

Bangladesh

April-June 2023

Quarterly



50th Anniversary of Bangabandhu's
Winning of Joliot-Curie Peace Medal

A Timely Budget: Where to see the
Picture of Smart Bangladesh

Archaeological and Historical
Sites of Bangladesh 1

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina signing the proposed budget for FY 2023-24 on June 1, 2023



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Editor

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Md. Mamun Hossain

Cover Design & Layout

H. K. Barman

Cover picture

World Peace Council General Secretary honours Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with 'Joliot-Curie' Peace Award

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Tathya Bhaban

112, Circuit House Road, Dhaka- 1000

Telephone : 88-02-8300697

Fax : 88-02-58310020

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

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Editorial

The golden jubilee of the conferment of the Joliot-Curie Peace Medal to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has been celebrated nationwide. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation and the forerunner of democracy and peace movement, was awarded the Joliot-Curie Peace Prize by the World Peace Council on May 23, 1973. The World Peace Council has been awarding Joliot-Curie Peace Prize to distinguished individuals and organisations since 1950 for outstanding contribution to the fight against fascism, anti-imperialism, humanitarian welfare and peace. The peace prize was an international recognition of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's contribution to the establishment of world peace.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal has placed the country's 52nd budget of Tk. 7.61 trillion for FY 2023-2024 before the national parliament on June 1, 2023. This budget is larger by 12.34% than the current fiscal's Tk. 6.78 trillion budget. The budget is termed as the first budget towards building 'Smart Bangladesh'. The proposed budget is designed to mitigate inflation, expand the social safety net, spur job creation, and foster notable growth.

Pahela Boishakh is one of the most ebullient festivals in the life of the people of Bangladesh irrespective of caste, creed and religion. On this day they wear colourful dresses and celebrate this day with traditional Bengali food items. On the occasion of Pahela Boishakh a wave of joy flows across the country.

Bangladesh has hundreds of archaeological and historical sites of interest to domestic and foreign tourists. There are many monuments and relics of the Muslim, the Buddhist and the Hindu architecture established at different times. Also, many European structures of the 19th and 20th centuries, including the medieval Sultanate period and the subsequent Mughal rule, still stand proudly all over the country.

Articles on the above subjects have been included in this current issue. Moreover, write ups on Bangabandhu's 6-point charter, air pollution, smart Bangladesh, agriculture and wildlife have been accommodated in this issue.

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50th Anniversary of Bangabandhu's Winning of Joliot-Curie Peace Medal

Dr. Md Matiur Rahman Khan

The World Peace Council (WPC) conferred the Joliot-Curie gold medal of World Peace on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Father of the Nation on 23rd May, 1973, as the first ever international award for Bangladesh. This was really an immortal achievement and fame for him as well as for the people of Bangladesh. He was honored with the award for his outstanding contribution that he made to establish world peace. This was the recognition of his successful efforts for the liberation of Bangladesh and promotion of world peace.

World Peace Council

It is an international organization that aims at advocating for world peace, universal disarmament, sovereignty, independence and peaceful co-existence of countries and launches campaigns against imperialism, weapons of much destruction and all forms of discrimination. It was established at the first World Peace Congress held in April, 1949 in Paris. The original 1949 regulations envisaged best for arts, literature, film or industrial work which advanced peace among nations in 1951. As the largest International Peace Organization, the WPC consisting of more than 100 countries and is a democratic and non-aligned international movement of mass action. Since its creation, the WPC has also been working for its global security, peace, economic and social justice along with protection of human rights, culture, heritage and environment. This WPC decides awarding Peace Medal to those who struggle successfully for establishing and promoting world peace.

Joliot-Curie Peace Medal

For further advancement and initiative of peace in the world, the WPC in 1951 categorized and recognized three distinct awards: 1 International Peace Prize 2 Honorary International Peace Prize 3 Medal of Peace. Then, in 1959 the Medal of Peace was renamed as Joliot-Curie Peace Medal in honor of Frederic Joliot Curie who won the Nobel Prize and led the World Peace Council as the first president

of the WPC till his death in 1958.

Bangabandhu's Contribution as a leader to World Peace

Bangabandhu struggled throughout his life to ensure people's economic emancipation and a life free from exploitation and oppression. From the very beginning of his political career, he tried to build up a Bengal of Gold rid of hunger, poverty, illiteracy, manipulation and suppression. His struggles and sacrifices became successful when

the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 proved him to be an uncompromising leader of the Bengalis and his uncompromising nature brought him special honor and international prestige as one of the intransigent leaders of the world.

Bangabandhu was a symbol of peace and justice, and he would like to see peace and stability across the world. Actually 'World Peace' was one of the principles of the political philosophy of Bangabandhu. He used to say, 'We want peace everywhere in the world.' He used to stand beside people who struggled for independence. He was very deliberate and cautious of the foreign relations and policy. He used balanced foreign policy, 'Friendship to all and malice towards none.' He believed in and emphasized on peaceful solution of all disputes as the mainstay of foreign policy. Bangabandhu was a peace-loving leader. Fidel Castro, the then president of Cuba in the non-aligned summit in Algeria in 1973 called Bangabandhu as 'Himalayas' in praise of his great leadership, charismatic personality and tremendous courage. Like Fidel Castro, the leader of the British humanist movement late Lord Fener Brockway remarked, 'In a sense, Sheikh Mujib is a greater leader than George Washington, Mahatma Gandhi and De Valera.' The then Indian president VV Giri also praised Bangabandhu as the visible symbol of the eternal consciousness of suffering and sacrifice for human liberation and human freedom.

In 1973, Bangabandhu visited Yugoslavia where he met the then president Tito. The two leaders welcomed the end of the war of Vietnam and Laos to determine their fate freely. They urgently emphasized on the importance of establishing sustainable peace in the Middle East and full rest for the nights of Arab states and Palestinians. Both leaders asked Cambodia to stop bombing. Bangabandhu sent messages to World Peace Congress Conference held in Moscow in October, 1973 where he said, 'I am really glad to hear the news of the World Peace Conference. When people in different parts of the world are struggling against imperialism, colonialism, and racial discrimination and are striving for economic and political liberation, this congress will be able to strengthen and inspire all those who are committed to world peace. If the World Peace needs to establish stable peace, then the oppressed



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman getting off the car to attend the award giving ceremony on May 23, 1973

people of the world will have to free themselves from the exploitation.'

Bangabandhu attended the non-aligned summit in 1973, where he raised his voice in favor of the United Nations. He not only declared his firm determination to fight against poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and unemployment but also urged all nations to be united to eliminate it. He made a strong statement to the United Nations on behalf of the oppressed humanity

where he emphasized on the legitimate rights of the oppressed people of South Africa and Palestine. In 1974, Bangabandhu made a visit to Egypt. During the visit he expressed his support for the people of Asia, Africa, and also Latin America. He also emphasized on strengthening brotherly relations with Arab people. Bangabandhu always laid stress to keep good and friendly relations with the neighboring countries. During his time, Bangladesh got the recognition of most countries. Bangabandhu developed good relations with India and Japan too.

His remarkable feats and dynamic leadership in the international forums drew the attention of the WPC. Hence, in the presidential committee meeting of the WPC held in October, 1972 in Chilean capital Santiago, Ali Aksad, a leader of the World Council from Bangladesh proposed Bangabandhu's name for the Joliot-Curie Medal of Peace for his great efforts for the freedom of the Bengali nation and for world peace. All of the 200 present representatives from more than 100 countries supported the proposal and advocated strongly for awarding the Joliot-Curie Medal of Peace to Bangabandhu. As a result, The World Peace Council declared the name of Bangabandhu for Joliot-Curie Medal



Bangabandhu proceeding towards stage



Bangabandhu delivering speech at the Joliot-Curie Peace Medal award ceremony

of Peace on 10 October, 1972 and this Medal of World Peace was handed over to Bangabandhu later in a conference.

In this context, the World Peace Council organized a two-day conference titled Asian Peace and Security Conference held on 22nd and 23rd May 1973 in Dhaka. Representatives from a number of different countries attended that conference. Romesh Chandra, the then Secretary General of the World Peace Council handed over the Joliot-Curie Medal of



World Peace Council General Secretary Romesh Chandra honours Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with 'Joliot-Curie' Award for Peace, 23 May 1973

Peace to Bangabandhu at the North Plaza of the National Parliament Complex on 23rd May 1973. Then he said, 'Sheikh Mujib is not just Bangabandhu (friend of Bengal) anymore, today he has become Bishwa Bandhu (friend of the world)'. Indian politician Krishna Menon and the famous American leader John Reed were present at the award giving ceremony.

After receiving the prestigious award at the Asian Peace Conference from World Peace Council Secretary General Romesh Chandra in the chair, Bangabandhu said, 'The honour goes to those who laid down their lives for the cause of our freedom and those who valiantly fought the war... the Joliot-Curie belongs to the entire Bengali nation; to the 75 million people of my country.'

Some other Joliot-Curie Peace Medal awardees

Many revolutionary leaders of different countries, who struggled to bring, secure and promote world peace received the Joliot- Curie Medal of Peace. Some of the recipients of the Medal of Peace are as follows:

Fidel Castro(Cuba), Ho Chi Minh (Vietnam), Yasser Arafat (Palestine), Nelson Mandela (South Africa), Indira Gandhi (India), Martin Luther King Jr. (USA), Jawaharlal Nehru (India), Hugo Pesce (Peru), Valentine Tereshkova (Soviet Union), Shafi Ahmed El Sheikh (Sudan), Walter Friedrich (Germany), Edward Glerek (Poland), Tawfik Munir (Iraq), Paul Robeson (United States), Bela Bartok (Hungary), Bill Morrow (Australia), R.K Aggarwal (India), Jean Boulier (France), Pablo Neruda (Chile), James E Jackson (United States) and so on.

Celebration of 50 years of Bangabandhu's Joliot-Curie award

May 23, 2023 was the 50th anniversary of the conferment of the Joliot-Curie Medal of Peace to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a function organised to celebrate the golden jubilee of the conferment of the Joliot-Curie Peace Medal to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

Like previous years, the day was observed throughout the country with due honor and dignity. The Bangladesh missions abroad also observed the day with due pomp and grandeur.

Different political and social cultural organizations celebrated the day through holding various programmes in the capital and elsewhere in the country. The programmes include placing wreaths at the portrait of Father of the nation Bangabandhu

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, seminars and discussions were organized at national level on the life and activities of Bangabandhu. People recalled the great sacrifice and contribution of the undisputed charismatic leader. Different educational institutes held discussions on and offered prayers for Bangabandhu.

