freedom country.
We solemnly pledge to defend our freedom and sovereignty
with our high morale of the liberation spirit
in course of every odd and adversity.

We, the heroic Bangalee people of Bangladesh shall remain ever free.
Our Bangladesh is the core of our heart and soul
we love our country.

The Poet is easysist and coulumnist



e-ASIA and the Agenda 'Realizing Digital Nation' in the eve of pandemic Covid -19

Afroza Nice Rima

doctors are providing medical services through telemedicine, conventional shops are being transformed into super shops with all modern amenities, teachers are taking classes virtually with multimedia. Everything became possible when mass people encouraged & realized the importance of digitalization.

Realizing Digital Nation eAsia

The concept of eAsia with the motto of Realization Digital Nation in information & communication technology (ICT) for development in all spheres of life. The objective of eAsia is to enforce technology & knowledge based growth and the needs of Asian countries.

The governments is to make the nation digitalization to mainstream ICTs as a pro-poor tools to eradicate poverty, establish good governance, ensure social security through quality education, health care and law enforcement for all and prepare the citizens for climate change. Bangladesh has been working relentlessly to establish 'Digital Bangladesh', an integral part of the government's Vision 2021. This is the first time in the history of Bangladesh that the vision of poverty reduction and human development by utilizing ICTs. The Covid-19 pandemic has come amid the ongoing implementation programmes of Digitalization.

At the time of crisis due to corona virus pandemic, people are availing online services. Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud said, 'Government is making people aware of the disease in every possible way and it is working.'

State Minister of ICT Zunaid Ahmed Palak said over 8 hundred thousand people visited the website...corona.gov.bd...in 0 days of its launching since March 20.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina 'rolled out' a three year economic plan to overcome the impacts of the virus lockdown across the world that made many people jobless and plummeted country's exports.

Asia is rapidly emerging, growing economy in the world in all development sectors. The secrets of this emergence are vibrant development of innovative knowledge & technological advancement. Even during Covid-19 pandemic over the world, the progress of Asia, especially south Asian countries like Bangladesh ensured stability of its economic growth meanwhile most of the countries over the world became debilitated to tackle the economy. The vital reason behind this success is to 'Realization of Digital Benefits for the Nation'. Early the inception of the concept of eAsia, countries like Bangladesh started the digitalization in the Banking sector, telecommunication, education & technology. Agro based countries like Bangladesh are using modern technology for yielding high amounts of crops consequently to ensure food security,



A student attends the class via mobile phone

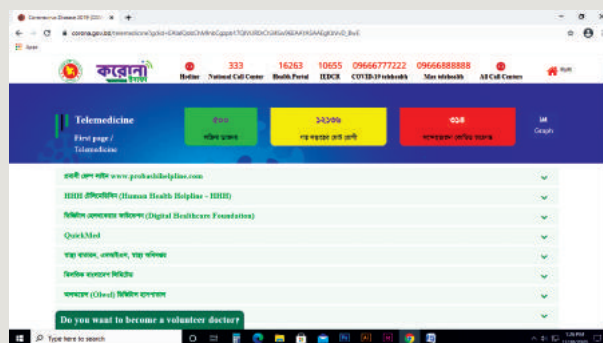
The argument that could be put forward for addressing the question is “due to Covid-19 pandemic the dependency on technology has increased, which in turn also has strengthened and accelerated the necessity of digitalization. However, the realizations of the full potentials of technology depend on some factors and also face some challenges.” The unavoidable dependency on and huge development of the ICT sector has been the bigger part of the fourth industrial revolution.

The government of Bangladesh has taken several initiatives to start the education institutions especially primary & secondary schools virtually through ‘Shangshad Television’. As a result, the school complex turned into a little box but the classroom spread throughout the country. Children over the country are attending the class by staying at home. Even in the higher education system, teachers are taking classes via skype, whatsapp, imo messenger etc. Examinations are also taking place virtually via dropbox system. Interviews are taken via zoom meeting. It is not possible if the nation does not realize the digital benefits of information & technology.

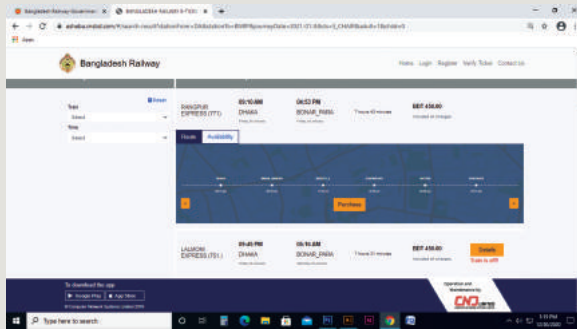
The government of Bangladesh has taken several initiatives to start the education institutions especially

The people of Bangladesh used to connect through digital media from the last decades. Once only those who lived outside the country seldom talked with their relatives through skype or mobile phone. Now the realization has been turned into peoples thumb.

People are connecting their relatives via mobile communication. People are using whatsapp, imo, messenger for video conferencing. The trends have become popular during the eve of Covid-19 pandemic. A survey of Rabi & Grameen Phone says that in Bangladesh, almost 60% of people are engaged in any means with virtual connection in this Covid-19 situation. Today, with converging technologies has become possible to test several innovative approaches to pandemic response. Certainly it is a good change. Now the so-called old ICTs such as TV & Radio have been turned into mobile devices. Under the Information Ministry, Press Information Department publishing a special handout on corona virus and also playing a great role from the beginning of outbreak of Covid 19. Nationwide broadband connection & its advanced bandwidth blessed people to connect virtually in these Covid-19 pandemic.



Nationwide online medical service during Corona pandemic



Online Bangladesh Railway e-ticketing service

Serving Citizens- is about the proliferation of e-service from all service providers with due attention to making sure the service reduced time. Providing emergency medical service is important during this Covid-19 pandemic situation. Health care department discourages people not to make congestion in the hospital for minimizing the spreading of Covid-19 until the

patient becomes serious. Telemedicine has already become popular in this situation. The Healthcare department introduced lots of doctors approved mobile numbers to give telemedicine in the pandemic situation. People also realized the importance of this service too. As a result citizen service ensures reduction of time, cost & hassle for citizens and increases efficiency, responsiveness and transparency of the government.

Driving economy- is about utilizing the tools of ICTs to boost the private sector particularly in agriculture, industry, small & medium enterprise where training, services and business communications are running virtually. Even in this Covid-19 pandemic situation farmers are getting agricultural information via mobile app software. Garment labourers are receiving their salary via mobile banking.

Role of NGOs during Covid-19

According to a recent survey, around tk. 155.87 core in support provided by national and local non-government (NGOs) during Covid-19 pandemic situation. The support was provided to 49 districts by 212 national and local NGOs. The NGOs suggested the government could involve national and local NGOs – who are working as frontline service providers – in local coordination and enable them to act as service providers on behalf of the government. Helping people find closure the best way possible right now, a few charitable organizations, along with the authorities and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), are taking measures for proper handling of the dead bodies.

Breaking all barriers eAsian countries like Bangladesh break all barriers. During this Covid-19 pandemic situation, Prime minister Sheikh Hasina is serving the nation through videoconferencing with every corner of the country. This has been possible by realizing the digital nation during this Covid-19 pandemic. In fact the pandemic is compelling the governments and societies, of the whole world including Bangladesh, to turn toward digital technologies to respond to the crisis and, increasingly, is requiring governments to adopt an open government approach and to use digital communication channels to provide reliable information on global and national Covid-19 developments. However, the ongoing digitalization process of Bangladesh has been the consequence of political will of the government led by Sheikh Hasina.

Afroza Nice Rima, Senior Information Officer, Press Information Department (PID), Ministry of Information



Role of quality cereal seed to increase yield in Bangladesh

Dr. Md. Shafayet Hossain

The quality seed is considered as an important factor for increasing crop yield. It helps greatly in higher production to attain food security. Among the cereal crops, rice is the staple food in Bangladesh and contributing calorie intake over 65% of the country people. Crop yields in the country need to be increased by 15% - 20% to meet the demand of increasing population. Farmer participatory experiments carried out in the Philippines and Bangladesh showed that good quality seed can increase rice yield by 8 to 10 %.

Compared to other countries, the yield gap is higher for most of the crops in Bangladesh and inadequate supply of quality cereal seeds is one of the important limiting factors for lower yield. Currently only 46% of farmers can use quality seed and the rest 54% comes from poor quality seed. The public and private organizations supplied 60% of the total requirement of the quality cereal seeds of rice, wheat and maize and 40% are produced traditionally by the farmers, which



Maize cultivation is gaining popularity in the Rajshahi region

are known as informal seed and below standard. Seed supplied by the BADC, private sector and NGO's are considered as formal and quality seeds.

Although the net cropped area is decreasing in Bangladesh but the total cropped area is increasing with the increase of crop intensity. The cultivable land under three major cereal crops (rice, wheat, and maize) was 12 million hectares and the cropping intensity was 215% in 2017-18 year. The intensive rice cultivation is now dominating in crop production systems and in Boro season, 75% of the area is covered by the HYV and 21% is hybrid rice varieties. In Aman, about 73% area is used for HYV and 27% for local varieties. Wheat covers 370 thousand hectares area and Maize area is increasing gradually and now it has become an important cereal in term of yield. To cultivate the land under the said crops around 333,120 MT of cereal seed is required but the supplied quantity seed against the requirement is only 201,794 MT. Hybrid rice seed accounts for around 3.5 % of the total seed requirement.

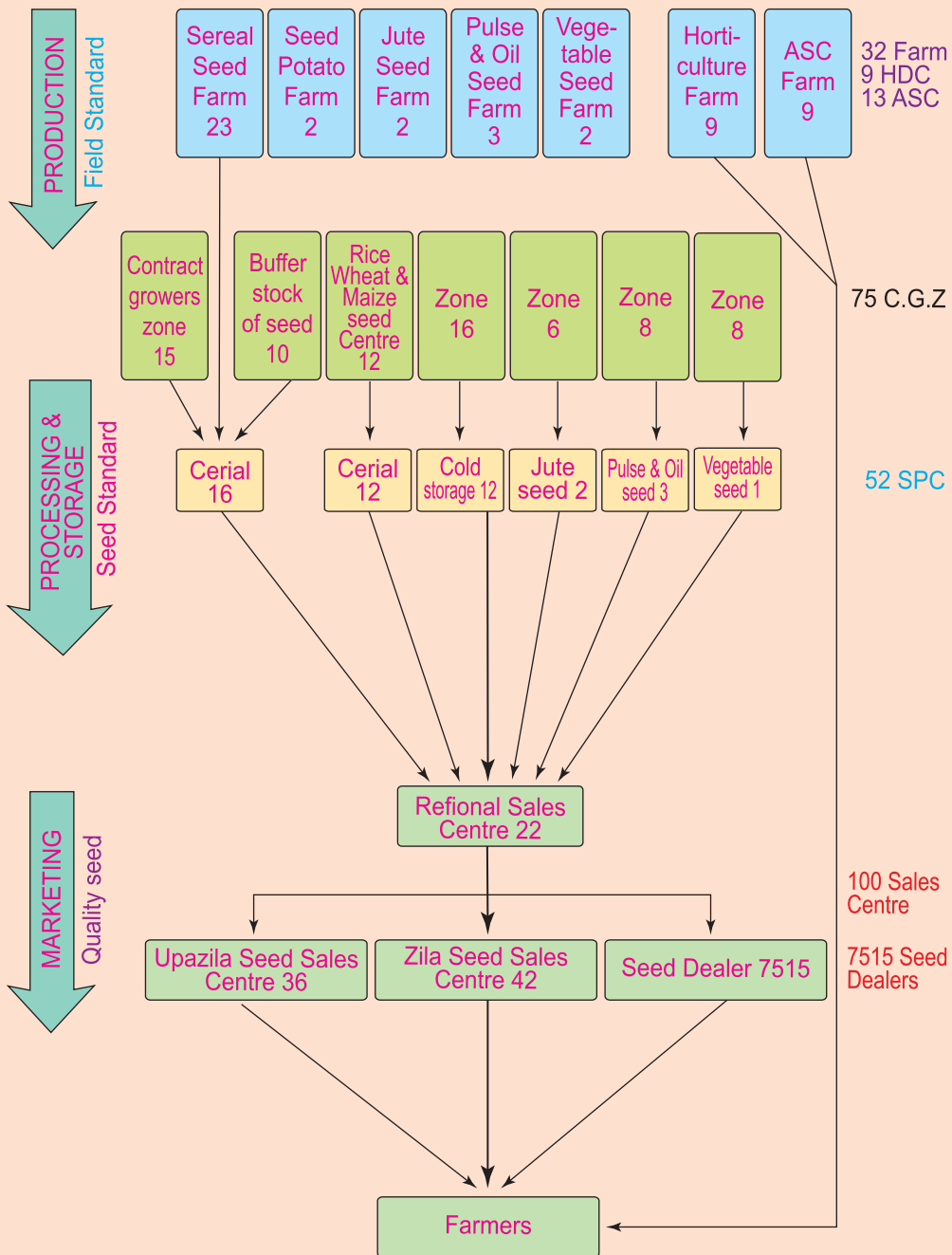
According to the UN projection, Bangladesh' population will further increase to 186 and 202 million by the year 2030 and 2050 respectively. If the total cultivable land will remain more or less static, Bangladesh will have to support 182.3 million peoples by 2025. Therefore, there is a tremendous scarcity of good quality formal seed in the country. Failure to ensure the supply of quality cereal seeds will result low productivity, unemployment, poor economic growth which will ultimately reflects to the poor GDP.