At ministry level, different committees were formed to arrange discussions, seminars followed by spectacular cultural functions. Apart from those, wide publicity in print and electronic media on the receipt of Bangabandhu's Joliot-Curie Medal of Peace was made and highlighted. Moreover, on this grand occasion, commemorative stamps were issued and documentary film shows were arranged. Radios and televisions put up separate special programs highlighting the significance of the day.

In addition, especial prayers were offered in the mosques, temples, churches, pagodas and in all other prayer houses. Voluntary blood donation and free medical camps throughout the country, drawing, painting and quiz competition at district and upazila levels were arranged.

In conclusion, it may be said that winning of Joliot-Curie Peace Medal by Bangabandhu is a great prestigious achievement for us. Through this Peace Medal, Bangabandhu has enhanced and improved the image of the people and the nation, which the whole world has witnessed. His monumental achievement will remain as a permanent and lasting impression on the mind of the people, and this impression will continue from generation to generation. We are really proud and pleased because of his gaining of this Peace Medal. Today the world has known that Bangabandhu was a true national and international leader who worked very seriously to promote domestic and world peace. But this uncompromising and undisputed leader is now in eternal sleep. But his deeds and inspiration will remain unabated in the mind of the people. We pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

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



A Timely Budget: Where to see the picture of Smart Bangladesh

Azgar Ali



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the pre-budget cabinet meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban on June 1, 2023

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal has placed the country's 52nd budget of nearly Tk. 7.61 trillion for the fiscal 2023-2024 in the National Parliament on June 1, 2023. This time the title of the budget speech was 'Towards a Smart Bangladesh after a decade and a half of development progress'.

The amount of the first budget of the country was only 786 crores in 1972. After 52 years of independence, the size of this budget in 2023-24 financial year has stood at 7 lakh 61 thousand 785 crores. On the other hand, the allocation in the budget of the last financial year 2022-23 was 6 lakh 60 thousand 507 crores. That is, the new budget is one lakh one thousand 278 crores or 15.33 percent higher than the budget of the past fiscal year. However, starting from the first budget of independent Bangladesh till last year, it can be seen that the size of each budget has increased with time.

The picture of the government's financial plan is reflected in the budget in which sector of the country in a particular financial year. Starting from the first budget of independent Bangladesh till last year, it can be seen that the size of each budget has increased with time.

In all national budgets, the budget is balanced between public satisfaction and economic protection. The budget for the FY 2023-2024 has been formulated with the aim of not creating any new pressure



President Mohammed Shahabuddin signing the proposed Budget for FY 2023-24 on June 1

on the economy and maintaining balance.

Size of GDP and Revenue Target:

The budget is 15.21 percent of the projected GDP of Tk 50 lakh 6672 crore. In the new budget, the revenue target has been fixed at 5 lakh crore taka. Out of this NBR will provide 4 lakh 30 thousand crores and 70 thousand crores will be acquired from other sources.

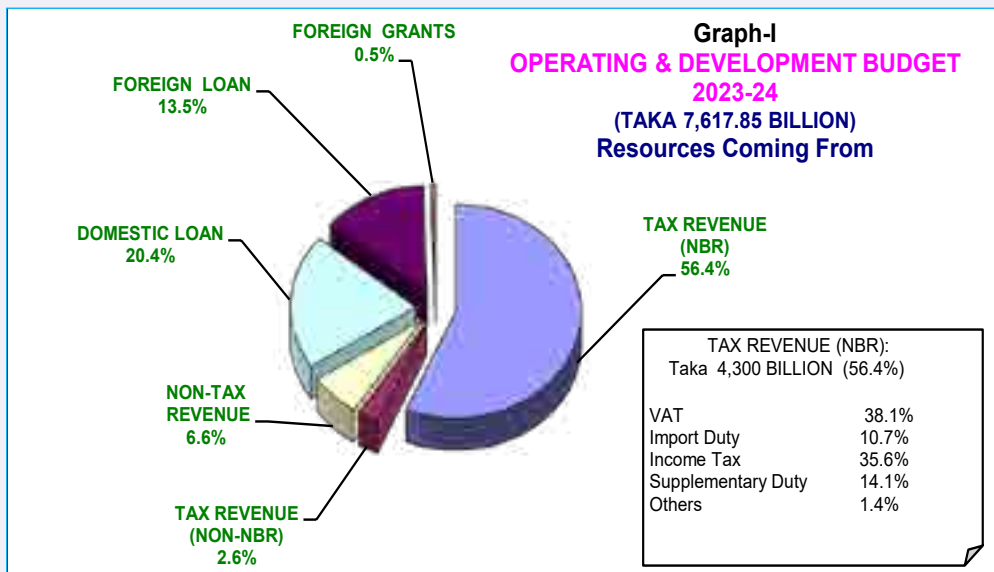
The deficit in the budget has been estimated at 2 lakh 57 thousand 885 crores. Without grants, the deficit would be Tk 261,785 crore, which is 5.2 percent of the total GDP. It is proposed to collect Tk 1 lakh 2 thousand 490 crore from foreign sources and Tk 1 lakh 55 thousand 395 crore from domestic sources to meet the deficit in the budget.

Expenditures: In the expenditure sectors in the proposed budget, operational expenditure has been estimated at Tk 4 lakh 75 thousand 281 crore and development expenditure at Tk 2 lakh 77 thousand 582 crore.

Growth Rate: Bangladesh is estimated to achieve 7.5 percent growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in 2023-2024 fiscal year. On the other hand, the rate of inflation has been estimated at 6.5%.

Allocations: In the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2023-24, the total allocation for the education sector is 1.76 percent of the GDP. In the next financial year, 11.57 percent or 88 thousand 162 crore taka of the total budget for primary, secondary and higher education and madrasa and technical education has been allocated to the education sector. On the other hand, 35 thousand 374 crore taka have been allocated to the agriculture sector, which is 4.64 percent of the total budget. This time in the budget for the fiscal year 2023-24, it has been proposed to increase the allocation to the social security sector to a total of Tk 1 lakh 26 thousand 272 crores, which is 16.58 percent of the total budget and 2.52 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). On the other hand, the allocation is increasing in the ICT department as well. It is proposed to increase the allocation of Tk 452 crore to Tk 2 thousand 368 crore in the budget of the fiscal year 2023-24 for ICT department. In the budget, the tax-free income limit for women has been increased to Tk 4 lakh.

An allocation of Tk 34 thousand 819 crore has been proposed for the energy and power sector. The Annual Development Programme (ADP) allocation in the budget is Tk 2.63 billion, which is 5.3 percent of the GDP.



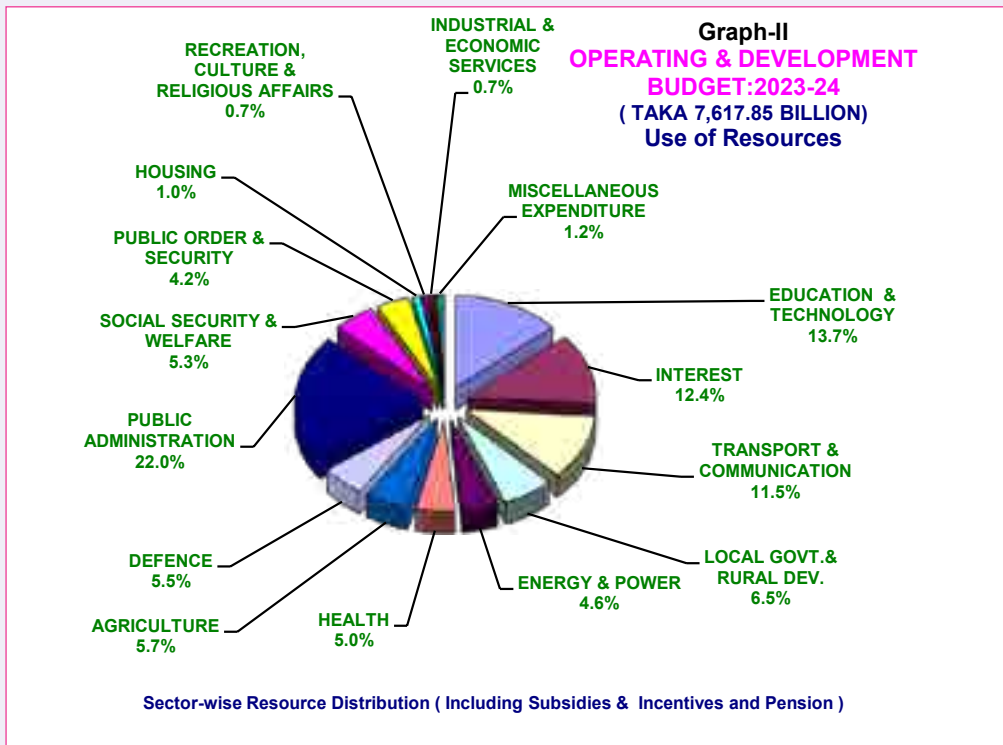
Strategies to meet Deficit: To meet the deficit of the budget, a total of Tk 155 thousand 395 crores borrowing from internal sources has been set as a target. 1 lakh 6 thousand 390 crore taka will come from foreign sources (including grants). The country's foreign debt as a proportion of GDP is still at a tolerable level. Therefore, it is necessary to be careful about taking foreign loans. On the other hand, there is no problem if the domestic debt ratio is less than five percent of GDP. But more than that is a problem. The government has to incur this debt due to inefficiency in revenue collection. A transparent investment friendly programme should be adopted to deal with the possible crises that may arise due to dependence on external and internal sources of credit in the budget. There are 88 lakh TIN holders in the country. Out of this only 35 lakh submit tax returns. Adequate steps should be taken for this poor deduction of tax collection.

Human Resources: Human resources are emphasized in the budget. Accordingly, attention should be paid to the infrastructure and social security sectors in Bangladesh such as health, agriculture, food production system and education sector.

Other Aspects of the Budget: This time in the budget, large investment by individual entrepreneurs is expected. That is why banks have to eliminate the liquidity crisis. Overall, we expect a return to higher growth in the coming fiscal year, driven by investment and productivity gains in the productive sector and on the back of robust domestic demand.

An increase in travel tax has been proposed to discourage non-essential foreign travel. Environmental surcharge has been imposed on several car users to reduce environmental pollution.

Inflation is an inseparable part of the modern economic system. Inflation is always the immediate result of unexpected conditions. So there can be inflation in the economy. It cannot be desired that the degree of rationality and limitation shall by



any means be exclusive. As there is an internationality to the increase in inflation, there must have also an impact on domestic inflation also. The international inflation cannot be controlled by the government. But it is needed to pay attention to the domestic factors behind the rising inflation and the government should take necessary measures to resolve the reasons.

Almost all aspects of the country’s economy have been taken into account in the budget. The scope of social safety net has been increased in the proposed budget. Various types of food friendly programmes will be running throughout this financial year.

No country can remain isolated in the present world system. When an unexpected event occurs in the international economy, its negative impact is more or less on the economy of almost every country. Therefore, in the preparation of the budget of any country, in accordance with the contemporary international economy, one has to face a big challenge to meet the needs of the domestic sector in the financial year. This year’s budget has been adopted as a key philosophy to build a happy, prosperous, advanced and smart Bangladesh by 2041, in continuation of the milestones that the current government has laid for the country’s development in the past decade and a half. Moreover, the slogans of four basic pillars namely - Smart Citizen, Smart Government, Smart Society and Smart Economy have been taken in the hope of building a smart Bangladesh for the first time in the budget of the fiscal year 2023-2024.

The author is Deputy Director, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics



Bangabandhu's 6 Points demand: A precursor to Independence of Bangladesh

Md. Quddus Khan



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

The 6-point charter was the precursor of the independence of Bangladesh.

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman presented his Six-Points demand before the national conference of opposition parties of Pakistan at Lahore on 5th February, 1966 as the Magna Carte of Bangalee People (The then East Pakistan). But it was outright rejected by the conference' on the ground that it would lead to disintegration of Pakistan.

After returning from Lahore, Bangabandhu got the nod of his Party in favour of six-points demand, as people of East Pakistan overwhelmingly supported his 6-point demand. This demand made him a national hero. For the first time, Awami League elected Sheikh Mujib as its president on March-1, 1966. Mujib started campaigning for his six points. This enraged Pakistan Govt. They arrested Mujib & others several times. On 7th June, 1971 hartal was observed in protest against these arrests. During the Hartal 11 labourers were killed in Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka.

What was there in six points demand for which people did not hesitate to lay down their lives? Before we discuss 6 points demand and its implications. Let us see what there in 6 points demand?

Circumstances and events that shaped Mujib's vision of 6 points demand before partition of India:

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was born in 1920 at village- Tungipara of



Bangabandhu presented 6-point charter in 1966

the then- Gopalganj Sub-Division of Faridpur District under the Province of Bengal. His father being a govt. servant (*Sherestadar*), he used to live with his father at Gopalganj town and was a student of Gopalganj Mission School. He suffered his first imprisonment (When he was a school student) in a false case brought

Outline of the Historic 6-Point

1. Constitution of a genuine federation in Pakistan based on the Lahore Resolution adopted in 1940; it would comprise a parliamentary form of government, and the legislative assembly elected through universal adult suffrage would be sovereign.
2. Only the defence and foreign policies would remain vested with the central government.
3. Two separate currencies should be introduced for East and West Pakistan.
4. The provincial government would be vested the power of fixing and collecting all taxes and fees, and a part of this would be deposited under the federal government head.
5. Separate accounts would have to be maintained for the foreign currencies earned by the two provinces; the provincial government would have the authority of signing trade pacts with foreign countries as well as on imports and exports.
6. A separate militia force would have to be raised for East Pakistan.

against him by Hindu Mohashava leaders. 'As SDO was Hindu, hence he (Mujib) was denied bail,' (Ashampto Atmo Jiboni (AA p 12-13). Many other events of the time, convinced Mujib that Muslim interest was different from Hindu interest and the Hindus wanted domination over the Muslims. The root of six points demand (Specially demand no-1) may be traced back to the historic Lahore Resolution, 1940 of the All India Muslim League (AIML). The LR envisaged two independent Muslim Majority States in the North-West (Area of west Pakistan- Now Pakistan) and the Eastern zones (Area of East Pakistan- now Bangladesh) of India (A.A. p. 38-39). After the 1946 General Election in British India on Pakistan issue, the convention of Muslim league Legislators of India held in Delhi from 7-9 April, 1946, changed the term 'states' of LR and replaced it with 'state' meaning one independent Muslim majority state- Pakistan instead of two Muslim majority states in North-West (west Pakistan) and Eastern Zones (East Pakistan) of India as envisaged in the famous Lahore Resolution. East Bengal Muslim League leader Mr. Abdul Hashim and few others opposed this change but they were overruled. Sheikh Mujib who also attended the Delhi Convention writes, 'Later we were told that it (one state) was the proposal of the Convention, The Lahore Resolution has not been changed' (AA p-52).

In our view, historically the root of 6 points demand may be further traced back to Partition of Bengal movement popularly known as *Banga Bhongo Andolon* of 1905 AD in British India. Muslims of East Bengal under the leadership of Nowab Sir Salimullah started *Banga Bhongo Andolon*, which demanded that Bengal to be divided into two provinces- East Bengal and others with Muslim majority and the rest- west Bengal and others with Hindu Majority with Dhaka & Calcutta being their Capitals respectively. The British accepted this demand of separate Muslim Political Identity and the Partition of Bengal took Place in 1905 AD. But Hindu leaders opposed it vehemently. Because they could not accept separate Muslim Political Identity. They cherished perpetual Hindu domination of the Muslims in the name of undivided Bengal. Poet Rabindranath Tagore also composed his famous song, '*Amar Sonar Bangla, Ami Tomay Bhalobashi* (My Bengal of gold, I love you)' in Opposition to *Banga Bhongo Andolon* (undivided Bengal movement) and also upheld the united Bengal Slogan. (Which later became The National Song of Bangladesh). In 1911 AD. in the face of Vehement Hindu opposition The British Govt. annulled Partition of Bengal, which they (British) once said, 'A Settled fact' in 1905 AD. This annulment of Partition of Bengal, gave a Strong message to the Muslim Community of India that the Hindu and the Muslim interest could not co-exist (Which is a pre-condition for a common Nationhood). The British Govt. was overpowered to upheld Muslim interest in the face of Hindu opposition.

However in 1946 General Election on Pakistan issue Muslims of Bengal voted overwhelmingly in favour of separate Muslim state for the Muslims. The Muslim League (ML) bagged about 116 seats out of 119 Muslim seats in Bengal (AAP-48). Mujib worked as a Muslim League worker in 1946 General Election on Pakistan issue, he also witnessed Hindu Muslim riots of Calcutta (1946) following the election. He was narrowly saved during the riots (AAP-6). All these events led Mujib to believe 'Pakistan has to be achieved, otherwise Muslim will have no chance of survival' (AAP 15). After the General Election of 1946 on Pakistan Issue, both the Hindu leaders of the Congress and The British govt. being convinced, conceded Pakistan demand and two independent States- Pakistan and India was created under the Partition of India Act 1947.



East Pakistan observed a general strike in favour of 6-point, 7 June 1966

After the establishment of Pakistan the events and circumstances that led to the 6 points demand may be discussed as under: (Please see Bangabandhur Vashon BV P-40).

1948: The Language Movement started in 1948 when Mr. Jinnah, Governor General of Pakistan declared in Dhaka that Urdu and only Urdu shall be the state language of Pakistan, students, intellectuals and some politicians of East Pakistan protested this declaration and demanded that in addition to Urdu, Bangla should also be made state language

of Pakistan (as 56% people of Pakistan spoke in Bangla). Mujib joined Language Movement and suffered imprisonment.

1952: On 21 February 1952 when Mujib was in Jail several students & Public were killed in Police firing during language movement demonstration in Dhaka.

1954: United Front (U.F) Govt. was formed to fight provincial Election in which Mujib participated as a leader of AL (Partner of UF), 21-Points demand of the manifesto of UF included demand for autonomy of East Pakistan and also demand for recognition of Bengali as one of the state Languages of Pakistan. The UF got landslide victory in the 1954 (March) Provincial Election. UF Bagged 223 seats out of 237 Muslim seats, Muslim League got only 9 seats (AA P-291). In the Election, ML leader Mr. Wahiduzzaman was defeated to Mujib by a margin of about 10,000 votes. UF Cabinet included Sheikh Mujib. But later UF Govt. was dismissed by Central Govt. of Pakistan U/S 92 (A) of the Govt. of India Act, 1935. Mujib was the only cabinet member of the UF Govt. who was to be arrested as he was considered a threat to the Pakistan Govt. Dismissal of elected UF Govt. arbitrarily by the Pakistan Central ML govt. made it clear to Mujib that in the scheme of Pakistan federation, it would be difficult for East Pakistani people to get justice from West Pakistani leaders, who in fact, considered East Pakistan as a colony and had no respect for verdict of East Pakistani People in the Election.

1955: As a Member of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly (CA) on August, 25,

1955 Mujib told the Assembly, 'Sir you will see that they want to place the word 'East Pakistan' instead of 'East Bengal'; We have demanded so many times that you should use the word Bengal instead of Pakistan (AA P 293).' Sheikh Mujib soon realized that the communal politics has lost its utility in Pakistan, Hindus as minority was no longer a threat to Pakistan. Hence, he changed his earlier stance of keeping the word Muslim with the name of his Party AL and Student League. On 21 October 1955 in the Council Session of the Awami Muslim League the word 'Muslim' was dropped from the name of the party and Mujib was re-elected General Secretary of Awami League.

1956: On Feb. 3, 1956 leaders of Awami League met Chief Minister of East Pakistan and demanded that the draft constitution of Pakistan must include Provincial Autonomy. The Constitution of Pakistan was passed in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan in 1956. It was claimed that 98% autonomy has been given under the constitution. But in reality very minimum autonomy was conceded in the new constitution (Residuary Powers were vested in the Centre). Bangabandhu's hope for a satisfactory constructional settlement of autonomy for East Pakistan was dashed to the ground. Subsequent events- declaration of Martial Law in Pakistan (1958) and banning of politics, arrest of Sheikh Mujib, lifting of Martial Law (1962), formation of National Democratic Front (NDF) by opposition parties under Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy (Political Guru of Sheikh Mujib) and death of Suhrawardy (1963) made the future of democracy and autonomy movement very bleak.

1964: On January 25, Awami League was revived in a meeting held at Bangabandhu's House. Mowlana Tarkabagish and Sheikh Mujib were elected President and General Secretary of the party respectively. Mujib was again arrested only a few days before the Presidential election of Pakistan (1964).

1965: 1965 war between India and Pakistan made it very clear that two wings of Pakistan (East Pakistan & West Pakistan) separated by more than 1,000 miles of Indian territory (Hostile Territory) raised the question of viability of the Pakistan state. Communication between the two wings by air & road remained cut off during the war (communication by sea was also time consuming and difficult). The geographic condition and reality suggested granting of a complete autonomy for East Pakistan. Separate administrative, economic, financial & revenue collection as well as defence system etc. to be granted to East Pakistan to make it self-sufficient as a political entity (like a state), citing experience of Indo-Pakistan War (1965). This enraged Pakistan Govt. and Mujib was interned on charge of rebellion but was later released on the honorable High Court order.