Table 1. Population and cereal demands (per capita and total)

Projection	Population (million)	Per capita demand (kg)			Annual national demand (M. Ton)			
		Rice	Wheat	Maize	Rice	Wheat	Maize	All grains
2010	151	170.5	25.9	9.9	25.76	3.91	1.50	30.05
2030	185	162.7	29.6	12.5	30.11	5.47	2.31	36.30
2050	202	145.8	34.7	14.0	29.45	7.01	2.83	37.26

Currently, the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) is supplying 33 percent of the total required cereal seed. The department of agricultural extension started producing seeds under a project although the produced seeds are kept in farmer's house. It is an urgent need to balance responsibilities between public and private sector so that the need for quality cereal seed is fulfilled at a reasonable price. Ensuring quality cereal seed is urgent in Bangladesh to reach sustainable development goal and to establish a sustainable agricultural nation.

Seed Production, Processing, Preservation & Marketing Netwrk of BADC





Rice seed



Maize seed



Wheat seed



Mustard seed

Causes of inadequate supply of quality seeds

- ❑ With the increasing demand of quality seed, the infrastructure and technical manpower in public sector Like BADC and Seed Certification Agency (SCA) has not been increased as expected.
- ❑ Except a few, most of the varieties developed by National Agricultural Research System (NARS) are not like of farmers. Besides required quantity of Breeder Seeds of desired varieties are not obtained from research institutes.
- ❑ Lack of statistics on cultivable land under different crops and marketed seeds by the private sector.
- ❑ Absence of seed demand assessment or forecasting mechanism.
- ❑ Injudicious and high seed price become unaffordable to the farmers.
- ❑ Contract growers do not get their seed price in time. They usually get seed price one year after seed received by BADC but not paid at current year's market price that makes them reluctant to seed production.
- ❑ SCA has the regulatory functions to control seed quality but due to less capacity it can't carry out functions duly.
- ❑ Lack of appropriate seed production and marketing plan

Way out of the problems

Strengthening BADC and SCA

At present BADC is providing around 33% of the total required quality cereal

seed. It is needed to strengthen the organization for expanding seed processing, preservation and marketing network system. At the same time seed quality monitoring and regulatory activities of SCA to be expanded.

Facilitating private seed sector

In the open market economy private sector should come up with quality seed in the competitive market. Favorable policies, concessions, incentives and support need to be provided to promote private sector participation in the seed industry.

Subsidy for ensuring quality seeds

Agriculture contributes greatly in Bangladesh economy. Frequent natural calamities including pest and diseases, high labor cost, uncertainty in getting their product's cost, unavailable of quality seeds of desired varieties etc. are making our farmers less interested in crop agriculture. Moreover, our farmers do not get the fair price of their produce even sometimes it is less than the production cost. It is required to reduce seed price so that poor farmers can afford easily and maintain agricultural productivity smoothly. In that case government can allocate sufficient budget to subsidies in the seed sector on priority basis.

Updating statistics on arable land and seed

Realistic statistics is the base of any planning process particularly agricultural planning. It is urgently required to update database for seed related planning and activities.

Seed production and marketing plan

There is no long, medium, short term planning for seed production in the country. For proper agricultural development seed production & marketing planning is important.

Modernizing seed marketing with judicious pricing of seed

Seed marketing system of BADC is back dated. Seed allotment is done based on Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) demand. Packaging is primitive. Moreover, incentives for seed dealers are not attractive, seed buying procedure is not friendly and seed pricing is injudicious. Considering the situations seed marketing system should be modernized with judicious seed pricing.

Amendment of seed policy and application of seed law

For increasing production of quality seed the National Seed Policy has to be amended with proper guidelines and directions.

Conclusion

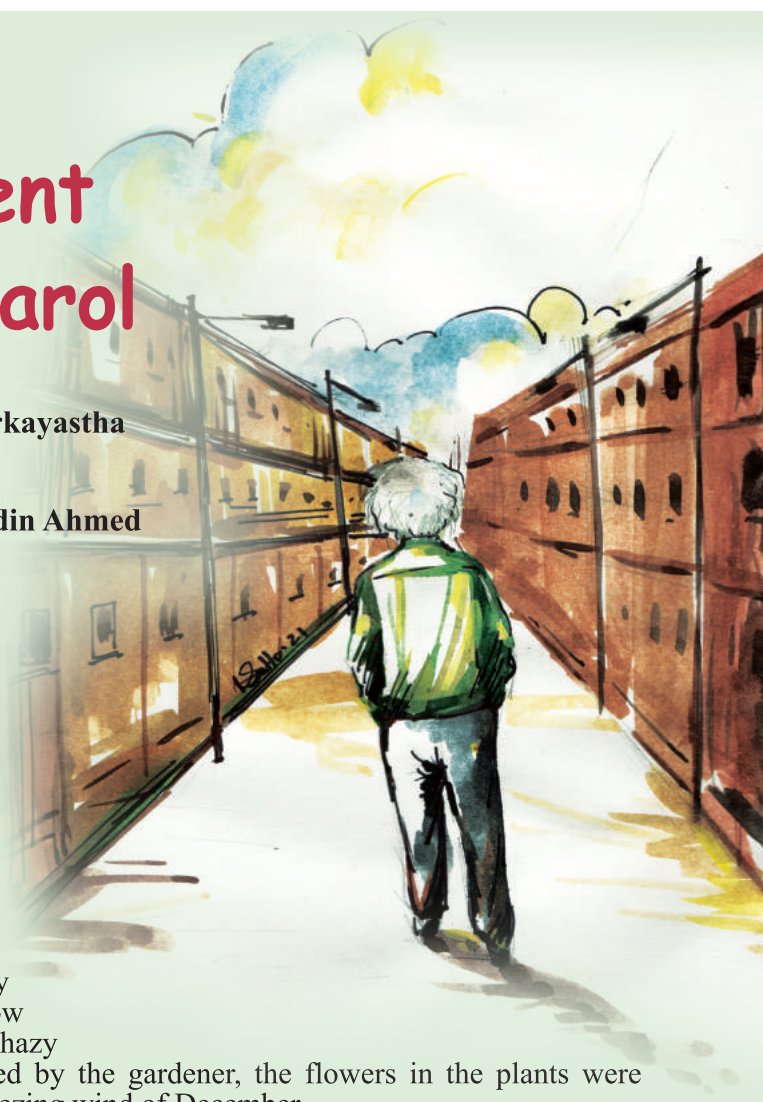
Sustainable agriculture requires available supply of quality seed and availability of quality cereal seed boosts food production. Almost all hybrid maize and hybrid rice seeds are being imported by private sector since there is hardly any good variety developed by our scientists. Policy support is needed to make available quality cereal seed at affordable price and in due time. The initiatives should be in a holistic approach. Moreover, strong monitoring mechanism should be ensured.

The writer is Deputy Director, Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation, Dhaka

A Different Kind of Carol

Original: Jharna Das Purkayastha

Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed



The man was walking along absent-mindedly. His shaggy white hair was flying in the air. This midnight in New Jersey appeared to him to be both miraculous and magical. There was a wheat-field not very far. The rows of stones and crosses in the nearby cemetery surrounded by low walls were visible in hazy moonlight. Carefully nurtured by the gardener, the flowers in the plants were shaking their heads in the freezing wind of December.

How captivatingly beautiful the world looked like on the night. The solitary man went back to those days in the boarding school of Munich in a night wet with dew. The teen was then very lonely. A solitary Einstein – Albert Einstein.

The nostalgic mind started to race backwards. The violin was then a constant companion. Mom handed over the violin to him when he was six years old. He learned to produce melodies from the strings of violin at that tender age.

The instrument seemed to be very tough to operate. Mistakes routinely occurred in playing tunes. He often used to say – Mom, it is very difficult. Mother used to reply fondly, ‘Not at all hard my boy. Try, try, and try again’.

Mother was very worried about him. He was slow in everything since his childhood. God did not endow him with normal attributes. He spoke for the first time at the age of four. And the handwriting? My God – it was started much later. Albert learnt to write at the age of nine years.

The journalists had asked him in later days, ‘I wonder – you first talked at the age of four years? Isn’t it true?’ He replied, ‘It is hundred percent true. I did not speak as that was not required then’.

Einstein put his steps forward cautiously on the snow-laden road awash with milky moonlight. He muttered to himself while looking at the bright sky filled with moon and stars amid an infinite void.

I was then a teen, passing through the adolescence period. At that time I had seen the worried face of my dad. He was in a soup. Yes, I remember, my age was then fifteen. Dad was incurring losses in his business. Oh God –

The Hermann family had then migrated to the Italian town of Milan. The nostalgic past made him grief-stricken in this winter midnight. The surroundings appeared very pathetic.

Albert was always alone, friendless. The introvert teenager was then staying at a boarding house in Munich. The beautiful house was a quiet place. There were pockets of sorrow inside his chest – just like the mournful melody of violin.

He could not concentrate in his studies. The boy Einstein then made up his mind.

The teacher had already declared that he would not be able to do anything noble.

OK, nothing great or powerful would be done by me, the teen Einstein decided in his mind. He returned home without informing anyone. The youngster got a secure shelter by embracing his mom and dad.

– Hi Albert – do you hear me?

Who calls him in this freezing night of December? A thrilling sensation passed through his entire body. Some shadowy figures were coming in a procession. When they came nearer, he identified them as Digart, Wigner and Alexander Sachs. There was a pathetic sadness on the scientist's face.

Wigner said, 'Why are you still suffering from inner burnings, the honourable scientist? Yes, it was true that a letter was sent to President Roosevelt proposing the production of atom bomb. But do you know – people are still dying everywhere? This is not unknown to you. You must be aware – the mosquito-borne Zika virus has arrived in this world?'

Einstein looked at them very intensely without dropping an eyelid. He replied in a mild voice, 'Yes, I heard about this virus. This virus has such an impact that it does not allow a child's brain to develop properly'.

– Yes Sir.

Digart said, 'Mr. Einstein, one becomes petrified when he learns about the terrible consequences of the virus. Even if the virus-infected child remains alive after delivery, his remaining few days or months are spent like a non-living object'.

– Is it? My God –

The man with the shaggy white hair went into deep introspection. Wigner said, 'Even when he lived for a few months, the child's life would be spent like non-living matter'.

Alexander said, 'Children with deformed heads are being born in Brazil due to Zika virus infection. This germ is spreading all over the globe'.

The finance secretary and private sector adviser to President Roosevelt was keeping track of so many news!

– General Watson has also come? Oh I see.

Watson said, ‘The germ has arrived in China via Central America, South America and the Caribbean countries’.

– That means, this virus has spread in the Asian continent.

The scientist was very worried. A deep depression was spreading all over his face and eyes.

He mumbled, ‘The disease cannot come by flying in the air, it has to take the help of n a u g h t y mosquitoes. Am I right?’

The scientist Gillard said, ‘Yes Mr. Einstein, you are right. Mrs. Margaret was infected by this

virus. A clever mosquito seized the opportunity and bit the white stone-like body of Margaret. Do you know what happened as a result?’

Paul Tibbets said, ‘I know everything. The virus had entered the body of a mosquito. The colour of this *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito is black; there are white spots like moles on its body’.

This Paul Tibbets had thrown bombs from the aeroplane. Poor guy –

The freezing wind of winter started to bite Einstein’s mid-ribs; a blizzard of snow was blowing deep inside his chest. Einstein became nostalgic.

– I realize everything. But what have we done Paul Tibbets?

The bright fortnight of December suddenly came to a halt; it forgot to stretch its moonlight. The fall of snow granules stopped. There was a tinge of melancholy on



the face of the wrong-headed Paul as well.

The day 6 August 1945 lay before them instantly.

Everybody could hear a rumbling voice now in the freezing night. The sky was filled with moonlight. And piercing the soil below, a message started to emerge – ‘The worst scandal of human civilization occurred on that very day’.

Digart said, ‘Do you know how many people died due to explosion of that murderous weapon’?

A deep breath coming out of Einstein’s chest started to get mixed with the freezing wind.

Who does not know this arithmetic count? The life-pulses of one hundred fifty-one thousand six-hundred forty-nine human beings were stopped by it within a matter of seconds.

The scientist asked himself in his own language, illnesses and tsunamis come by adhering to natural laws, but when humans become murderers – that is unforgivable.

The war-hero Turing said, ‘Has man stopped even after the disaster of Second World War? North Korea is now carrying out tests on the killer atomic bombs, can you imagine’?

– Again? What a shame –

Wigner said, ‘Why do you worry so much about it? What pride does the North Korean President Kim Jong Un show! He has said arrogantly, the button of the atomic bomb remains with me’.

– Don’t talk nonsense Mr. Wigner, damn it! Over one hundred thousand people were wiped away on that day through an air attack lasting just two and a half hours. Do you hear me?

– Oh Yes – General Watson said – Oh very sad.

– Mr. Einstein, I know one million people were injured or harmed. Can you imagine?

The scientist blurted out as if in a spell, ‘The atom bomb burned the people on the roads. They were so much burnt, can you imagine – ashes came out instead of meat when one touched a body’.

The bloody picture of Tokyo’s Midouri area in the Higashi Ryogoku neighbourhood started to swing before the eyes of Einstein. He saw the translucent current of river water in his mind’s eye. Besides that stood the industrially developed town of Japan, and the mirthful lifestyle of its dwellers. It was a serene and beautiful land full of fresh and green tree-leaves and colourful flowers.

The leader of the scientists J Robert Oppenheimer mumbled to himself, ‘Most of the bewildered people had jumped into the canal waters for saving their lives. On 6 August, the raging flames of the bomb named ‘Little Boy’ had burnt the bodies of innumerable people’.

– Mr. J Robert Oppenheimer, you were the leader of the scientists. – Just think what injustice you have committed? Do you agree with me?

Oppenheimer appeared to be shaken. The embarrassment on his face could be seen in the moonlight. Yes, it is true that Zika virus and Tsunami were nothing

compared to the atomic bomb. That is why he was devastated by the onslaught of cancer. Both Oppenheimer and Groves had worked together in the 'Manhattan Project'.

Groves defended himself by saying, 'Hang your sentiment Mr. Scientist. Science does not give way to emotion'.

Nicholas said, 'Please don't pronounce the words 'sentiment' and 'emotion'. I think – you are not a human being'.

Einstein enjoyed the articulation very much. As if everyone was pointing their fingers at Oppenheimer and saying in a chorus, 'You are a guilty person'.

Oppenheimer was the pampered offspring of a rich textiles businessman. He was brilliant in his studies. Despite being a student of chemistry, he studied physics on different campuses of Europe – Cambridge, Gottingen, Copenhagen. He wanted to impress everybody by inventing something after returning to the USA. Oh God! Became a black sheep. His companion Groves was also sitting there with a sad face. He was the son of a military family belonging to the lower middle-class. He was determined to advance his career after joining the military.

Oh destiny, two strangers from two divergent paths at last met. Then two names were written on the pages of history – Army General Leslie Richard Groves, and physicist J Robert Oppenheimer.

And Einstein? Wrote to the US President to produce atom bomb in the face of relentless pressure from Gillard and Wigner. Einstein dictated the letter in German language, and Taylor wrote that down in short-hand.

Gillard felt he did not know why he got involved in this chapter. Maybe destiny had taken him to the scientist for the second time. He was accompanied by Taylor. A short and a long letter were prepared from that short-hand script. After approving the long one, Einstein had signed it. That day still floats before his eyes like a vivid picture.

But Taylor's version was, they had written the letter, Einstein only signed it.

Alexander Sachs said, 'I was then the finance secretary and private sector adviser of the president. I delivered that letter to the president on time'.

The biographer of Einstein gave his well-considered opinion:

– It is very much true, but the day of the meeting was fixed after two and a half months. It was too late.

Alexander said, 'The day was 11 October, it was me who read out the letter at the White House'. Wigner said, 'After hearing it, the president summoned General Watson and told him to take effective measures after handing over the letter'.

Watson said, 'That is true, there was an apprehension that Nazi Germany would apply the atom bomb first after producing it very swiftly. The 'Manhattan Project' was created in America to counter that threat'.

Wigner said, 'It was you who did it Mr. Leslie Richard Groves, mind it'.

Recalling the old days, Einstein said, 'I know, many scientists and technologists joined this work; the atom bomb was born because of their toils day and night, Oh God –'

Einstein broke down with a pathetic cry. Wigner muttered to himself, 'Ultimately what happened? The Nazi Germany was defeated in the Second World War'.

Gillard said, 'I had apprehension, I was afraid – Although Germany was defeated, Japan was still fighting the world war. Would America throw 'atom bomb' on Japan then? That was what happened ultimately'.

A depressed and distressed Einstein said, 'Oh yes, I remember the dates – 6 and 9 August 1945'.

A key hero of the war Turing said, 'Mr. Einstein, look at me, hear me – may be the Manhattan Project would not have materialised if you had not written that letter. Am I right'?

Einstein shouted – 'Stop this nonsense, I say stop it. I did not write that letter, only signed it. Taylor knew everything'.

Turing said, 'Whatever you say'. He continued in a disaffected tone, 'If you had not done either of the tasks, then let alone throwing atom bomb on the bosom of Japan, it would not have been produced at all. You know, my heart was always burning; I could not live on with that pain, I couldn't be alive'.

There were fresh burnings inside his chest; the key hero of the war Turing had committed suicide. There was silence all around except the sound of grief-stricken breathing by some people.

Some nostalgic supple pictures were running inside the brain of Einstein through the gaps of his shaggy hair on that late night flooded with moonlight.

TWO

Einstein was vividly reminiscing the place of his birth. That town Wurttemberg of Germany – where was that? How far? Would he be able to touch the soil of that place ever? Never.

There was a touch of joy in the air of America from mid-December onwards. New Jersey was also swinging with that joy. Christmas was coming. Christmas was on the doorstep. The Christmas rose and Christmas tree would be built – everyone was merry with that theme. Therefore, the nightly hours were filled with a miraculous ecstasy. The roads and ports were covered with snow in the night awash with moonlight. The spots-pine, royal-oak and pine trees were covered with cotton-like fragments of snow. Poppy, daisy, lily, geranium, black-rose and daffodil flowers were smiling in the mood of imminent festivity. Various cakes made with dry fruits and immersed in wines, as well as the smell of roasted turkey filled the air. The Christmas tree would be decorated with colourful bulbs, the sleeping towers of churches would wake up in their own glory.

Einstein was looking at the joyous festivities, sometimes by standing on the Old Groves Road, sometimes by peeking through the window of his New Jersey home.

His motherland was no more; O My motherland! Left the country forever in 1933 after Adolf Hitler came to power, as he did not like dictatorships. Did not return there again. The birthplace of Württemberg was lost forever from his life.

Standing beside Digart, Wigner, Alexander Sachs, Paul Tibbets, Oppenheimer, Gillard, General Watson, Turing, Kenneth Nicholas – he could reminisce anew the lost days of his childhood.

While pushing the piles of two and a half feet high snow when walking on the road, the senior citizen of the neighbourhood Mr. Alex Winter used to say with a laughter, 'Dear Albert, now you are a snowman'.

Where have the childhood days gone? That game of hide and seek – how many light-years afar were they?

There were those nursery lullabies in his mother's soft voice. Oh Lullaby – how lovely!

Mom used to put on the dining table soup made of potato, carrot, broccoli and baby-corn with a bang. In between, Albert used to watch the slow melting of a piece of butter. That soup-pot resembled velvet – Albert craved to watch that picture by becoming a child.

Violin was put in Albert's hand when he was six years' old; he then ran away to mom and dad from the boarding house of Munich; sat comfortably before the fire-place during terrible colds of winter; all these touched Einstein! Old is gold – wasn't that so?

He entered his working life after growing up as an adult. Successes came in the fields of inventions and discoveries. It was a victorious march full of mirth. Won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1921. Got the citizenship of America in 1940. The days were rolling on quite well. He was satisfied by engaging in serious research and teaching.

What was he thinking about? Why are you so silent?

– What are you thinking about Mr. Einstein?

– No, I am not thinking of anything particular. Like the hours of life, the memories of a seventy-six year lifespan arrive like a procession.

When the drums of the Second World War reverberated, he had written that letter to President Roosevelt saying that Germany might build a different kind of hugely powerful bomb – and urged for similar research in the USA as well.

Why did he do that? May be destiny had driven him to that path. May be the sin-free adolescence gets lost with the aging of people. Why did I do that?

He also wrote the Russell-Einstein Manifesto by partnering with the British philosopher Bertrand Russell, highlighting the dangers of atomic bomb. He has also been recognized as the greatest physicist of all time based on the votes cast by renowned physicists. The Time Magazine had declared him the 'Man of the Century'.

In spite of so many successes, there was a wailing deep inside his heart, a strange kind of guilty feeling bit him continuously.

There was silence all around, only the sound of pathetic breathings by some individuals whose hearts were dissected.

The night lit up by moonlight brought the memory of many wonderful dreamlike days. Those thrilling days of first love with Sophia Mary! After Mary had left for Ellsberg for teaching purposes, there was intense solitude around Einstein's life, similar to his days at the boarding school. He met Mileva Maric during those terrible days. Those days of bliss still brings waves of merriment to the burnt heart.

The birth of the daughter Lieserl and her sudden departure also brought chronic pain to the heart.

Man continues to live even amid sorrow, grief and heat. The sounds of life keep him alive. The births of two sons Albert and Eduard again brought waves of joy in the family of Einstein and Mileva.

– What do you think Mr. Scientist? We are on the same boat; we are all guilty.

The assembled men who were awake even late at night were startled by the words of Paul Tibbets. This man with distorted brain, none of his words should be heeded. But he was talking like a healthy and normal man. Long time ago, they considered themselves to be hugely powerful by thinking that they were the gods of a planet called earth. Today, looking at the infinite sky awash with moonlight in this solitary icy night, they realized how absurd that idea was.

Wigner looked at everybody and asked, ‘Why are you so silent?’

There were again mumblings all around. Leslie Richard Groves and J Robert Oppenheimer were sitting in silence. Einstein confessed by putting up a sad face, ‘It was true that I sent the letter for making atom bomb in the face of continuous requests from Digart and Wigner’ –

– Weren’t you in agreement with the substance of the letter Mr. Einstein?

That same question! I am quite tired of hearing this. In fact, he had become tired by asking the same question to himself repeatedly.

He said in an irritated voice, ‘Mind your language Groves. What about you? What did your subordinate Colonel Kenneth Nicholas say – don’t you remember? You are a swine. But yes, he preferred you as a leader – he had also said that’.

Taylor said, ‘Mr. Groves, you know – Mr. Einstein was not directly involved in making the atomic bomb, mind it’. Einstein said in a tearful voice, ‘I made a great mistake in my life when I signed the letter sent to President Roosevelt recommending the production of atomic bomb; but there was some justification...., the danger that the Germans would make them’ –

Taylor said in a gloomy voice, ‘Yes, your biographer Ronald Clarke has mentioned that in your biography. Please don’t cry scientist. You yourself also wrote later on, ‘I have always condemned the use of atomic bomb against Japan’.

Tears continued to fall from Einstein’s deep-seated jaundiced eyes. He muttered to himself – I was supposed to innovate for the benefit and welfare of humans – but what have I done? My name will forever be linked to the atom bomb in the pages of history.

Atmanathan said, ‘Whose head does not have the blessing of your hand? Yes German scientist, you are so great! You also helped the Bangali scientist Professor Basu’.

I remember. It was a matter of joy for me. It is my duty to help people. Maybe 1924, it was Professor Satyendranath Basu of Dhaka University. He had written – ‘Planck’s law and the hypothesis of light quanta’. Mr. Basu had sent it to the renowned journal ‘Philosophical Magazine’ for publication. The essay was returned, as it was not selected. After that, Mr. Basu had sent the paper to Einstein. He also sent a letter outlining his profile.