1966: It is interesting to note that being general secretary of East Pakistan Awami League (EPAL), Sheikh Mujib decided to place his Six Points demand before the National convention of opposition parties of Pakistan held on 5th February, 1966 at Lahore, West Pakistan (Even before his own political party -EPAL had endorsed his 6 points demand). The Lahore Convention of opposition Parties of Pakistan rejected his 6 points demand. Mujib came back home empty handed but not with empty confidence. It caught the imagination of Bangali people promptly. His party (EPAL) for the first time elected Shekih Mujib as its President and endorsed his six points demand. He started mass movement throughout the country in support of his 6 points demand. As a result he was interned several times. On 7th June, 1966, 11 labourers of Tejgoan I/A were killed while observing hartal for release of Sheikh Mujib and his colleagues. For 6-point demand people not only laid down

their lives but also made him (Mujib) a National Leader. Soon, 6 points demand got recognition as Magna Carte for the people of East Pakistan. The movement argued that East Pakistanees were deprived by the West Pakistanees in all spheres of National Life- Administrative, Economic, Defence etc. Awami League Published a leaflet under the heading 'Sonar Bangla Shoshan Keno!' (Why Golden Bengal is a Cremation Ground!) The Leaflet contained a long list of data / information showing discrimination /disparity between East and West Pakistan in different fields. (e.g. out of 19 central Govt. secretaries only one was from East Pakistan, More than 90% officers and soldiers were from West Pakistan, Huge flight of capital took place from East Pakistan to West Pakistan etc.).

Disparity between East and West Pakistan was suppressed and misinformation was given to the public of West Pakistan- That Mujib wanted to disintegrate the country. Hatred was also spread against East Pakistan and its leadership. The writer as an undergraduate student of Dhaka University visited West Pakistan in early 1970 as a member of a student team who were on a study tour. At the Punjab University campus, a minor student of the University Laboratory School told the writer on query 'Oh! Mujib! usko desko tukra tukra korna chati hai' (Oh! Mujib! he wants to cut the country into pieces). While visiting Rawal Dam near Rawalpindi a Gordon College Student getting the identity of the writer as a student (DU) from East Pakistan instantly reacted 'You people (people of East Pakistan) do not like us'. I asked both the school and college students (sorry! I do not remember their names) 'how could they know it?' They replied in the same manner that their parents had told them. Therefore, it appears, mental division permeated long before the actual one (Between the two wings). Since 1966, the beginning of 6 points demand the disparity between East and West Pakistan became the central issue in Politics and other spheres of National life.

1968: Agartala Conspiracy case was started against Sheikh Mujib & 34 others. Sheikh Mujib and others were interned for the case.

1969: On January, 5, 1969 *Kendrio Chatra Sangram Parishad* (Central Student Action Committee) was formed to press home 11 points demand which also included 6-points. The Chatra Sangram Parishad started movement to withdraw



The people of East Pakistan from all walks of life participating in a rally in support of 6-Point

Agartala Conspiracy Case and release of Sheikh Mujib & others. This movement of students turned into a mass uprising & compelled Pakistan govt. led by General Ayub Khan to withdraw Agartala Conspiracy case and release Sheikh Mujib and others. Chatra Sangram Parishad in recognition of Mujib's contribution to Bangali cause conferred the title of 'Bangabandhu' on Sheikh Mujib on 23rd February, 1969 at a huge rally in Race Course

Maidan (Now called Suhrawardy Udyan- AA p-296). President Ayub Khan invited free Sheikh Mujib to attend a Round Table Conference (RTC) held on March 10, 1969 at Rawalpindi. Mujib placed his 6 points demand and 11 points demand of students community before the RTC, which were rejected by the Pakistani Rulers and Politicians. On 25 March, 1969, President Ayub Khan abdicated power by saying, 'I cannot preside over the disintegration of Pakistan'. General Yahya Khan replaced him and declared Martial Law in Pakistan. On 5th December 1969 on the Shaheed Suhrawardy's death anniversary- Mujib Said, 'From today Eastern Province of Pakistan, will be named only Bangladesh in place of East Pakistan'. (AA p-297).

1970: On January 6, 1970 Bangabandhu was re-elected President of the Awami League. President General Yahya Khan declared General Election in Pakistan would be held in December, 1970 and also said election will be held under the Legal Framework Order (LFO). LFO empowered Martial Law Govt. to cancel the election result (if needed). As a result some left political parties were not in favour of taking part in the Election. But Mujib decided to take part in the election to get a mandate on his 6 points demand and said, 'I shall throw LFO into dustbin after the election'. In the December, 1970 General Election of Pakistan Sheikh Mujib's Awami League secured absolute majority. Awami League secured 167 seats out of 169 National Assembly seats of East Pakistan / 300 National Assembly seats of the whole of Pakistan. In East Pakistan Provincial Assembly Election Awami League got 288 seats out of 300 seats. This result in the General Election gave a clear mandate to Bangabandhu and Awami League, not only to form a government but also to frame a constitution for Pakistan on the basis of 6 points.

1971: On January 3, 1971 at the Racecourse Meeting, Bangabandhu asked elected people's representatives to take an oath to frame a constitution on the basis of 6-points & they did so (took oath). On February 13, 1971. President General Yahya Khan called a session of Pakistan National Assembly at Dhaka on 3rd March 1971. West Pakistani PPP Leader Mr. Bhutto declared boycott of NA session of 3rd March, 1971 & demanded power sharing with Awami League which Mujib rejected as unreasonable as AL commanded majority in the NA of Pakistan. Sheikh Mujib as majority party leader also demanded that power to be transferred to majority Party- Awami League immediately. President General Yahya Khan on Bhutto's threat postponed NA Session sine die. Bangabandhu called hartal in protest on March 3, 1971. On March 7, 1971 at Race Course Maidan (Now Suhrawardy Udyan) he delivered a historic speech, in which he declared, 'The struggle this time is a struggle for our emancipation. The struggle this time is a struggle for independence'. However, subsequent negotiation for a settlement between Bangabandhu & Pakistani Military Junta and between Bhutto and Bangabandhu failed. In the night of 25th December, 1971 Pakistani Military arrested Sheikh Mujib and later send him to Pakistani Jail. They also cracked down on the innocent people of Bangladesh (East Pakistan) and killed many of them. Before his arrest, Bangabandhu sent a wireless message through Chittagong EPR at 12-20 am on 26th March 1971 in which he said, 'This may be my last message, from today Bangladesh is independent (AA p-299)' (Please Note: this wireless message was confirmed by Bangabandhu in his 7th June, 1972 Speech, (BV p-56) .

However soon people of Bangladesh started resistance movement. The Proclamation of Independence was adopted by the elected representatives of Bangladesh who



Rally of government employees in favour of 6-point and the mass movement of '69

were elected in 1970 General Election. They also formed Mujib Nagar Revolutionary Government (RG) on March 10, 1971. The Revolutionary Govt. took oath of office on March 17, 1971 at Badyanath Tola (Now called Mujibnagar) of Meherpur Sub-Division (Now District). Our Muktijuddho was organized under this Revolutionary Government of Mujibnagar. It may

be mentioned here that Mujibnagar Bangladesh Revolutionary Government was formed with Bangabandhu as the Head of the government (De jure) as he was then detained in Pakistani Jail. Sayed Nazrul Islam headed the Revolutionary Government- De facto (in absence of Bangabandhu). However Muktijuddho was also conducted in the name of Bangabandhu as his Physical absence could not diminish his importance and need. After Long 9 months of liberation war by the Muktibahini (freedom fighters) compelled Pakistani Army to surrender and Bangladesh became Independent (De facto) on 16th December 1971 (Though Bangladesh was declared Independent (De jure) on 26th March 1971).

The above analysis shows that six points demand was designed basically to protect the political, economic and security needs of East Pakistan. True federation as envisaged in six point demand (point 1) should be based on Lahore resolution (LR). According to LR, federating units shall not only be autonomous, but also be sovereign (AA a page 38 and 39.) The other points (points from two to six) of the demand already mentioned in the previous para 5 raised the vision, hope and the feeling for an independent status among the people of East Pakistan.

Conclusion

To a student of politics, theoretically, 6-point demand unveils a gray area between a federation and a Commonwealth. But through the course of history, people of Bangladesh gave a mandate in favour of six points demand. In the 1970 general election of Pakistan, which ultimately paved the way for emergence of a nation state, i.e Bangladesh. The author of six points demand Bangabandhu was successful in creating a vision of state among his people (East Pakistan) who were imbued by him and their patriotism to shed their blood for its achievement. Blood of our Shohid Muktijuddas assisted by Indian Army, sacrifice of lacs of Mukti Jhoddas, men and women of all walks of life made the independence of Bangladesh a reality in the World political map in 1971.

***The writer is a retired Secretary to the government of Bangladesh and the former Assistant Professor of Chattogram University, Bangladesh
Email: mdqudduskh@gmail.com***



Social Dimensions of Pahela Boishakh

M. Mizanur Rahman

Pahela Boishakh is traditionally the most ebullient festival in the life of people of Bangladesh who get together irrespective of caste or creed and turn out happily with colourful dress with festive outlook. The beginning of Pahela Boishakh gives us a focal point of pleasant enthusiasm of festivity of an auspicious time to carry ensuing days, months for a year new irrespective of social, economic, and political diversities of our people until the next Pahela Boishakh arrives at our door. Before we conceive our enormous dreams of creative works on different programmes materialised time flies like air. Yet we are not disheartened or disappointed in hoping the better future. This is what our struggle for existence. We are that people who fight to fit ourselves and achieve rights.

For ages immemorial Bangali people are basically the lovers of nature. Their waves of air naturally appear rhythmically poetic. It is evident from their age-old customs and traditions. Ritually some customs and traditions of different religious communities differ among one another to some extent. But in their festivities we often



Welcoming the Bengali New Year at dawn by singing song at Ramna Park



Mongal Shovajatra : A rally on the Bengali New Year's Day, declared intangible heritage by UNESCO in 2016

find communal harmony. It appears from their sentiment and emotion, as they are the sons and daughters of the soil. Nature takes them as if on its lap and brings them up on its swinging cradle like the mother herself. That is what the reason why the people usually called the land where they live as the motherland.

It is very difficult to ascertain when Bangalis have started living on cultivation. Naturally the people of Bengal used to live on cultivating their land sowing seed of foodstuff and reaping them during the harvesting season. These soft-hearted people coexist with the aliens who were allowed to trade on their soil and bartered their harvested fruits whatsoever long before the urbanisation and industrial revolution took place like other nations who boost mostly on agro-economy. Besides their food grains like rice, wheat, barley etc, Bangalis used to cultivate vegetables, spices and engaged themselves in developing fishery and livestock in support of agriculture. Earlier tools and appliances were not as developed as now-a-days. Farmers had to earn their living on farming by strenuous but hard labour. Earlier natural bounties were abundant in this land and the people had their fisheries, poultry and livestock in plenty. There was no dearth of clothes also. They used to weave clothes in their home-made handloom. The land of Bengal used to give forth enormous agricultural products. Naturally Bangalis were so affluent that they could export surplus agricultural products to far flung countries like Southeast Asia, Middle Eastern and African counties beyond Indian peninsula meeting all local demands. The French traveller Francois Bernier had given the vivid accounts of it in details in his book Travels in Mogul Empire.