Not only was Einstein captivated by reading the paper, he could understand its importance. He also told the editor of the famous German journal 'Zeitschrift Fur Physik' to publish both his and Professor Basu's papers in the same issue.

People should help other people, should wish their welfare – a genuine scientist should not be the cause of other people's death.

What have I done?

Tears were trickling down his cheeks.

– You Oppenheimer –

– Yes sir.

– Do you remember – your comment about the atomic bomb – 'technologically sweet'. Shame on you.

– I am awfully sorry sir.

They were sitting with their heads bowed down. A thought temporarily peeped inside Einstein's head. Have all of them arrived there by riding a time machine? Or those who had any kind of connection whatsoever with the atomic bomb – they were repeatedly returning to this painful and complex earth from their peaceful graves as they carried the stigma of a crime. Just as Einstein was returning for smelling the fragrance of the past. He roamed around along the nostalgic streets of Wurttemberg; sometimes on the Old Groves Road; sometimes at New Jersey before the Christmas Eve.

Einstein can never forget that day, 16 July 1945. The first experimental blast of the atomic bomb was carried out on that day. That early dawn was very sacred and serene. Oppenheimer was delighted, amazed and captivated on seeing the sky-high flames on the Alamogordo desert.

It was reminiscent of the worldview of Sri Krishna, the guru and companion of the devotee Arjuna.

Just as Sanjoy had described the worldview in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita to the blind king Dhritarashtra –

– If the rays of a thousand suns flash in the sky together, then that luminosity may be similar to the supreme being.

In joy and thrill, Oppenheimer's heart had spoken out –

– O the people of this world, congratulate me, congrats me.

It seemed to Einstein, how empty that arrogance and pride was!

Do people lose their sense of judgement sometimes? He did not know the answer.

The night was coming to an end. Darkness was gradually receding with the bursts of light making their way.

The willow trees were covered with the snow particles. There was an unfading smile on the petals of blooming Coriander.

A strange tranquillity had spread in nature. One felt like loving everybody in the dawn illumined by hazy moonlight.

Seized by unprecedented joy and emotion, the scientist started to cry like an innocent child with his hands raised.

The aeroplane's pilot Paul Tibbets, who had thrown the bomb, asked in a dazed state, 'Hello scientist, why are you crying? The bomb was exploded through my hand'.

As long as the divine sons – the human beings – live on in the earth and the universe, can anyone forget the bomber 334TB-29?

In this sacred dawn, a melody was floating around, coming from a faraway place. The pale grief was getting washed away by the magic of music.

It was a song of joy and praise. A carol – hymn of joy – as the flower-like freezing wind of dawn became resonant with the sound of the song:

Jingle bells, jingle bells

Jingle all the way!

Oh what fun it is to ride

In a one-horse open sleigh, hey –

Paul Tibbets, Digart, Wigner, Alexander Sachs, Oppenheimer, General Watson, Turing, Ronald Clarke, Atmanathan – all started to sing in tune with the carol's music. The father of relativity Einstein was crying. Tears were coming down over his broken cheek.

Forgive me.

Everybody started to confess. The engraved message of Hiroshima was appearing repeatedly with the waves of melody in the shape of a distant carol song.

'You sleep in peace, this mistake will not be repeated again'.

The sky and air appeared to be shaking by the flow of melody. There was unspoken anguish in the bosoms of all, and tears were rolling in their eyes.

Forgive us. Suddenly a blizzard struck, rains of snow came down from the sky. The divine found expression by removing with two hands the freezing wind, the falling rains and the heavy snow. He had in his hand a brass pot carrying oblation of honey; the golden nectar lay on it – a mixture of milk-curd-honey-ghee-sugar. This was required for invoking good fortune.

They have emerged from the deep darkness of death for erasing the shame of their sin. They were singing the victory-song of life. A different kind of carol! 'O God, O Lord – give us virtuous soil, fill up the sacred blue sky with white clouds, give crystal-clear flows of water in the rivers, make the air pure and soft'.

The victory-slogans for the welfare and wellbeing of mankind were reverberating all around. The early dawn was appearing on the scene by shattering the luminosity of a moonlit night.

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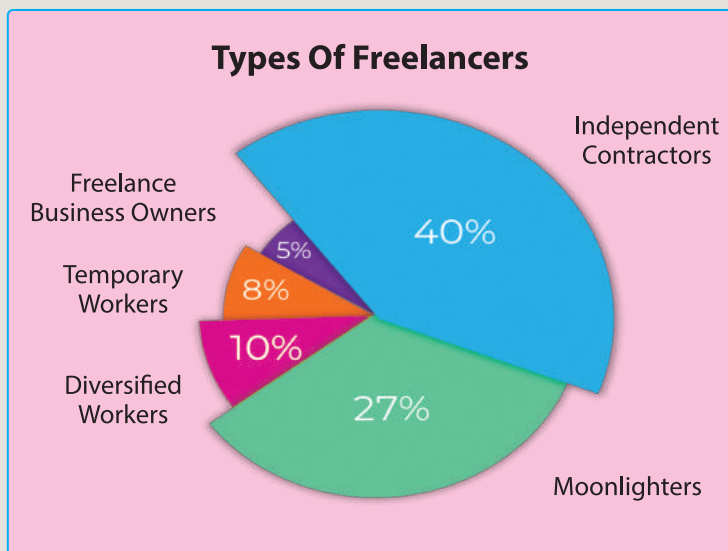


Success and Potentials in the Freelancing Sector in Bangladesh

Hussain Mamun

we usually call it outsourcing. Freelancing is a type of job, where we can earn money by using skills without office is called freelancing. On the other hand a freelancer could earn money directly from the client and they could earn by the outsourcer.

According to the ICT Division, there are 650 thousand registered and about 5 lakh are working regularly, making \$100 million annually. Most of them are working



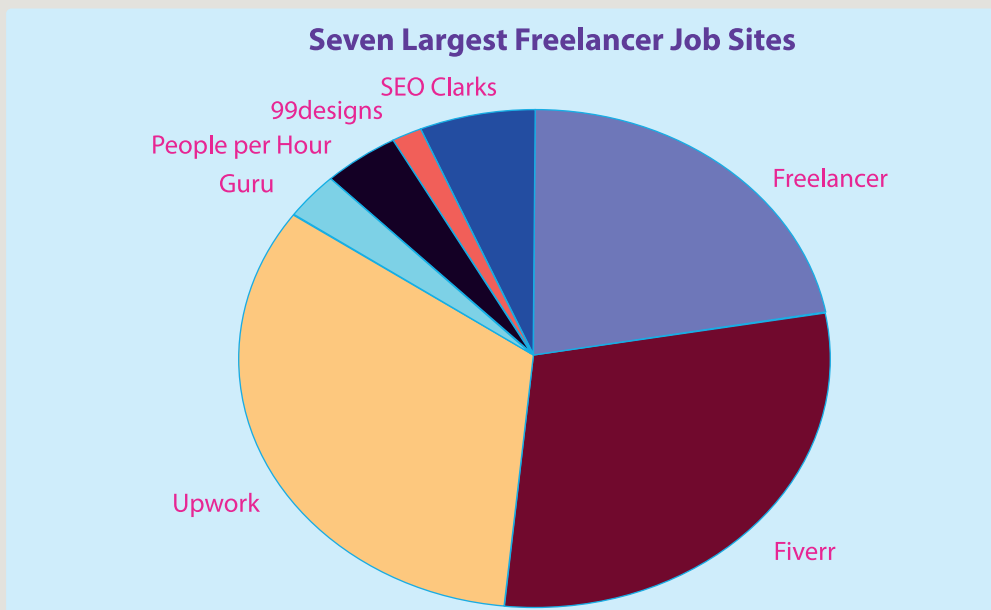
in various marketplaces such as-

- Upwork
- Fiverr
- 99Designs
- Freelancer.com
- People per hour
- Design hill
- Guru.com

Some are working to bring the client offline from sites like Dribbble, Behance. These categories include-

The time is now for information technology. The world is in the palm of one's hand. Now we can keep track of the world around us and at the same time our house can be our workplace. Everything is possible through freelancing or outsourcing. At present, people of all ages, including the younger generation are earning a lot of foreign exchange by freelancing and outsourcing at the individual level. Various steps have been taken by the government to further accelerate this sector with the aim of contributing to the country's economy.

Basically freelancing and outsourcing is not one thing. There is a difference between the two. When a first party job is done by a second party (a person or organization) through a third party,



- ❑ Software Development and Technology
- ❑ Creative and Multimedia
- ❑ Sales and Marketing Support
- ❑ Righting and Translation
- ❑ Clerical and Data Entry
- ❑ Professional Service

Among the mentioned categories, some of the popular sectors such as graphic design, UI / UX, SEO, web design, content writing, digital marketing, translation, video editing, and visual design, digital printing, including the youth of Bangladesh are working in different sectors.

For the entire year, worldwide services revenues crossed the \$1 trillion. Our neighbouring country India is earning 100 billion in this sector. Bangladesh is dreaming of earning 5 billion dollars in 2021. According to the Oxford Internet Institute and the World Economic Forum, outsourcing will contribute 5% to the country's gross





Sheikh Hasina Software Technology Park, Jashore, Bangladesh

domestic product (GDP) growth in future.

The government is investing enough every year for this sector. IT parks are being set up in different places. Where there skilled freelancers and workplace opportunities are being created here at a time. In 2017, ‘Sheikh Hasina Software Technology Park’ was set up in Jessore at a cost of Taka 2.53 billion, where 5000 job opportunities have been created.

The government has recently provided the ‘Virtual ID Card Portal’ cards to freelancers. This card is to recognise the work of Bangladeshi freelancers aimed at bringing the freelancing industry into a shape.

In 2016, Bangladesh was ranked third in the world of freelancing. Now Bangladesh is in the second position in the world, surpassing the United States, United Kingdom and Canada. (World Economic Forum)

At present, more than 100 organisations in Bangladesh have survived vigorously through this freelancing. Women and the disabled are not lagging behind in this sector. Even many women and people with disabilities are working as top level freelancers in marketplaces like Upwork and Fiverr. Freelancing is a golden opportunity for women and a huge platform where women can handle both clients and the house at the same time, very comfortably by this sector where they could use the opportunity to work from home. According to a recent study, female freelancers have been able to demonstrate greater efficiency than male freelancers. If it is possible to ensure the arrival of women, then in this field of work, women can boost the economy of the country as well.

Soon the freelancing sector may become the largest remittance income sector in the country. Millions of new jobs could be created, which could play a huge role in solving the country's unemployment problem. For this, freelancers and eminent people think that it is necessary to take some more steps in government initiatives starting from individuals and non-governmental organisations.

Translated by U. Halima Megha

Photo Exhibition held on the occasion of Victory day

The Department of Films and Publications (DFP) organized a photo exhibition marking the victory day, on December 17 at Tattya Bhaban premises. The programme was inaugurated by Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud while the State Minister for Information Dr. Md. Murad Hassan as special guest, and Director General of DFP S.M. Golam Kibria were also present.

In the programme, rare photographs on the life and struggle of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and liberation war of Bangladesh were exhibited. Moreover, in a separate gallery the printed copies of the supplements published in the newspapers and posters brought out on different national days and occasions in the last couple of years were displayed.

The officials of different government organizations and mass people attended the day long programme.



Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud and State Minister for Information Dr. Md. Murad Hassan visiting the photo gallery while Director General of DFP S.M. Golam Kibria was also present

Major National Events

October-December

1 October, 2020

Women Participation in Workforce: PM pledges to raise it to 50pc by 2041

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on October 1 pledged to increase women's participation in the workforce to 50-50 by 2041 and called for protecting their jobs in the context of Covid-19 pandemic.

She also urged the international community to renew its commitments and enhance efforts to ensure women's equality, empowerment and advancement.

The PM said while highlighting three issues at a high-level meeting at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

The High-Level Meeting on the 25th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women was held virtually on the sidelines of the 75th UN General Assembly.

Pointing out two other issues, Sheikh Hasina said firstly, the world can benefit from every girl whose potential is realised, from every woman whose talent is tapped, and this can only be done through education.

'Secondly, empowerment comes with income and employment. Therefore, engaging women in income-generating activities should be a priority,' the PM said.

Talking about Bangladesh's tremendous development in women empowerment, the PM said women are now becoming higher court judges, public university VCs, secretaries of the government ministries and so on. Gender budgeting, micro-finance and similar initiatives have ensured women's financial inclusion.

'Today, 20 million women are engaged in agriculture, industry, and service sectors, while over 3.5 million are working in the readymade garments sector, our largest export-earning sector,' she said. *Source: The Daily Star*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the High-Level Meeting on the 25th Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women held on the sidelines of the 75th UN General Assembly on October 1

5 October, 2020

PM warns of prompt action

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on October 5 said the government is careful so that prompt action can be taken against any kind of child oppression in the country.

'We're taking steps to ensure security of children...we're giving special attention to it so that prompt action can be taken against any kind of child oppression,' she said.

The Prime Minister said this while inaugurating 'World Children's Day and

Child Rights Week 2020' at Bangladesh Shishu Academy Auditorium. She attended the programme virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The Prime Minister, in the inaugural function, unveiled the covers of a series of children's books written on the life and works of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, 'Amra Ekechi 100 Mujib', a book published with selected pictures drawn by children, and 'Amra Likhechi 100 Mujib', another book published with the writings of children, on the occasion of the 'Mujib Year' marking Bangabandhu's birth centenary. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveiling the cover of one of a series of children's books on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman marking the World Children Day & Child Rights Week 2020 at Bangladesh Shishu Academy through videoconference from Ganobhaban on October 5

6 October, 2020

ECNEC approves four projects worth Tk 16.59b

The government on October 6 endorsed four development projects at a combined cost of Tk 16.59 billion.

Presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) approved those projects at its meeting in Dhaka.

Planning Minister MA Mannan said, 'Out of total costs, Tk 7.40 billion will come from government's internal resources while the rest of Tk 9.19 billion from external resources as grant.'

The ECNEC revised the multisector project (1st revision) to address Rohingya crisis on an emergency basis increasing the cost by Tk 9.30 billion to Tk19.88 billion to ensure facilities for forcibly-displaced Rohingyas and also for the host communities in Cox's Bazar. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inspects the samples of rice stocked in government warehouses after procurement during Boro and Aman seasons, at her official residence Ganobhaban in the city on October 6

Economy sees turnaround on stimulus packages: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on October 6 said the national economy has made a turnaround with its desired pace due to the government's timely decision to give stimulus packages to various sectors and groups during the Covid-19 pandemic.

'We've taken the step at the right time...we didn't think about how much money we've or what we've, we just thought about keeping our economy moving,' she said.

The Prime Minister said this while speaking at the weekly ECNEC meeting held at NEC auditorium. She attended it virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Sheikh Hasina directed to distribute rice that was collected in 2019 on a priority basis.

Besides, she also asked the authorities to construct modern godowns to preserve food grains like the warehouse set up at Shantahar in Bogura. This will make it possible to preserve food grains longer.

The Prime Minister also directed to manage the information of rice preserved in all godowns across the country through a database, her press secretary said. *Source: The Financial Express*

7 October, 2020

PM urges global leaders to act fast, save planet

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on October 7 said it is today, not tomorrow, to take



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the virtual Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) leaders' event from her official residence Ganobahban on October 7

action to save the planet as mankind is going to lose its 'war against nature'.

The Prime Minister said this while addressing the virtual Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) leaders' event from her official residence Ganobahban.

As the current president of the CVF, she chaired the event which was hosted by Bangladesh along with Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA).

Bangladesh has assumed CVF presidency for 2020-22 for the second time after its successful tenure as CVF president in 2011-13.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina launched Bangladesh regional office of Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) for South Asia in Dhaka, which will also serve as CVF Secretariat, according to the existing MoU between GCA and CVF Secretariat.

The Prime Minister said this while unveiling the wrapping of the braille version of 'Unfinished Memoirs' of Bangabandhu at her official residence Ganobahban. Social Welfare Ministry published the braille version of the book in six parts.

Source: The Financial Express

11 October, 2020

Maintain austerity to face Covid 2nd wave

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on October 11 again directed the government officials to refrain from unnecessary spending of public money as she expressed the fear that a second wave of COVID-19 might hit in the coming days.

'There's an apprehension that COVID-19 pandemic might hit again, because many countries including Europe are suffering from this pandemic again. We all have to remain safe from now on,' she said at a programme where she handed-over the national standard to ten units and organisations of Bangladesh Army.

She joined the programme in Savar Cantonment virtually from her official residence Ganobahban.

The government has announced a budget of Tk 5.68 trillion for the 2020-21 fiscal which was a very tough job due to the COVID-19 pandemic where many countries were suffering from severe economic constraints, the PM said.

The Prime Minister said that the Army is the asset of the country and the symbol of trust and confidence. *Source: The Financial Express*

13 October, 2020

Rapists are beasts: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on October 13 termed the rapists as 'beasts' and said the government has incorporated the provision of death sentence into the relevant law to protect the girls from them.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveiling the cover of a book entitled 'Standing Orders on Disaster 2019' at a programme marking the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction on October 13 through a videoconference from Ganobhaban

'The rapists are beasts, and our girls are affected due to this beastly act (of some so-called people). That's why we have amended the relevant law in the cabinet by keeping a provision of capital punishment for rape,' she said.

The Prime Minister made the remarks while addressing a programme marking the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020.

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief arranged the function at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium, and the Prime Minister joined it through a video conference from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The theme of this year's International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020 is 'Disaster risk governance' while the theme for Bangladesh is 'Good Governance in Reducing Disaster Risk, Ensuring Sustainable Development'.

Earlier, State Minister Enamur Rahman, on behalf of the Prime Minister, handed over awards to the winners of best volunteers. *Source: The Financial Express*

15 October, 2020

Help repatriate Rohingya

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on October 15 renewed her call to the international community, including the United States, to help Bangladesh rehabilitate Rohingyas in their homeland of Myanmar.

The Prime Minister said this while visiting US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen E. Beigun paid a courtesy call on her at her official residence Ganobhaban.

Stephen E. Beigun said the United States also wants a permanent solution to the protracted Rohingya crisis. 'We'll continue to extend our support to Bangladesh on this issue,'

'The problem has been created by Myanmar and we're holding dialogue with them ... they should take their citizens back,' the PM said.

Sheikh Hasina said the Rohingya issue is a social problem, and a large number of the displaced Myanmar nationals are living at camps in Cox's Bazar. 'Some quarters could mislead them to be involved in anti-social activities. So, we need their immediate repatriation to their homeland,' she said.

Source: *The Financial Express*



US Deputy Secretary of State Stephen E. Beigun called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Ganobhaban on October 15

16 October, 2020

Global Hunger Index

BD moves 13 notches up

Bangladesh has gained 13 places to rank 75th out of 107 qualifying countries on the latest Global Hunger Index, well ahead of neighbouring India.

While the South Asian nation has made significant strides in its battle to eradicate



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing from Ganobhaban on October 16 the inaugural ceremony of an online international seminar at a city hotel marking the World Food Day

hunger, it stands among 40 countries where hunger remains at 'serious' levels with a score of 20.4, down from 25.8 last year, according to the 2020 report.

A high GHI score can be evidence of a lack of food, a poor-quality diet, inadequate child care - giving practices, an unhealthy environment, or all of these factors. The

GHI ranks countries on a 100-point scale, with 0 being the best score (which means no hunger) and 100 the worst.

Jointly published by Concern Worldwide and its partner Welthungerilfe, the 2020 Global Hunger Index was launched through an online event from Ganobhaban on October 16.

The world faces an 'immense mountain' if it is to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development goal of 'Zero Hunger' by 2030, according to the report.

Source: The Financial Express

18 October, 2020

We want such incidents never to happen again: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on October 18 said the government didn't want any recurrence of brutality like that of the killing of her youngest brother Sheikh Russell.

'Sheikh Russell was brutally killed. We want such incidents never to happen again,' she said while addressing a function marking the birth anniversary of Sheikh Russell.

The PM joined the event from the Ganobhaban through videoconferencing.

Sheikh Russell Jatiya Shishu Kishore Parishad organised the programme at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC). Participants were virtually connected to the event from Sheikh Russell Roller Skating Complex and University Laboratory School and College.

Earlier, the PM inaugurated the screening of 'Bubur Desh' (animated documentary on Sheikh Russell), and unveiled the cover of a book titled 'Sheikh Russell Amader Abeg, Amader Valobasha' (book on the life of Sheikh Russell).

She also unveiled the mural of Sheikh Russell and inaugurated 'Shaheed Sheikh Russell' building at University Laboratory School and College.

The premier witnessed a video on the activities of Sheikh Russell and unveiled the cover of another book titled 'Smritir Patay Sheikh Russell'. *Source: The Daily Star*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveils the cover of a book titled 'Sheikh Russell Amader Abeg, Amader Valobasha' at a programme marking the birth anniversary of her youngest brother Sheikh Russell from the Ganobhaban through a video conference on October 18

20 October, 2020

Govt to upgrade 3 local airports

ECNEC okays Tk 5.67b project

The government would upgrade facilities of three local airports, and the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) approved a project at a cost of Tk 5.67 billion in this regard on October 20.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) would implement the project, covering the Shah Makhdum Airport in Rajshahi, Saidpur airport and Jessore airport.

Presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the ECNEC meeting endorsed the project along with three others at a combine cost of Tk 16.68 billion.

The other ECNEC-approved projects are: Land acquisition and development at Kadamrasul in Narayanganj City Corporation for waste management project at Tk 3.01 billion, Rural infrastructure development in Madaripur, Shariatpur and Rajbari districts project (1st revised) - extending the cost by Tk 5.09 billion to Tk 20.09 billion, and Irrigation expansion through surface water in greater Dinajpur and Jaipurhat districts project at Tk 2.51 billion. *Source: The Financial Express*

23 October, 2020

PM seeks UN's role in resolving global issues

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the United Nations (UN) to play more decisive and robust role in resolving existing global challenges, including the Rohingya crisis.

'There are still areas where the UN can play a more decisive and robust role in resolving many of today's intractable challenges such as the Rohingya Crisis,' the premier said in a message issued on October 23 on the occasion of the UN's 75th founding anniversary.

She said the world is still beset with poverty, hunger, armed conflicts, terrorism, insecurity, climate change - all of which call for concerted efforts and greater action.

On the 75th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, Sheikh Hasina said, Bangladesh joins the international community in reaffirming its unwavering commitment to the principles and objectives enshrined in the United Nations Charter. *Source: The Financial Express*

28 October, 2020

Keep constant vigil to face any threat to country, constitution: PM tells army

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on October 28 asked the army to gain greater strength to defend Bangladesh in case of any internal or external attack on the country though the nation doesn't want war against any country.

'We have to achieve more strength as we can remain prepared to face any attack on the country,' she said while virtually raising flags of the eight units and organisations of the Bangladesh Army from her official Ganobhaban residence in Dhaka.

The premier said that they want peace and friend- ship rather not enmity and war, referring to the foreign policy adopted by the Father of the Nation, 'Friendship to



On behalf of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Army chief General Aziz Ahmed raising flags of eight units and organisations of the Bangladesh Army at the Sheikh Hasina Cantonment, Lebukhali, in Patuakhali on October 28 as she joined the programme virtually from Ganobhaban

all malice to none' in this regard.

The Prime Minister directed members of Bangladesh Army to keep a constant vigil to face any 'internal and external threats' for safeguarding the country's constitution and sovereignty.

Chief of Army Staff General Aziz Ahmed spoke at the function from the Sheikh Hasina Cantonment, Lebukhali, Patuakhali.

Besides defending the country's independence and sovereignty, PM said, the army has engaged themselves in the nation building programmes. *Source: The Financial Express*

29 October, 2020

Govt working to make Bangladesh self-reliant

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on October 29 said the government was working with a goal to make Bangladesh economically self-reliant and brighten its image so that its people can move in the world stage with dignity.

The PM was addressing virtually a function marking the distribution of the Independence Award 2020. She joined the programme, held at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city, through a videoconference from the Ganobhaban.

Eight renowned personalities and one organisation received the Independence Award 2020, the highest state honour.

On behalf of the PM, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque handed the prestigious award to the awardees and their relatives.

Congratulating the award recipients, Sheikh Hasina said they have made outstanding contributions to their respective fields, including medical, education and culture.

The awardees are Jute and Textiles Minister Golam Dastagir Gazi, Commander Abdur Rouf (posthumous), martyred intellectual and novelist Anwar Pasha (posthumous) and Azizur Rahman for Independence and Liberation War; Prof Dr



On behalf of the Prime Minister, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque handed over the Independence Award 2020. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina virtually joined the programme from Ganobhaban on October 29

Md Obaidul Kabir Chowdhury and Prof Dr AKMA Muqtadir for medical science; Kalipada Das and Ferdousi Mazumder for culture; and Bharateswari Homes, a boarding school for girls in Mirzapur of Tangail, for education. *Source: The Daily Star*

31 October, 2020

PM vows to banish poverty through united efforts

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on October 31 vowed to eradicate poverty from the country through united efforts of all.