Most probably Bangalis fixed Pahela Boishakh as the first day of Bengali new year on account of its harvesting season of the year. Historically it is stated that Emperor Akbar (1542-1605) of Mughal empire while extending his suzerainty over Bengal simply ordered his General Todarmal to exact taxes or revenue from Bangalis in cash or kind during the Bengali harvesting period on very soft terms and conditions, so that his subjects would have the easy time to pay revenues. After Todarmal won Gujrat in 1574, Emperor Akbar appointed him as his Revenue Secretary. Later

Todarmal won the battle of Bengal in 1576 and was made the Subedar of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by the emperor. During this period the emperor ordered to 'survey die entire area under his suzerainty and introduced a new system of earning revenue that remained in force for some considerable period of his reign.

It has been assigned that the emperor Akbar might have introduced the above-mentioned



Panta-Ilish (soaked rice with fried Hilsha), a favourite dish on the Bengali New Year's Day

Bengali day of festival. That might not be the fact. The Bangalis, who are apt to take advantage of all auspicious moments to celebrate the time of their choice with joys at heart. The event of 'Punyah' of the zamindars of those days could not signify such joyous moments, because the collection of revenues in the name of 'Punyah' by zamindars were mostly extortion exerting their muscle power over the teeming farmers under their heels could hardly be termed as the celebration of Pahela Boishakh by the people in joyous mood.

However on Pahela Boishakh, with an auspicious outlook, closing their business of the previous year for opening a new red-ledger called 'Khero Khata', the Bangali businessmen start a fresh the ongoing business transaction. A few days before Pahela Boishakh, concerned businessmen used to send colourful cards inviting their customers with sweet words to attend their business plan. The customers also used to repay their dues, if any, on that day to keep mutual relations with respectful reciprocity. This is what maintenance of good relation between the businessman and the customer since early times. Maintaining good-will and confidence is always a pre-requisite for every goods business. On the day of Pahela Boishakh, the customers were entertained with sweetmeats and sweet words of the host businessmen. This has become an age-old Bangali custom. It's really commendable. Throughout Bangladesh and also in West Bengal, Assam, Tripura of India including all of its surrounding villages- this sort of celebration of Pahela Boishakh is in vogue till now.

So this legendary festival gives a pleasant look among the Bangali people with a pledge of composite communal harmony. In spite of the hottest summer season intermingled with sudden change of sky-being overwhelmed with cloudy but grayish colour wrapping the shining sun by the cyclonic storm that tempts all over the horizon, but the Bangali people remain undaunted and face it. They have been enjoying this hard time with a high morale since long unknown period. Even those Bangalis migrated abroad and living around the world celebrate Pahela Boishakh also with similar customary enthusiasm.

The urban Bangali people, especially in Dhaka, commemorate 'Bangaliana' by taking Panta Bhat (soaked rice in water) with pieces of fried Hilsa fish at Ramna Botomul, is a great fun of Pahela Boishakh. On that day, some of the cultural organisations used to present Tagore's and Nazrul's seasonal songs in Bengali and stage dance drama on this occasion at Ramna. The Botomul, as it were, resounds welcoming this great festival with Tagore's song-



Children are being dressed-up for the Bengali New Year

'Esho Hey Boishakh, Esho, Esho, 'Taposho Nishshasho baye...

(Come O Boishakh ! Come and breathe out of devotee's fragrant air ...).

Tradesmen of different colourful toys, flutes, balloons and handicrafts crowd here and sell their items to the fascinated children. The people of all classes throng here to enjoy the occasion with festive mood. The young girls, who come to the fair usually are dressed with red-bordered yellow sari and red & white flowers set in bun within the tuft of their coiled hairs. And young boys wear colourful long panjabi and pajama. It can be said that the most attractive part of the first-day of Boishakh is the fair. Besides Dhaka such type of fairs are held all around the Bangladesh. The new year fairs of our country are nothing but the changed forms of the oldest 'seasonal festivities' and 'agricultural festivals' of Bangladesh.'

Since 1989 the 'Mongol Shovajatra', a mass procession that takes place on the first day of the Bengali New Year in Dhaka. The procession is organised by the teachers and students of the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Dhaka. The festival is considered an expression as a way to promote unity among the people of Bangladesh irrespective of colour, creed and race. It was declared an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2016, categorised on the representative list as a heritage of humanity.

All festivities bear pleasure of heart. So our Pahela Boishakah festival over-coming such hottest summer brings to us a pleasure of our heart no matter what agonies lie ahead. Let us recollect a few lines of our National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam on this sacred occasion-

'Let us sing of them/

*who brought forth on earth/
the fruits of their toil.*

*Their hardest labour that contributed basket-full of fruits and flowers/
as offerings fur earth...*

Let us sing of them.'

The author is a poet, essayist and columnist



Archaeological and Historical Sites of Bangladesh

M. Q. Zaman

Portuguese, Dutch, Greek, Armenian, French and English came here for trade in the 16th, 17th; 18th and lastly 19th centuries respectively. That is why, many traces of Buddhist, Hindu rules and also Sultanate and Mughal periods are found all over the country. Moreover, the establishments of Hindu and Muslim zamindars of the 19th century and many European establishments of 20th century still exist. Out of hundreds of sites, selective few spots of archaeological and historical value, mostly other than religious establishments, are described here in brief.

1. Mahasthangarh, Bogura: Oldest fortress city built in 4th century

Mahasthangarh is one of the oldest archaeological sites of Bangladesh. Situated 13 km north of Bogura district town on the western bank of Karatoya River, the ancient habitat of Pundranagar or Pundrabardhan was located here. It is assumed from the



Mahasthangarh, Bogura: Oldest fortress city built in 4th century

joint archaeological excavations of Bangladesh and France that the ancient city of Pundranagar or Mahasthangarh was founded in the early 4th century. At that time it was the main fortress city in the whole Bengal. This city was surrounded by clay and brick walls at succeeding stages. The place was 1525 m. long from north to south and 1370 m. wide from east to west with an elevation of 5 m. from the surrounding plains and 36 m. from the sea level. Apart from the walls, there was a river on the east and deep trenches on the other three sides, which served as defence structures for the city. The area of the fortress was around 185 hectares. It is known from archaeological leftovers that this place was the provincial capital of the mighty Maurya, Gupta and Pala rulers of the Buddhist. Later, it became the capital of Hindu feudal kings. The notable structures of Mahasthangarh include: Mankalir Dhap, Parashuram's Palace, Boiragir Bhita, Khodar Pathor Mound, Jiot Kunda, Govinda Bhita, Gokul Medh, Vasu Vihara, Kanai Dhap, Godai Bari Dhap, Sannyasir Dhap, Skandher Dhap, Ojha Dhanwantorir Bhita etc. There is an archaeological museum which was established in 1967 at the hillock area beside Mahasthangarh.

2. Paharpur Buddhist Monastery, Naogaon: Largest Buddhist Monastery in Asia built in 8th century

Paharpur Buddhist Monastery, which is also known as Somapura Mohavihara is located at a place called Paharpur in Badalgachhi upazila of Naogaon district. It is the largest Buddhist Vihara (monastery) in Asia. The Scottish archaeologist Francis Buchanan-Hamilton first identified this spot when he conducted a survey in eastern India during 1807-1812. Later, excavation work was undertaken here from 1923 to 1934. King Dharmapala (781-821) of the Pala dynasty built it towards the end of 8th century. The height of this pyramid-shaped monastery is 21.33 m. This monastery is 280 m. long from east to west and 281 m. long from north to south. There were 177 rooms for the Buddhist monks in the main building. This Vihara was basically a university for the Buddhists. UNESCO declared the monastery a World Heritage in 1985.



Paharpur Buddhist Monastery, Naogaon: Largest Buddhist monastery in Asia, UNESCO heritage

3. Mainamati-Lalmai Hills, Cumilla: Archaeological site of 8th century

Mainamati is located only 8 km to the west of Cumilla town. This region is actually a tract of highland with low hills made of sediments. The area of this region covers about 34 sq. km with an average height of 21 m. This hill starts



Shalban Vihara at Mainamati-Lalmai Hill Range, Cumilla

from Mainamati and to the south extended up to Lalmai hill. There lie a good number of archaeological relics of the 8th century. Following several excavations, the archaeological finds have established beyond any doubt that the cultural and political centre of the ancient Banga-Samatat township was located at Mainamati. There is hearsay, that place was named after Mainamati, the queen of King Manikyo Chandra of Deva dynasty in the 10th century. The site is famous for its Buddhist relics that include Shalban Vihara, Kotbari Vihara, Rupaban Mura, Kotila Mura, Charpatra Mura, House of Ananda Raja and Palace of Queen Mainamati etc. Many Bengali and ethnic minority families live in the Lalmai region. The Mainamati Museum established in 1955 is located near Shalban Vihara.

4. Sona Masjid, Chapai Nawabganj: Jewel of Gaud

Commonly known as Sona Masjid, famous as the ‘Jewel of Sultani Architecture’ or the ‘Jewel of Gaud’, the Chhota Sona Masjid (smaller mosque of gold) is located in Shahabajpur union of Shibganj upazila of Chapai Nawabganj district. It may be mentioned that there is a mosque of a larger size at the site of ancient Gaud on the Indian Territory, which is known as Bara (large) Sona Masjid. For this reason, this mosque is called Chhota Sona Masjid. It stands on the south-western bank of a huge pond. According to a stone inscription, it was built during the reign of Sultan



Sona Masjid, Chapai Nawabganj built in 15th century

Alauddin Husain Shah (1493-1519) by Mansur Wali Muhammad Bin Ali. As a thin coating of gold was applied on the upper part of the mosque’s domes, they appeared to be made of gold in the sunlight or moonlight. The coating no longer exists. This mosque is 25 m. in length from the north to the south, 16 m. wide

from the east to west, and 6 m. tall. A principal feature of this mosque is that the inner and outer walls are covered with granite stones. The inner walls are decorated with terracotta plaques. Inside the western wall there are five semi-circular mehrabs. There are 8 columns inside the mosque, and 15 domes were built atop the four walls of the mosque. There are two adjacent medieval tombs standing on a platform about 15 m. east from the entrance of the mosque. Some opine that the tombs are those of Wali Muhammad and his father Ali, who built the mosque. Apart from these two tombs, there is the grave of Bir-Sreshtho Mohiuddin Jahangir at the premises of the mosque.

5. Shat Gambuj Masjid, Bagerhat: The most eminent structure of medieval city Khalifatabad

The historic Shat Gambuj Masjid (60-dome Mosque) is located in Bagerhat district. This mosque is the biggest of all the ancient mosques in Bangladesh and



Shat Gambuj Masjid, Bagerhat built in 15th century, UNESCO heritage

it is described as ‘one of the most impressive Muslim monuments in the whole of South Asia’. Eminent saint and administrator Khan Jahan Ali (R) founded the mosque in the middle of the 15th century. The construction of the mosque was started in 1442 and completed in 1459. The mosque was used for prayers, and also as a madrasa and assembly hall. Centering on this Shat Gambuj Masjid, Hazrat Khan Jahan Ali conducted administrative management of Bagerhat-Khulna regions until his death (1459 AD). The measure of the inner side of the huge mosque is 44 x 27 m. Though the name of the mosque is sixty-dome mosque, it has 77 domes on the roof, 4 domes at 4 corners and in all it has 81 domes. There are in all 10 semi-round mehrabs (prayer niches). The UNESCO declared the Shat Gambuj Masjid as the ‘World Heritage’ in 1985. There is a museum in the mosque compound.

The Mausoleum of Khan Jahan Ali is located 2 km south-east of Sixty-dome Mosque. There is a large pond measuring 180 acres in front of it, which is known as Khanjeli Dighi. Considering it very holy, people irrespective of caste, creed and religion bathe and collect water from this large pond.



Kasba Mosque, Barishal built in 15th century

6. Kasba Mosque, Barishal

This mosque stands on the bank of a large Dighi in Kasba village near Gournadi upazila Sadar of Barishal district. It is also called ‘Allah’s Mosque’ or ‘Gayebi (mysterious) Mosque’ too. This ancient nine-domed mosque preserved by the Archaeological Department was built about in the middle of the 15th century contemporary to sixty-domed mosque of Bagerhat. This mosque measures about 12 × 12

metres and walls are 2.18 metres wide. This mosque made of brick-dust has 4 round minarets and on the upper side, there are 9 domes in three rows. There are 3 entrance gates in the front wall. Though there are 3 more entrances in the north and the south wall each, at present they are blocked by grills. Inside the mosque, there are 3 niches in the west wall and 4 pillars made of stones are at the centre.

7. Sonargaon, Narayanganj: Ancient Capital of Bangla

The habitat of Sonargaon, the Ancient Capital of Bangla, is located at a distance of around 27 km south-east from Dhaka under Narayanganj district. Both men and women of this habitat used to wear gold ornaments as part of their heritage, and that is why it became known as ‘Sonargaon’ (village of gold). Sonargaon became the capital of the independent kingdom of Bangla during the reign of King Danuj, presumably during the decade of 1270s. Sonargaon was also the capital of eastern Vanga during the era of Bahadur Shah. The most glorious chapter of Sonargaon was started when it was declared the capital of the first independent Sultanate of Bangla established by Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah in 1338. Sonargaon became a commercial town towards the middle of 14th century. The world famous ‘Muslin’, a very thin and light cloth was produced here. At that time it became a centre of Islamic learning and knowledge. The existing relics include some structures of the medieval times, some bridges of the Mughal era and a few residential buildings of the British era. Known as the ‘Jamidar Bari’ or ‘Bara Sardarbari’, the Isa



Baro Sardar Bari, Sonargaon, Narayanganj

Khan Palace of Sonargaon located at Yousufpur is the most attractive spot in the area. Spanning an area of about 16 acres, this Zamindar House was built in the early 20th century. In addition, there is a rich library, crafts outlet, and a large lake. ‘Bangladesh Folk Art and Crafts Foundation Museum’ was established here in 1975.



Panam Nagar, Narayanganj

8. Panam Nagar, Narayanganj : Ancient township of Sonargaon

There is an ancient township named ‘Panam Nagar’, which is located just half a km north from the ‘Bara Sardarbari’. It is said to have been the site of Hindu capital city of Sonargaon emerging in the late 13th century. Later during the Muslim era, it was the residence of the early Muslim rulers. However, the present buildings of the city of Panam were built in the late 19th or early 20th century. Panam Nagar is a unique township having a single street 5 m. wide and 600 m. in length. There are 52 houses in dilapidated condition with 31 on the north side and 21 on the south of the street. The floors range from one to three. The buildings were decorated in line with European architecture. This old city appears to be well protected by artificial canals all around.

9. Wari-Bateshwar, Narsingdi: Oldest archaeological site of Bangladesh

Wari-Bateshwar is considered the oldest archaeological site of Bangladesh. The village Wari-Bateshwar is located in Belabo upazila of Narsingdi district. This archaeological site is rectangular in shape and surrounded by earthen walls. It stretches 3,417 m. from west to east, and 2,704 m. from south to north. From the evidences



Wari-Bateshwar : 3,000-year old site at Narsingdi

discovered through the excavations carried out in between 2000-2004, some archaeologists opine that the Wari-Bateshwar village is about 3,000 year-old. Some important archaeological artefacts were discovered through excavations at the site. These include rouletted clay-pot, earthenware, two-layered glass-beads, glass-beads covered by gold, household utensils made of bronze mixed with tin,



Kantajeu Temple, Dinajpur built in 18th century

etc. These prove that the region had linkages with South-east Asia and the Roman Empire.

10. Kantajeu Temple, Dinajpur: Famous for its terracotta

The Kantajeu Temple or Kantanagar Temple which was built in 18th century is located at Kaharole upazila 19 km away on the north from Dinajpur town across the Dhepa River. The word ‘Kanta’ means ‘Sree Krisna’ and ‘Jeu’ means ‘idol’. This temple was built between 1722 and 1752 by Maharaja Ram Nath, adopted son of Maharaja Pran Nath. Of the large architecture buildings of Bengal, this

famous temple has one of the characteristics that the mythological events are painted on its walls in the ornamental design of baked clay. This temple is the best evidence of the terracotta art in Bangladesh. This 3-storey square temple of about 16 square m. is located at the middle of a courtyard. The temple was built in a navaratna (nine-spined) style before the destruction caused by the earthquake of 1897. There is another temple similar shape to the Kanta Nagar temple known as ‘Navaratna Mandir’. This temple is located in Hatikumrul union of Ullapara upazila of Sirajganj district.

11. Ramsagar, Dinajpur: Largest excavated pond of the country

The largest excavated pond Ramsagar 8 km on the south of Dinajpur town, is one of the historic and archaeological evidences of Bangladesh. The size of the water body is about 52 acres and its total area including its banks in about 130 acres of land. This large pond is 1,079 m. on the north-south and 193 m. on the east-west. The



Ramsagar, Dinajpur excavated in 18th century



Jagaddal Mohavihara, Naogaon

height of the banks of the dighi is 13.50 m. And the main ghat (landing flights), which is 46 m wide and made of sandstone draws the attention of all. The average depth of Ramsagar is about 9 m. This deep pond contains water throughout the year. Noted Raja Ram Nath of Dinajpur excavated this large pond during Nawab Alivardi Khan's period (1750-1755).

12. Jagaddal Mohavihara, Naogaon: Buddhist monastery of 11th century

Buddhist monastery built in 11th century Situated in Dhamoirhat upazila of Naogaon district, this monastery is located in the village Jagaddal. Many old mounds and abandoned ponds remain scattered in the village. Excavation of a large mound was started here in 1996. As a result, the remains of a Vihara (monastery) were discovered. The original expanse of Jagaddal Mahavihara and its probable construction period could not yet be known correctly. It is conjectured that it was originally built by Rampala (1077-1120 CE). But the local people believe it to be the ruins of the house of Zamindar Batakrishna Ray.

13. Bhitargarh, Panchagarh : Largest ancient fort-city

This Bhitargarh is located at Panchagarh Sadar upazila along Bangladesh-India frontiers 16 km on the north-east from Panchagarh town. The origin of the word 'Panchagarh' has because of the presence of the main five garhs (fortress) of this region. The garh (fortress) are: Bhitorgarh, Mirgarh, Hossen Dighir Garh, Rajangarh and Debengarh. The Panchagarh's 'Bhitorgarh' is remarkable of the territories that are mentioned in the ancient documents of the North Bengal. This is the largest fort-city. In this ancient fort-city covering about 25 sq. km area (6x4 km) there were 10 old ponds. Of these ponds, Maharaja's dighi spreads 53 acres of land. It is thought that Prithviraj had the pond excavated. The main structure of the fort-city was destroyed by earthquake in 1897. After examining household utensils, copper products, brick-bats, and terracotta discovered here through excavation, it has been found that these objects have similarity with different objects and evidence from 6th century



Excavation work at Bhitargarh, Panchagarh



Deyang Hill, Chattogram

to 11th century. Once upon a time, there was business connection by road and water with Bhutan, Sikkim, Assam and Cooch Bihar.

14. Deyang Hill, Chattogram: First footprint of the Europeans in Bengal

Deyang Pahar is a historical hill of Chattogram. It is situated on the south bank of the Karnaphuli River in Chattogram covering the present Anwara-Karnaphuli area. The Diang is the first footprint of the Europeans

in Bengal. It is known that in the 16th century the Portuguese came through the Karnaphuli River to Chattogram mainly for business. Two Portuguese Catholic merchants came to Chattogram successively in 1517 and 1518 and the second group set up the first Christian settlements nearby Deyang. Portuguese Jesuit priest Father Francesco Fernandez was the first Catholic missionary to set foot in Chattogram in 1598. Then a band of Augustinian missionary priests turned up in 1600s and they started preaching Christianity to the locals, mostly lower-caste Hindus from fishing community and port laborers during 1622-1635. Father Fonseca and Father Boves set up two churches in Diang and Chattogram marking the first foothold of the Church in this part of the world. Ancient monuments no longer exist. At present some scattered ruins are found.

15. Lalbag Fort: Most attractive historical site of Dhaka City

The Lalbag Fort is one of the most attractive historical sites of Dhaka City located on the bank of the river Buriganga. Built during the Mughal era in 17th century,



Lalbag Fort, Dhaka built in 1678–1684

this fort is unique in terms of architectural style. Its area is 609 m. east-west and 243 m. north-south. The height of the walls surrounding the fort is up to 6 m. There was a secret tunnel slightly to the north of the south gate. The Mazar (tomb) of Poribibi, the Darbar (court chamber), Hammamkhana (hot bathroom), a pond and a three-domed mosque are located inside the fort compound. There are many relics of the Mughal era at the court chamber and the Hammamkhana have now been preserved as museum. The construction of the Lalbag Fort was started in 1678 by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's third son Muhammad Azam Shah, while he was the Subedar of Bengal. Although its original name was Aurangabad Fort, the name was later changed to Lalbag Fort. Azam Shah had to leave Dhaka for Delhi for an urgent task after starting the work of the fort. Then the new Subedar and Azam Shah's father-in-law Shaista Khan relaunched the work in 1679. But Shaista Khan's daughter and wife of Azam Shah, Iran Dukht or Poribibi, died at that time. Following this episode, Shaista Khan stopped the construction work midway in 1684 but he made the Mazar (tomb) of his daughter an attractive spot.