'If we all work together, there will be no poverty in the country,' she said while addressing a programme virtually titled 'Gift of house to the homeless people in Mujib Barsho'.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joins the opening ceremony of 'House gift from the secretaries of the government to homeless people on the occasion of Mujib Borsho' through a videoconference from Ganobhaban in the city on October 31

The programme was organised to hand over 160 homes among the homeless people at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC).

The Prime Minister attended the programme from her official residence Ganobhaban.

'We pledged to declare the country free from poverty by 2021, but due to coronavirus it could not be done, but our efforts are on and will be continued,' she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

1 November, 2020

PM cautions on inbound passengers' covid test

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 1 said in the wake of massive COVID-19 outbreak again across the globe, the time has come to reintroduce coronavirus tests for every inbound passenger in all ports.

Sheikh Hasina said this while addressing the 'Bangabandhu National Youth Day 2020' virtually. The function was arranged at Osmani Memorial Auditorium while she attended it from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The first November's youth day has been named Bangabandhu National Youth Day on the occasion of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joins the opening ceremony of 'Bangabandhu National Youth Day-2020' programme through a videoconference from Ganobhaban on November 1

Earlier, State Minister Russell handed over Bangabandhu National Youth Award (cash, certificate and crest) to 21 successful self-employed youths and five successful youth organisers in recognition of their exemplary contribution in setting up self-employment projects. *Source: The Financial Express*

2 November, 2020

Spreading propaganda not freedom of speech: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 2 asked all concerned to highlight the facts of any incident alongside protesting the spread of rumours and false propaganda in the name of freedom of speech.

The Prime Minister said this while speaking in the beginning of the regular weekly meeting of the cabinet at Bangladesh Secretariat. The Prime Minister chaired the

meeting joining it from her official residence Ganobhaban through videoconferencing.

There might be some pain in telling the truth of any incident, but ultimately it'll surely work and that's the reality, Sheikh Hasina said, adding that a vested quarter is accustomed to making ill-efforts to cause harm to people and the government of Bangladesh. *Source: The Financial Express*

3 November, 2020

Nation pays tributes to four slain leaders

Bangladesh on November 3 paid tributes to four national leaders and 1971 Liberation War forerunners — Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, Captain M Mansur Ali and AHM Quamaruzzaman — recalling their gruesome killing inside the high security Dhaka Central Jail on this day in 1975.



Ruling Awami League and its associate bodies as well as different organisations observed the day in a befitting manner through daylong programmes.

Later, the leaders and workers of Awami League's associate bodies, as well as other socio-cultural organisations paid homage to four national leaders placing wreaths at the portrait of Sheikh Mujib. *Source: The New Age*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over discussion virtually organized by Bangladesh Awami League at the Awami League Central Office marking the Jail Killing Day on November 3

Aminbazar-Mongla power line project cost revised

The government's highest economic policy-making body ECNEC on November 3 revised the PGCB's Aminbazar-Mawa-Mongla 400kv power transmission line installation project despite violation of original DPP during its implementation, officials said.

Presided over by the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on November 3 in Dhaka endorsed the PGCB's power grid line installation project along with three others at a combined cost of Tk 24.5915 billion.

The ECNEC on November 3 approved two fresh projects and revised two others at its meeting in Dhaka, Planning Secretary Asadul Islam told journalists after the meeting.

The state-owned power grid company has now obtained 85 per cent additional funds and six months more at the revised development project proposal (DPP) for completing the 164.6km power transmission line from Aminbazar to Mongla.

Source: The Financial Express



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurating the newly-built Chief Judicial Magistrate Court Building in Dhaka virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban on November 4

4 November, 2020

Ensure swift justice for people: PM to judges, lawyers

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 4 urged judges and lawyers to ensure people's right to quick and hassle-free justice.

'Getting justice quickly, less expensively and hassle-free is the right of the people. This can boost people's confidence and trust, she said.

The Prime Minister said this while inaugurating the newly-built Chief Judicial Magistrate Court Building in Dhaka virtually from her official residence.

She said that till June 2020, there are some 3,794,908 cases pending in the courts and requested the judges and lawyers to find a way for quick verdicts in the cases.

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, Law Minister Anisul Huq and Law Secretary Md Golam Sarwar also spoke at the programme.

The Prime Minister renewed her call for writing verdicts in Bangla alongside English so that the common people can understand the judgments. *Source: The Financial Express*

5 November, 2020

Dhaka focuses on building capacity, not waging war

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said Bangladesh wants to strengthen its capacity to resist any external attack.

The PM said the Father of the Nation had formulated Bangladesh's foreign policy -- 'Friendship to all, Malice to none'. 'We believe in that policy.'

Sheikh Hasina was addressing a programme marking the commissioning of five modern ships of Bangladesh Navy at the Naval Berth-1 in Chattogram.

Among the five are three warships -- BNS Umar Farooq, BNS Abu Ubaidah and BNS Prottasha, and two survey ships -- BNS Darshak and BNS Tallashi.

The premier commissioned the ships through a videoconference from the Ganobhaban.

Sheikh Hasina said the government has been making efforts to build Bangladesh Navy as a three-dimensional force.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina looks at replicas of Bangladesh Navy ships while commissioning five ships, including three warships, through a videoconference from the Ganobhaban on November 5

Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Shaheen Iqbal, on behalf of the PM, formally handed over the 'commissioning forman [statement]' of the ships to their respective captains at the Naval Berth. Source: The Daily Star

8 November, 2020

BGB three-dimensional force now, says PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 8 declared Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) a

three-dimensional force after the induction of two helicopters, Bir Shreshtha Nur Mohammad and Bir Shreshtha Abdur Rouf, into it.

"We're celebrating Mujib Barsha. In this Mujib Barsha, BGB got two helicopters. This is indeed a matter of pride. I'm declaring BGB as a three-dimensional force; from today BGB is a three dimensional force," she said.

The Prime Minister said this while addressing a programme for inducting two MI-171E helicopters into the Air Wing of BGB. The programme was held at the BGB Headquarters, Pilkhana. She attended the programme virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban. Source: The Financial Express



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a ceremony on helicopter induction into BGB Air Wing at Peelkhana Bir Uttam Anwar Hossain Parade Ground in the city through a videoconference from Ganobhaban on November 8

Work for people

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 8 urged the public representatives of local government bodies to stand beside people and work for their welfare with a service mentality.

The Prime Minister made the call while addressing an oath-taking ceremony of the chairmen of Madaripur, Faridpur and Moulvibazar district councils as they were elected in the recently-held by-elections.

She virtually administered the oath to the newly-elected chairmen of the three district councils from Ganobhaban.

Recalling the steps of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu for decentralisation of state power, the Prime Minister said the great leader had upgraded all the subdivisions to district ones.

In light of the initiatives of Bangabandhu, Sheikh Hasina said, the government has been working to fulfill all the basic needs of the people, including healthcare, education, housing, food and clothes. *Source: The Daily Star*

9 November, 2020

Cabinet nod for automatic land mutation

The Cabinet on November 9 cleared the proposal in this regard to ease the mutation process by removing complexities and thus reduce the sufferings of people.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting held at the Bangladesh Secretariat. She joined the meeting virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

'It's a landmark decision. It'll bring great relief for all, including investors and the general people of the country. It'll reduce the sufferings of people, minimise time in mutation and lessen the backlog of land-related cases,' said Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam at a press briefing.

He said the AC Land offices have an online database of some 4.30 crore records of rights and the sub-registration offices will have access to the database to verify the record of rights of a land before its registration.

The AC land offices will also know about the registration of a land automatically through software. Besides, the AC land office will get one manual copy of a land document (Dalil) following its registration. *Source: The Financial Express*

10 November, 2020

Recovery not possible sans united efforts

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said there is a need for constructive multilateralism more than ever as the Covid-19 pandemic has reminded the world that 'no one is safe until everyone is safe'.

The PM was addressing a high-level event titled 'Call for Action: In Support of Multilateralism' held on a virtual platform on November 10.

The Spanish government organised the event in the wake of unique challenges caused by Covid-19 across the world.

Despite the impact of the pandemic, the country's GDP registered a 5.24 percent



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a high-level event titled 'Call for Action: In Support of Multilateralism' held on a virtual platform on November 10

growth due to the government's timely interventions.

Hasina said all should guard against this type of activities which are detrimental to international peace, security and global development.

The premier said Bangladesh is a flagbearer of multilateralism and pursues international peace and security by its high presence in the UN peacekeeping and peace-building process. *Source : The Daily Star*

16 November, 2020

Cabinet approves draft financial inclusion strategy

The government has approved the draft of the National Financial Inclusion Strategy in order to bring maximum number of people under the financial accounting system and arrange the financial benefits for them.

Both the Bengali and English versions of the draft were cleared at the cabinet meeting on November 16 Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam told

a media briefing after the meeting.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting held at the Bangladesh Secretariat, joining from her official residence Ganobhaban virtually.

The five-year strategy is being taken for 2021-2025 to improve the life and livelihood of people, particularly the poor, by bringing under all sorts of institutional financial services, said the cabinet secretary.

The government has a plan to bring 100 per cent people under the financial accounting system by 2025, he added. *Source: The Financial Express*

17 November, 2020

ECNEC approves Tk 5,906cr project to repair rural infrastructures

The government on November 17 approved a Tk 5,905.59-crore project to conserve the rural road network system by rehabilitating the roads, bridges and culverts affected due to cyclone Amphan, excessive rain and the recent flood.

The approval was made at the 15th ECNEC meeting of the current fiscal year, the 48th ECNEC meeting of the current government.

ECNEC chairperson and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting virtually from her official Gonabhaban residence. The ministers, state ministers and secretaries concerned attended the meeting at the NEC conference room in the city's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

Revealing the details of the project, Planning Commission member Md Zakir Hossain Akand said that the Local Government Engineering Department under the Local Government Division will implement the project, titled ‘Rehabilitation of rural road infrastructures affected due to cyclone Amphan and Flood’, with an estimated cost of Tk 5,905.59 crore with entire government fund by December 2023.

The project aims to reduce the transportation cost and time through ensuring a sustainable road maintenance system, simplifying the marketing system of various produces, generating more rural employments and thus keeping operational the rural economy. *Source: The New Age*

20 November, 2020

Antimicrobial resistance poses another global emergency: PM

Prime minister Sheikh Hasina on November 20 called for an internationally coordinated research and investment campaign for new generation antibiotics



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina coordinating a press events on ‘One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance’ through videoconference from her official residence Ganobhaban on November 20

having universal accessibility amid growing ‘antimicrobial resistance’, fearing the phenomenon to expose the world to another health emergency.

‘We are running out of available antibiotics and soon could face another global emergency, far severe than the current COVID-19 pandemic,’ she told a virtual meeting of global leaders as they joined international agencies to fight the accelerating crisis of antimicrobial resistance called AMR.

The Bangladesh premier has been elected co-chair of ‘One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance’ as the World Health Organisation on November 20 jointly launched the grouping with UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and World Organisation for Animal Health. *Source: The New Age*

21 November, 2020

Nation-building activities

PM expects armed forces' enhanced contribution

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expected on November 21 the armed forces to earn

enhanced professional expertise to contribute more to the nation building campaign being imbued with patriotic spirit as it emerged through the process of 1971 Liberation War.

'The armed forces that emerged on a smaller scale in the process of the Liberation War today became a gigantic institution,' the premier said in a nationwide televised address on the occasion of the Armed Forces Day 2020.

She added: 'I pray to most merciful Allah - let the members of the armed forces contribute more to the country's defence being empowered with professional efficiency.'

The armed forces this year celebrate the Day discarding the traditional festivity in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, prompting Sheikh Hasina, who holds the charge of the portfolio of defence ministry, to deliver her address using the virtual platform. *Source: The Financial Express*

22 November, 2020

'Extensive communication network' drives economy, says PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has attributed Bangladesh's dynamic economy to an 'extensive network' of communication developed by the Awami League government.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurating three newly-constructed bridges in Magura, Jashore and Narayanganj through a videoconference from Ganobhaban in the city on November 22

She made the remarks while inaugurating three bridges in different districts and an 'Independence Square' in Pabna via video conference from Ganobhaban on November 22.