Ahsan Manzil, Dhaka built in 1859–1872

16. Ahsan Manzil: Palace of Nawabs of Dhaka

The Ahsan Manzil is located on the bank of the river Buriganga at Islampur of old Dhaka covering an area of 5 acres of land. It was the palace of the Nawabs of Dhaka. Presently, it has been converted into a museum. It was established by Nawab Abdul Ghani and he named it after his son Khawaja Ahsanullah. It was built during 1859-72. Set over a one metre high platform, the area of the two-storey palace building is 125.4 m. x 28.75 m. The height from the floor to the roof of the ground-floor is 5 m. There are porches on both the northern and southern flanks of the palace. A huge open staircase goes down to the south from the first floor veranda. There is also a beautiful dome atop the roof of the palace. There are Darbar-hall, dining room, drawing room, library, dancing floor and other residential quarters in this huge building.

Some important chapters of Bengali history are linked to the Ahsan Manzil. Starting from the last part of 19th century up to the first part of Pakistan's



Armenian Church, Dhaka built in 1781

Road of old Dhaka. Spread over an area of about 2 acres, it is surrounded by walls. It stands in the middle of a cemetery and was named as ‘Holy Resurrection Church’. This church was built on the ruins of a chapel existing earlier towards 18th century by Nicolas Pogos. There are huge verandas on its north, south and west. The cemetery contains 270 paved and ornamented tombs. It could be gathered that the Armenians started to arrive in Dhaka from Europe for the purpose of doing business from the 17th century. The area was therefore named as ‘Armanitola’. This two storied 230 m long church has 4 doors and 27 windows, which are arched.

18. Curzon Hall, Dhaka: Outstanding establishment of British era

Among the structures constructed at Ramna and neighbouring areas for grooming Dhaka as a provincial capital after the announcement of partition of Bengal, Curzon Hall was an outstanding one. The Viceroy of India Lord Curzon is credited with building this structure. Surrounded by a large garden, there is a huge central hall in the two-storey main building. A blend of European and Mughal architectural styles is reflected beautifully in the structure. It was initially set up as a town hall. But following the partition of Bengal, a college was established here called ‘Dhaka College’. It came under the purview of the Dhaka University in 1921. Since then, it has been used as the science faculty building of Dhaka



Curzon Hall, Dhaka built in 1904

creation, leadership was provided to the Muslims of East Bengal from this building. The renovation works of the palace and setting up the museum was completed in 1992. The number of collected artefacts at Ahsan Manzil is more than 4,000. Exhibits are shown in 23 rooms out of a total 31.

17. Armenian Church, Dhaka: Old Church built in 18th century

This church is located beside the Armanitola



Old Highcourt Building, Dhaka built in after partition of Bengal

two-storey building was constructed as the official residence of the Governor of East Bengal and Assam following the partition of Bengal in 1905. The building is surrounded by a huge quadrangular wall. The rooms are arranged in four segments. There is a commemorative gate standing on four columns on the south for entering its premises. Its front portion was set over a Corinthian pillar. The European renaissance style is observed in the building as well as in its gate. A wide staircase built with white marbles ran upstairs from the front-room to the veranda in the backside. There are over 50 rooms of different sizes in the four arms of the 2-storey rectangular building.

20. Ramna Park and Suhrawardy Udyan, Dhaka

Located between the High Court and Shahbag areas of Dhaka, the Ramna Park is the oldest of its kind in Dhaka. This park was basically established in 1610 during the Mughal era. After that in 1825, steps were taken for development of the Ramna area by Doves, British Collector of Dhaka. At that time, walls were erected around a part of the area, where horse racing were organised that became known as Ramna Racecourse ground. The other part was named as ‘Ramna Green’, which is the present-day Ramna Park and was formally inaugurated in 1949.



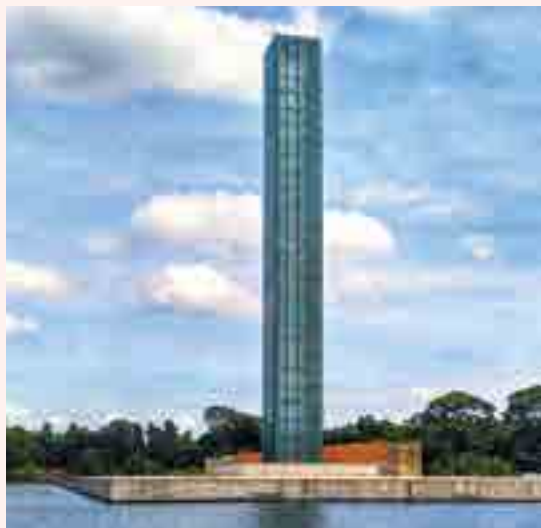
Ramna Park, Dhaka

University. It was here in 1948 that the students of Dhaka University raised the first protest against the declaration by Jinnah that Urdu would be the state language of Pakistan.

19. Old Highcourt Building, Dhaka

The Old High Court Building is a structure built during the colonial era in Dhaka. It is located to the southern corner of Ramna Park. This gorgeous

The other part of Ramna Green, which was known as Racecourse ground later renamed as Suhrawardy Udyan is historically famous. Founding Father of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered his historic speech on 7th March 1971. In the speech, Bangabandhu informally declared the independence of Bangladesh. UNESCO added the speech to the Memory of the World Register as a documentary heritage in 2017. The Independence Tower has been built at this Suhrawardy Udyan as a memento of the liberation war of Bangladesh. The construction work was completed in 2013 on 67 acres of land. The tower is made of steel structure, which is 45.72 m. tall. There is an artificial water reservoir on the western side of the terrace and a 83.21 m. long terracotta wall on its eastern side. There is a museum beside the Independence Tower.



Independence Tower, Suhrawardy Udyan, Dhaka

21. Rose Garden, Dhaka: Historic building of 20th century

The historic building ‘Rose Garden’ is located at Gopibag-Tikatuli area in Dhaka city. Renowned zamindar of Dhaka Hrishikesh Das, after purchasing 7 acres of land here, built this charming palace surrounded by Corinthian pillars in 1936. There are 13 rooms on each floor of this 2-storey building. The palace garden was full of various species of roses. Later Hrishikesh Das sold away the palace to the book-trader Abdur Rashid and then the Provincial Library was established here. Towards 1970, Rose Garden was leased out to the ‘Bengal Studio’.



Rose Garden, Dhaka built in 1936

The Rose Garden became a witness to one of the most important events in Bangladesh’s political history when the Awami Muslim League (precursor of Bangladesh Awami League) was established here in 1949.

22. Bahadur Shah Park: Delightful attraction of old Dhaka

The historic Bahadur Shah Park is located near Sadarghat of old Dhaka. The previous name of this park was ‘Victoria



Monument at Bahadur Shah Park, Dhaka

Park', named after the then queen of England. The park was first built on the ruins of an Armenian billiard club known as 'Antaghar' at Sadarghat area of Dhaka through the initiative of Nawab Sir Abdul Ghani at the start of the 19th century. The Victoria Park became famous during the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Dead-bodies of a number of mutineers were then hanged on trees at the place. There is a 4-corner obelisk on the southern side of the park, which commemorates the death of Dhaka Nawab's son. In 1962, a domical shade with arched opening raised from a rectangular high platform were constructed to the north of the park in honour of the martyrs. The park was then renamed as 'Bahadur Shah Park' after the name of last Mughal emperor.

The oldest mosque of Dhaka city 'Binat Bibi Masjid' built about 600 years ago is located about 500 metres to the north of Bahadur Shah Park. Other historic and famous establishments of old Dhaka include Beauty Boarding, Ruplal House and Lalkuthi.

23. Zinzira Palace, Dhaka: Memory laden place connected to Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah's family

Zinzira is located on the other side of Buriganga River across the Bara Katra Palace adjacent to Swarighat landing station. Zinzira is an Arabic word that is a distortion of the word Jazeera, which means island. At one time, it emerged in the middle of the river. The then Subedar Nawab Ibrahim Khan built the Zinzira Palace 'Naw-ghara' over several acres of land as a recreation cum leisure resort in 1620. After his defeat in the Battle of Plassey on 23 June 1757, the family members of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah were brought to this Zinzira Palace and held captive for 8 years. Built in Mughal architectural style, a stairway goes down from the roof of the palace on the eastern side. Some parts of the palace – the entrance gate, two separate palaces, and a recreation-hall still remains.



Zinzira Palace, Keraniganj, Dhaka built in 17th century

24. Three water-forts: Built in mid 17th century

The Mughal Subedar Mir Jumla had built three water-forts for observing the movement of pirates on river routes in mid 17th century. These were: a) Sonakanda Fort on the eastern bank of Shitalakshya River in Narayanganj, b) Hajiganj Fort on the western bank of the same river and c) Idrakpur Fort on the bank of river Ichhamoti in Munshiganj.

Sonakanda Fort: The Sonakanda Fort was built for ensuring the security of important river-routes that were linked to Dhaka. There was a high platform here that was used for putting cannon. The fort is 90 m. east-west and 56 m. north-south. The height of the walls is 3.10 m. while the thickness is 1.10 m. There are 4 turrets in the four corners of the fort.

Hajiganj Fort: It is the second among the triangle of water-forts built during the Mughal era. The fort stands on the western bank of the river Shitalakshya in Hajiganj area of Narayanganj district. It is also known as the 'Khijirpur Fort'. It is presumed that the fort was built for resisting the attacks by Maghs and Portuguese pirates via river-routes after the setting up of Dhaka as a Mughal capital in 1610. Having a green compound of massive size, the fort is surrounded by column-shaped wide walls.

Idrakpur Fort: This is the third among the water-forts built during the Mughal era. The Idrakpur fort stands on the bank of Ichhamoti River at the old court area of Munshiganj town. The Mughal Subedar Mir Jumla built this fort in 1660 for observing the movements of pirates. Rectangular in shape and longer from north to south, this fort was built with bricks, lime and mortar. Its size is 83 m. × 55 m. The surrounding brick-wall is 6 m. high and about 1 m. in breadth. There are holes on the upper portion of the wall for firing cannon and throwing arrow. There is a watch-tower in the middle of the fort compound, which is surrounded by internal walls. There are four turrets in four corners of the fort, as well as a pond outside its premises.