The Prime Minister opened a 600.70- metre long Elangkhali bridge over the Madhumati river in Magura's Mohammadpur Upazila, the 576.214-metre 'Muktijoddha Golam Dastagir Gazi (Bir Pratik) Bridge' on the Shitalakshya River at Rupganj's Murapara Ferry Ghat Road, and a 702.55-metre bridge along the Jashore-Khulna road in Jashore's Avoyngar Upazila. *Source: The Financial Express*

25 November, 2020

Govt to purchase 80,000 tonnes of urea fertiliser

The cabinet committee on government purchase has approved procurement of 80,000 tonnes of urea fertiliser form Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company Ltd. (KAFCO).

The procurement will cost the exchequer Tk 1.75 billion.

The approval came at a virtual meeting of the committee on November 25. Law Minister Anisul Huq presided over the meeting in absence of finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal.

And 25,000 tonnes of bulk prilled granular urea fertiliser will be purchased from Qatar Chemical and Petrochemical Marketing and Distribution Company (Muntajat) at a cost of Tk 555 million.

The approval also includes purchase of 30,000 tonnes of bagged granular urea fertiliser from KAFCO at a cost of Tk 635 million. *Source: The Financial Express*

26 November, 2020

Eight 'iconic mosques' to be built with Saudi assistance: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on November 26 eight 'iconic mosques' with modern facilities will be constructed in the country's eight divisions with Saudi Arabia's assistance.

The Prime Minister said this when Saudi Ambassador in Bangladesh Essa Yousef Alduhailan paid a courtesy call on her at the latter's official residence Ganobhaban.

Sheikh Hasina said 560 model mosque-cum-Islamic cultural centres are being constructed at the upazila level across the country with Saudi assistance.

'Saudi Arabia has a special place in the hearts of Bangladeshis,' she said.

The Saudi envoy highly praised the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and hoped that the existing friendly relationship between the two countries would deepen further under her leadership. *Source: The Financial Express*

29 November, 2020

Govt to broaden rail links: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 29 said the government is working to establish a rail network across the country for providing transportation to people and goods at a cheaper rate.

The Prime Minister said this while laying the foundation stone of 4.8km long double-line dual-gauge Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Railway Bridge over river Jamuna aimed at increasing the rail communication between the capital and Western zone of the Railway.

Once constructed, the dedicated 4.8km dual-gauge double-track railway bridge over the Jamuna River, which will be built some 300 metres upstream of the



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaking after laying the foundation stone of Bangabandhu Railway Bridge over the Jamuna River through a videoconference on November 29

Bangabandhu bridge that has a single rail line, would be the largest dedicated rail bridge in the country. *Source: The Financial Express*

1 December, 2020

Govt approves 3rd submarine cable project worth Tk 6.93b

The government on December 1 approved the third submarine cable project worth Tk 6.93 billion to upgrade the country's telecommunication system.

Upon implementation of the project, Bangladesh will get 6.0 terabyte per second of bandwidth that is expected to result in a massive boost of internet speed and facilitate 5G services across the country, officials said.

The ECNEC meeting was held at the Planning Commission in Dhaka presided by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Bangladesh would join the SEA-ME-WE-6 cable that also connected Singapore and France. The dispersion of the submarine cable will be from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea via the Arab Sea and the Red Sea.

Bangladesh will join the information super highway at the Bay of Bengal with the submarine cable.

The cable will have core landing stations in Singapore, India, Djibouti, Egypt and France. The Bangladesh branch will stretch to the cable landing station at Cox's Bazar through the Bay of Bengal. *Source: The Financial Express*

2 December, 2020

Cabinet okays direct vaccine purchase

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on December 2 approved in principle a proposal of the Health Services Division to procure Covid-19 vaccine directly from any organisation through negotiations without following any bidding process.

'The cabinet body approved a proposal of the Health Services Division [under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare] to procure Covid-19 vaccine worth over Tk 5 crore by applying the direct procurement method,' said Abu Saleh, additional secretary of the cabinet division.

Earlier on November 5 last, the government signed a tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Serum Institute of India (SII) and Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd to collect three crore doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca SARS-CoV-B2, AZD1222 vaccine. *Source: The Daily Star*

3 December, 2020

1971 atrocities by Pakistan cannot be forgotten: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that Bangladesh cannot forget the atrocities committed by Pakistan in 1971, according to a press release of the Press Wing of Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

'Incidents of 1971 cannot be forgotten. The pain will remain forever,' she said when Pakistan High Commissioner in Dhaka Imran Ahmed Siddiqui called on her at her official Ganobhaban residence in the city on December 3.

Referring to the volumes of the book titled 'Secret Documents of Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman', the Prime

Minister said all can learn many historical facts from 1948 to 1971 from this book. Noting that (the Urdu version) of the book 'Unfinished Memoirs' written by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is one of the best-sellers in Pakistan, she said it's also well read in Pakistan, apart from other countries.

The High Commissioner said the Pakistan PM advised them to learn about the development miracle of Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister said there is no bar here to continue functioning regularly.

Source: The Financial Express

4 December, 2020

Fighting Covid-19

PM seeks more 'global collaboration'

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sought 'urgent global attention and further collaboration' to defeat the coronavirus pandemic, save lives and accelerate economic recovery, as she placed a three-point proposal at the 31st Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

'Yet, there is a need for urgent global attention and further collaboration in three priority areas ... Bangladesh stands ready to work with all in this (global) efforts,' she said in a pre-recorded speech on December 4 evening (New York time) at the special UNGA session convened in response to Covid-19 pandemic.

The current Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Chair Azerbaijan and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres have convened the two-day special session that started on December 3.

The three-point proposal placed by the Bangladesh Prime Minister are: In her first proposal, Sheikh Hasina said the world needs to ensure universal, equitable, timely and affordable access to quality vaccines.

She pointed out that the 2030 Development Agenda recognised the fundamental role of Universal Health Coverage for achieving the SDGs guided by the principle of equity.

The Prime Minister, in her second proposal, said the world must treat the Covid-19 vaccine as a 'global public good'. *Source: The Financial Express*

5 December, 2020

Act out of love for country, people: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on December 5 called upon the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) to act always while in service and out of love for the country and its people.

She also urged all to stay alert during the second wave of Covid-19 and follow the health guidelines to remain safe from this deadly disease.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina giving speech at the 31st special session of General Assembly of the United Nations in response to Covid-19 pandemic on December 4



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joined the closing-out parade of the BGB's 95th batch at the BGB Training Centre and College at Satkania in Chattogram via a video conference from Ganobhaban on December 5

She made the statement while attending the closing out parade of the BGB's 95th batch via videoconferencing from Ganobhaban on December 5. The parade was held at BGB training Centre and College at Satkania in Chattogram.

The Prime Minister said the government has taken a plan to recruit 15,000 more manpower in phases. As part of the smart border management, ultramodern surveillance equipment, ATV and modern APC, helicopter, vehicle scanner and speedboat have been inducted apart from installing new BOPs and BSPs.

'We've turned BGB as a three-dimensional force. BGB now attains its capacity to discharge its duties in water, land and air,' she added.

The BGB DG handed over awards on behalf of the Prime Minister among the trainees for their outstanding performance during the training programme.

A total of 2,524 new recruits of BGB paraded at the closing out ceremony.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina praised Bithi for her outstanding performance. Bithi

is the first female soldier who achieved such excellence. *Source: The Financial Express*

6 December, 2020

PM offers Thimphu use of different ports

First-ever PTA signed with Bhutan

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on December 6 said the Bangladesh-Bhutan Preferential Trade



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Bhutanese counterpart Dr Lotay Tshering (left) join the signing ceremony of a Preferential Trade Agreement between the two countries through a videoconference on December 6

Agreement (PTA) would further consolidate the relations between the two neighbouring countries for mutual benefit.

'The PTA which both sides signed will contribute to further consolidating the relations between our two countries,' she said, joining the signing ceremony virtually from her official Ganobhaban residence.

She added that the PTA signing was held on Decemver 6 to make the day memorable as on this day in 1971, Bhutan became the first country in the world to recognise Bangladesh's independence and it marks the 50th anniversary of bilateral and diplomatic relations between the two countries. *Source: The Financial Express*

8 December, 2020

Escalating project costs, time

PM orders all to halt the trend

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed on December 8 all concerned to stop the trend to raise the project cost and time, and implement the projects in due time instead.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) cleared four development projects.

ECNEC Chairperson and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting joining it from Ganobhaban through a videoconference.

The four development projects approved by ECNEC included a Tk 22.28 billion (2,228-crore) one to widen the existing road and construct two-storey road from Panchabati to Muktarpur Bridge.

'The ECNEC meeting approved four projects involving an estimated cost of Tk 39.03 billion (only additional costs of two revised projects were counted here),' said Dr Shamsul Alam.

'If the expressway (the two-storey road) is constructed, the travel cost will come down by 62 per cent, while the waiting time by 74 per cent. The average speed of traffic will go up four-five times,' said another member of the Planning Commission, Md. Mamun-Al-Rashid. *Source: The Financial Express*

9 December, 2020

Govt working for women's empowerment

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on December 9 said the government was working to ensure equal participation of women in every sphere of the society so that they could contribute to expediting the country's development with courage.

The PM was addressing a programme marking the Begum Rokeya Day and distribution of Begum Rokeya Padak 2020.

Sheikh Hasina joined the ceremony at Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium virtually from the Ganobhaban. The ministry of women and children affairs organised the event marking the birth and death anniversary of Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain.

The winners of Begum Rokeya Padak 2020 are: Prof Dr Shireen Akhter in education, Brig Gen Dr Nazma Begum in women's professional development,

Manjulika Chakma in women's socio-economic development, Begum Mushtari Shafi in literature and culture, and Farida Akter in women's rights.

Fazilatun Nessa Indira handed the awards to the winners on behalf of the Prime Minister. *Source: The Daily Star*

12 December, 2020

Innovate, not imitate to enjoy benefits of Digital Bangladesh

President Md. Abdul Hamid stressed the importance of innovations instead of imitation to take the benefits of 'Digital Bangladesh' to people.

'Technology is the tool of development. Information technology is the most significant invention of the present time...in order to effectively deliver the benefits of Digital Bangladesh to people, we've to catch up with the new and changed technology,' President said.

The President said this while addressing a virtual event, marking the 4th Digital Bangladesh Day on December 12.

He inaugurated the 'Digital Bangladesh Day' activities at the Auditorium of Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) in the capital through a video message.

On December 12, 2017, the day was observed as National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Day.

On 26 November last year, the cabinet renamed the day as 'Digital Bangladesh Day'.

The theme of this year's 'Digital Bangladesh Day' is 'Even though I consider it as a distance, I'm still connected'. *Source: The Financial Express*

13 December, 2020

Govt taking preparation to open schools: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on December 13 said the government is taking preparations so that children can return to their educational institutions and resume their academic activities normally.



The National Defence College presented a painting to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the graduation ceremony of the National Defence Course-2020 and Armed Forces War Course-2020 on December 13. The Prime Minister joined the programme virtually from Ganobhaban

'We hope that good day will come in the future [when] our children will be able to go [back] to their schools [and] carry on their studies normally. We're preparing to that end,' she said.

The Prime Minister said this while speaking virtually at the Graduation Ceremony of National Defence Course-2020 and Armed Forces War Course-2020 at National Defence College at Sheikh Hasina Complex DSCSC in Mirpur Cantonment from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Source: The Financial Express

14 December, 2020

Martyred Intellectuals Day observed

The nation observed on December 14 the Martyred Intellectuals' Day paying glowing tributes to the intellectuals who were brutally killed by the Pakistan occupation forces and their local collaborators at the fag-end of the country's Liberation War in 1971.

Marking the day, hundreds of people from all walks of life converged at the Martyred Intellectuals' Mausoleum in Mirpur and the Rayer Bazar killing ground (Baddhobhumi), maintaining the health guidelines, to pay their homage to the worthy sons of the soil.

The programmes of the day included raising of black flag and hoisting of the national flag half mast, placing of wreaths at the martyred intellectuals memorials and graveyards, discussions, lighting of candles in memory of the martyrs, morning marches, painting, general knowledge and hand writing competitions and milad and doa mahfils seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of the martyrs.

President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid their homage to the martyred intellectuals of 1971. *Source: The Financial Express*

15 December, 2020

No division, no anarchy over religion: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on December 15 issued a strong warning against religious fanatics, saying that the government will not let anyone create any division and anarchy in the country over religion.

‘This Bangladesh is the Bangladesh of Lalon Shah, Rabindranath, Kazi Nazrul, Jibanananda...this Bangladesh is the Bangladesh of Shahjalal, Shah Poran, Shah Mokdum, Khanjahan Ali, this Bangladesh is the Bangladesh of Sheikh Mujib and 16.5 crores of Bangalees– this country is for all. We won't allow anyone to create any division and anarchy in the name of religion,’ she said.

The Prime Minister said this while addressing the nation on the occasion of Victory Day.

State-owned Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television simultaneously broadcast the Prime Minister's address. Private television channels and radio stations also aired the speech. *Source: The Financial Express*

Institutionalise democracy: Hamid

President Md. Abdul Hamid on December 15 put emphasis on institutionalising the country's democracy and developing a culture of absolute tolerance and mutual respect to reach the benefits of independence to people's doorsteps.

‘Democracy must be institutionalised . . . A culture of absolute tolerance and mutual respect must be developed to bring the benefits of independence,’ the President said in a recorded video speech from Bangabhaban on the occasion of the 49th Victory Day.

The President said all-out cooperation as well as the positive change of people's mindset is mandatory to take country's ongoing development trend forward.

'Only then the country will become a 'Sonar Bangla (Golden Bengal)' envisioned



President Md. Abdul Hamid greets the countrymen on the occasion of the Victory Day in a video message on December 15

by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman,' Abdul Hamid added.

Referring to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent global effect, the President said it (outbreak of coronavirus) has brought human civilization to the brink of one of the worst disasters in the history.

'Meanwhile, under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh is coping with the Corona situation successfully,' he mentioned. *Source: The Financial Express*

16 December 2020

49 Years of Victory

Nation renews resolve to uproot fundamentalism

The nation on December 16 celebrated Victory Day, saluting the supreme sacrifice of the gallant sons and daughters of the soil and vowing afresh to uproot fundamentalism.

There were restrictions on public gatherings due to the pandemic, but the virus scare could not dampen the spirit as hundreds of people, irrespective of age and gender,

gathered at memorials across the country.

Imbued with the spirit of the Liberation War, they paid rich tributes to the freedom fighters who had unflinchingly sacrificed their lives to translate the national dream of an independent motherland into reality.

Forty-nine years ago on December 16, 1971, Bangladesh was liberated under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and the sacrifice of the lives of three million people.

On this day, the Pakistan Army surrendered to the allied forces of Bangladesh and India in the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan after the nine-month war.

The day began with a 31-gun salute at National Parade Square, followed by rich tributes by President Md. Abdul Hamid and the Prime Minister at the National Martyrs' Memorial in Savar to the martyrs who laid down their lives for the emancipation of the nation.

On behalf of the President, his military secretary SM Shamim-uz-Zaman and on behalf of the Prime Minister her military secretary Maj Gen Naqib Ahmed Chowdhury placed floral wreaths at the memorial.

A smartly turned out contingent drawn from the Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy, and Bangladesh Air Force presented a state salute on the occasion when bugles played the last post.

The national flag was hoisted atop government, semi-government and private offices as well as offices of autonomous bodies across the country.

Different government and non-government offices and establishments were decorated with colourful lights. Patriotic songs played over loudspeakers in many areas.

The president and the Prime Minister issued separate messages on the occasion and national dailies across the country published special supplements.

State-owned and private televisions channels and radios broadcast month-long special programmes highlighting the Liberation War. Different organisations held discussions where Liberation War related documentaries were screened.

Special prayers were offered in mosques and other places of worship, seeking eternal peace for the souls of the martyrs, and peace, progress and prosperity for the country. *Source: The Daily Star*

17 December, 2020

Hasina-Modi maiden virtual summit

India pledges vaccine support

India promised to promptly and effectively deliver to Bangladesh the Covid-19 vaccines it is producing as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi held a virtual summit on December 17.

The two PMs also expressed their interest in expanding the already-strong bilateral and regional economic cooperation by improving connectivity while resolving existing issues, including water



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses to the nation on the occasion of the 49th Victory Day

- ❑ Bangladesh wants early signing of Teesta deal
- ❑ Chilahati-Haldibari rail link inaugurated
- ❑ India will join activities on 50th year of Bangladesh's independence
- ❑ India says border killings to be brought to zero
- ❑ Two countries sign seven MoUs during the summit
- ❑ India offers Bangladesh to be member of BRICS dev bank
- ❑ Bangladesh wants to join India-Myanmar-Thailand highway, speed up BBIN agreement on MVA
- ❑ Postal stamp on Bangabandhu and Bangabandhu-Bapu Digital Exhibition inaugurated



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina along with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a commemorative stamp on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman through a virtual meeting

sharing and management and bringing down border killings to zero.

Stating that Bangladesh is a significant pillar of India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy, Modi said pharmaceutical companies on both sides have already arranged plans for supply of vaccines. The prospect of cooperation in production will also be explored, he added.

The government of Bangladesh and a local pharmaceutical company have already signed an agreement with Serum Institute of India for Covid-19 vaccines.

The summit was held at a historical time as the countries are in their 50th year of diplomatic relationships. Bangladesh is also celebrating the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and preparing to celebrate its 50th independence anniversary next year.

The two premiers inaugurated a postal stamp of Bangabandhu and the Bangabandhu-Bapu digital exhibition. They also inaugurated the Holdibari-Chilahati rail link, which remained unused since the India-Pakistan war in 1965, and inaugurated two community development projects.

They also signed seven MoUs and adapted a 39-point joint statement following the meeting. *Source: The Daily Star*

20 December, 2020

Govt to procure high-capacity warplanes for Air Force: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on December 20 reaffirmed that the country's armed forces will be provided with more modern equipment and technologies as ensuring top quality modernised force is very important.

The Prime Minister said this while addressing the President's Parade of Bangladesh Air Force virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban. The parade was held at Bangladesh Air Force Academy in Jashore.

The government has recently started the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University in Lalmonirhat which will offer courses on flying planes, building aircraft and space science.

Earlier, the Prime Minister took salute at the parade and witnessed a short but impressive flying past by the Bangladesh Air Force.

At the function, Air Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Serniabat, on behalf of the Prime Minister, handed over sword, awards and other trophies among the winners



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the 'President Parade (Winter)-2020', held at the Jashore Academy of Bangladesh Air Force, through a videoconference from Ganobhaban in the city on December 20

who successfully completed the 77th Buffer Course at the Air Force Academy.

Source: *The Financial Express*

23 December, 2020

Project gets ECNEC nod

A Tk 18.82 billion (1,882.59 crore) project for the improvement of water supply and sanitation in arsenic- and iron-hit 98 upazilas of 30 districts was cleared by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on December 23 along with four other development projects.

The approval came at the ECNEC's weekly meeting held at the NEC Bhaban in the city virtually with ECNEC Chairperson and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair. She joined the meeting from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Of the amount, Tk 12.45 billion (1,245.35 crore) will come from the government exchequer, Tk 209.8 million (20.98 crore) from the own fund of the agency concerned and the remaining Tk 20.42 billion (2,042.08 crore) as project assistance from foreign sources, he said.

The project deadline was also extended till June 2022 in place of June 2020. The original project cost was Tk 3.40 billion (340.13 crore), which now stands at Tk 5.99 billion (599.3 crore) in the first revision. Source: *The Financial Express*

25 December, 2020

Work to fulfil duty to the people, Hasina tells army

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called upon the newly-commissioned army officers to perform their duties with devotion to the country and its people.

She made the call while addressing the 'President Parade' of the 79th BMA Long Course at the Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) Parade Ground via video conference from Ganobhaban on 25 December.

'You must always remember that you have to love the country and fulfil your duty to the nation. The oath that you have taken bestows on you the great responsibility of defending the independence and sovereignty of this country. You must always remember that.'



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the President Parade-2020 of the 79th BMA Long Course through a videoconference from Ganobhaban in the city on December 25 while Chief of Army Staff General Aziz Ahmed distributed various prizes among the cadets

The Prime Minister harked back to her father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's speech to young cadets at the Bangladesh Military Academy in 1975, in which the Father of the Nation emphasised the need to 'stand up for justice, respect elders, be honest and disciplined' in order to lead a fulfilling life. *Source: The Financial Express*

27 December, 2020

PM inaugurates Biman's new Dash 8-400 aircraft

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurate the Biman Bangladesh Airlines' new Dash 8-400 aircraft.

The premier formally inaugurate the aircraft named 'Dhurbatara' at 11am through a videoconferencing from her official residence Ganobhaban on 27 December.

The opening function of the new aircraft will be held at the VVIP terminal of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA), it said.

Earlier, the national flag carrier received the first Dash 8-400 aircraft out of three made by De Havilland Aircraft of Canada, a prominent aircraft-maker of the North American country.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally inaugurates a new Dash 8-400 aircraft named 'Dhurbatara' (right) through a video conference from Ganobhaban in the city on December 27. The aircraft has been inducted into the fleet of Biman Bangladesh Airlines

The Dash 8-400 aircraft is equipped with eco-friendly and state-of-the-art facilities arrived here on November 24. *Source: The Financial Express*

28 December, 2020

Govt devising strategy, roadmap to battle money laundering

The government is preparing a working strategy and a roadmap for risk assessment on legal persons and arrangement as part of the global efforts to prevent money laundering.

The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) is preparing it in line with the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a global body working to combat money laundering and financing terrorism.

The financial institutions division (FID) under the ministry of finance recently held a meeting in this regard and discussed that risk assessment of legal persons and arrangement is one of the top recommendations of 11 immediate outcomes of the FATF.

The recommendations have to be made on how appropriate measures can be taken to combat money laundering and terrorists financing.

According to Global Financial Integrity (GFI), Bangladesh lost a total of US\$ 61.6 billion between 2005 and 2014.

Majority of the money laundering is taking place through trade misinvoicing. Between 2008 and 2017, on an average, some \$7.53 billion were laundered out through trade misinvoicing. *Source: The Financial Express*

29 December, 2020

Encroaching on Highways: Cabinet okays stern punishment

Anyone who erects a permanent or makeshift structure or sets up a market on the highways without prior approval may face a maximum of two years in prison or a fine between Tk 50,000 and Tk 5 million, or both.

This is according to the draft Highway Act-2020 approved in principle by the cabinet on 29 December with an aim to make the construction, development and maintenance of highways timely and to ensure discipline and safety of vehicular movement.

Under the draft law, even utility service providers -- both public and private -- may face similar punishments if they instal utility services without prior approval, because such unapproved works would be considered 'invasion'.

Anyone operating a slow-moving vehicle on roads without a dedicated lane or driving a vehicle that is unable to meet the minimum speed limit will be fine up to Tk 50,000, says the draft of a new law.

Once passed, the law will replace the near century-old Highway Act 1925. *Source: The Daily Star*

People reaping benefits of democracy: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on December 29 said the people of the country are now reaping the benefits of democracy as they got back their state power from the cantonment.

The Prime Minister said this while addressing the National Economic Council meeting virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The meeting approved the 8th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025).

Sheikh Hasina said she believes that the 8th Five-Year Plan will be very much effective in attaining the country's desired development.

In this connection, she mentioned that the government is implementing the UN-formulated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). 'But coronavirus has created a problem, this is not for us alone, it's for the whole world.'

Shikeh Hasina said the government has taken five-year plans, Vision 2021 and Vision 2041 apart from Delta Plan 2100.

'We'll be able to build Bangladesh as a developed and prosperous country if future governments, no matter whether we'll be in power, formulate these five-year plans,' she said. *Source: The Daily Star*

30 December, 2020

Forex reserve hits record \$43b

Finance Minister Mustafa Kamal on December 30 said that the country's foreign currency reserve had reached a new high of \$43 billion.

He said that the size of the reserve was a milestone in the country's economic strength even in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mustafa gave credit to expatriate Bangladeshis for helping the nation to achieve the landmark on the eve of the New Year by sending a record amount of remittance.

In the first five months, between July and November, of the current financial year 2020–21, the inflow of remittance reached \$10.90 billion.

The foreign exchange reserve crossed \$41-billion mark at the end of October as the inflow of remittance remained above \$2 billion while import payments remained low due to disruption in imports caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Mustafa also gave credit to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as the government introduced two per cent cash incentive against the inflow remittance in the last fiscal year.

In the financial year 2019-20, remittance inflow reached record \$18.21 billion. *Source: The New Age*

Govt building up every force to protect sovereignty: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on December 30 said the government was building up every force in such a way so that the country could avail all sorts of measures and training to protect its independence and sovereignty.

'We want peace, not war. But for protecting our country's independence and sovereignty we have to take all measures and training [and] we're building up all our forces that way,' she said while addressing, the President's Parade-2020, held at Bangladesh Naval Academy, Chattogram.

She attended the event virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

She said that as an independent country, the government aims to ensure that the people of the country will roam in the world arena with their heads ever high. *Source: The Financial Express*

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The Garo Hills in the winter- Netrokona



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