Sonakanda Fort, Narayanganj



Hajiganj Fort, Narayanganj



Idrakpur Fort, Munshiganj

25. Teliapara Dak bungalow, Habiganj

Madhabpur Teliapara Tea Garden and the Big Bungalow are an important chapter in the history of great Liberation War of Bangladesh. The plan of Liberating War of Bangladesh was drawn up in this historic Bungalow. On April 4, 1971 Colonel (later General) M.A.G Osmani, the chief commander of the liberation army, consulted with some officers of 2nd and 4th East Bengal Regiments and



Teliapara Dak Bungalow, Habiganj

took some important decisions here. An impressive monument adjacent to the Big Bungalow has been built, and close to it there lies a beautiful lake.

26. Puthia Rajbari, Rajshahi : Memorial of oldest Zamindari in Bengal

This Rajbari or palace is located in Puthia upazila beside the Rajshahi-Natore highway, 32 km to the north-east of Rajshahi district HQ. The Puthia zamindari was a principal one among the oldest zamindaris established in the then Bengal in 17th century during the Mughal era. Bearing beautiful ornamentations, this palace was reportedly built by the Maharani Hemanta Kumari Devi in 1895. After the abolition of the zamindari system in 1950, the Puthia zamindari also ceased to exist. However, although the zamindari was abolished, the palaces, temples and other structures built there still survive. There are six large ponds or lakes around the Puthia Rajbari. Other structures include a monastery with six temples, Large Anhik Temple, Small Govinda Temple, Small Anhik Temple, Pancharatna Shiva Temple, Small Shiva Temple, Govinda Temple, Dolmancha Temple, Keshto Khepa's Monastery, Khitish Chandra's Monastery, Krishnapur Small Gopala Temple and Ratha Bagicha or Hawakhana. All walls of the temples are embellished with beautiful terracotta decorations.



Puthia Rajbari, Rajshahi built in 19th century



Tajhat Palace, Rangpur built in 20th century

27. Tajhat Palace, Rangpur

Tajhat Palace (Zamindar Bari) is situated only 6 km away from Rangpur district HQ. This white and spectacular house, a unique example of Indo-European architectural design, is one of the large and beautiful structures in Bangladesh. Imitating the structural design of Dhaka's Ahsan Manzil, Moharaja Kumar Gopal Lal Roy built this house at the beginning of 20th century. The 4 ponds in four corners, a large field in front, the splendor of greenery all around has given enhanced beauty to the house. The structure of the two storied main building is U-shaped. The front flight of stairs is made of marble imported from Italy. There is also a fountain made of marble in the front courtyard. There are 22 rooms in the both floors of this building. In 1987, this Zamindar house was transformed into a museum and was named afresh as Rangpur Museum. 300 archaeological antiques have been preserved in some rooms of the museum.

28. Dighapatia Rajbari or Uttara Ganobhaban, Natore

The famous historical palace 'Dighapatia Rajbari' is located in Dighapatia union of Natore sadar upazila around 2.5 km north of Natore town. It is also known as the 'Uttara Ganobhaban'. Surrounded by 3 m. high robust boundary



Dighapatia Rajbari or Uttara Ganobhaban, Natore built in 18th century



Masud Manzil at Karotia Zamindar House, Tangail built in 1899

wall, the palace compound stretches over an area of 43 acres. It is a wonderful relic of medieval and modern architectural styles. A huge clock brought from Florence of Italy has been placed above the huge and gorgeous main gate of the palace. There are around 14 acres of deep and beautiful trench surrounding the palace for security, beautification, angling

and entertainment purposes. Raja Ramjiban had gifted the Dighapatia pargana to his loyal Nayeb Dayaram after being satisfied with his performance. Dayaram Ray built this palace after establishing the Dighapatia dynasty in 1734. In 1972, it was named as 'Uttara Ganobhaban'. There are 12 buildings in this palace compound.

29. Karotia Zamindar House, Tangail

Among the zamindar houses of Tangail district, the one at Karotia is the most prominent one in terms of history and heritage. The huge zamindar house of Karotia stands on the bank of Putia River, about 10 km from the Tangail town. The Afghan ruler Solaiman Khan Panni's grandson Sayeed Khan Panni, who had settled down at Atiya of Tangail in early 16th century, was the founder of this zamindar family. The 11th descendant of this clan Sadat Ali Khan Panni founded the Panni family by coming to Karotia of Tangail. Possessing a natural and secluded setting, this walled zamindar house is about one km long and half a km wide, which is divided into two parts- Bara Taraf and Chhoto Taraf. It contains Masud Manjil, Rokia Mahal, Iron-house, a pond-'Ranir Pukur', Daud Mahal, and a mosque that has a Mughal architectural style. The zamindar house has a mix of Mughal and Chinese architectural style.

Apart from this, there are other renowned zamindar houses namely Delduar Zamindar House, Dhanbari Zamindar House or Nawab Manzil, Mahera Zamindar House, Nagarpur Chowdhury House, Pakutia Zamindar House and Hemnagar Zamindar House or Porir Dalan, built in between 18th & 20th century in Tangail.



Nawab Manzil, one of the beautiful zamindar houses in Tangail

30. Baliati Zamindar House, Manikganj

This zamindar house is located in Satoria upazila of Manikganj district, about 62 km away from Dhaka city. Gobinda Ram Shaha was the settler of the Zamindari at Baliati. Built in 18th century, the palace contains: Pub-bari (Eastern house), Paschim-bari (Western house), Uttar-bari (Northern house), Modhya-bari (Middle house), and Gola-bari (Barn). In addition, there is a Nat-Mandir, a Durga-Mandir, Ramkrishna Mission Ashram, Gouranga Moth (monastery), charitable clinic and a school. Inside the most attractive Pub-Bari or dashani house, spread over an area of about 6 ha, there are currently 2 three-storey buildings intact. The Corinthian columns, decorated iron railing, solidified ornamentation of lime and sand, wooden beams, paintings etc of the buildings are attractive. Recently, the archaeology department has set up a museum in the dancing floor of the zamindar house.



Baliati Zamindar House, Manikganj built in 18th century

31. Shashi Lodge, Mymensingh

The Shashi Lodge also known as the Mymensingh Palace is located on 10 acres of land. Surrounded by walls and built on a land area of 3.64 hectares, it comprises a beautiful palatial building, one pond, one garden and a fountain. The then Zamindar Suryakanta built this structure in 1880. But when



Shashi Lodge, Mymensingh built in 19th century

the palace was destroyed by the earthquake of 1897, Zamindar Shashikanta, the adopted son of Suryakanta, rebuilt it. There is a garden containing a lovely fountain in front of the palace. A sculpture of Venus made of marble stone had been installed on a quadrangular column-shaped platform inside the fountain. In 2018, all the artifacts of the museum located in Mymensingh town, have been shifted here and the Shashi-lodge was converted into a museum.

The writer is a coulmnist and geographer



Vision : Smart Bangladesh

Hasina Akter

Smart Bangladesh is a vision and policy of the present Government to build a digitally enabled, smarter and more sustainable country. It is an advanced version of Digital Bangladesh that emphasizes the use of emerging technologies to enhance the quality of life, promote sustainable development and improve governance. The goal of Smart Bangladesh is to use technology to create a smart and sustainable society that benefits all citizens. The objectives of Smart Bangladesh include creating smart cities, promoting smart educations, developing a smart economy and establishing smart governance. This may involve the adoption of new technologies and approaches in various sectors such as transportation, energy and agriculture

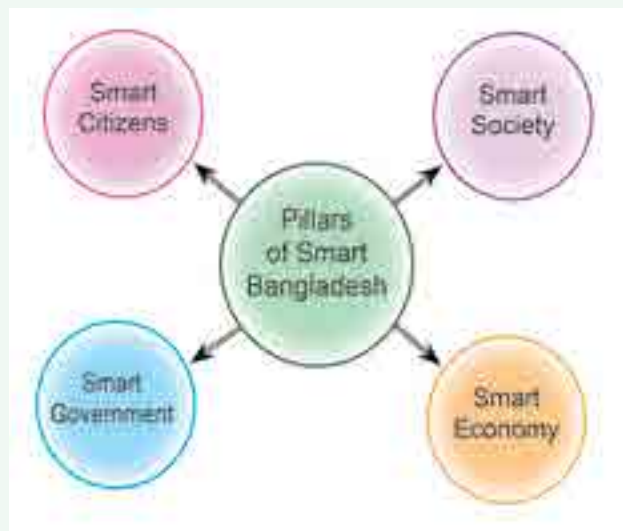
as well as the development of policies and initiatives that support the use of technology to drive innovations and progress.

The young generation of Bangladesh is the key players for the visions of 'Smart Bangladesh'. The ultimate objective of smart Bangladesh is to achieve Bangabandhu's dream of *Sonar Bangla* (Bengal of Gold). The Smart Bangladesh Vision- 2041 is more comprehensive, goal driven, inclusive and effective than the Digital Bangladesh Vision- 2021.

In this context, 'SMART' refers to the use of advanced technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and big data analytics to improve various aspects of society such as education, healthcare, transportation and other public services using digital technologies.

Smart Citizens are individuals who leverage technology and innovation to enhance their lives. They are proactive in using digital technologies such as mobile devices and the internet, to access information engage with their communities and improve their quality of life. They use online platforms and various apps manage their finances.

Smart Government is an approach to public administration that leverages technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government services. It should implement hundred



percent paperless offices and hyper personalised service platforms across priority areas like education, healthcare, agriculture, revenue management and public security. Although Bangladesh made a good start of digitalizing government services by automating over two thousand government service, a serious jump is still needed in order to achieve the target of 2041.

Smart Economy emphasizes the use of technologies like the Internet of things (IOT) location systems, sensors, robots and Artificial intelligence (AI) are used in economic sectors. It is significant considering that Bangladesh plans to make ICT one of its revenue generating pillars by 2041. It is based on technological innovation, resource, economic prosperity, economic progress, sustainable jobs, efficiency, sustainability and high social welfare as engines for success. Bangladesh has taken numerous initiatives to build a smart economy by creating skilled digital-ready workforce and technology-supported trade. 'Smart Economy' is intended to identify measures to stimulate entrepreneurship in order to smartly, sustainable and inclusively develop economy by harnessing creative potential, innovative ICT skills specific for the human capital.

Smart Society is a concept that describes a society that leverages technology and innovation to improve the quality of life for its citizens. Citizens will adopt digital tolerance, ethics and values. A cashless payment ecosystem, 'Smart City' and 'Smart Grid' will be integral components. Bangladesh has also seen a rapid increase in its skilled freelancing community. They are completely configurable, thereby giving the flexibility needed to suit your unique needs, with a simple modern interface that can be used by everyone.

Although the government goal of creating a 'Smart Bangladesh' by 2041 is a bold decision, its implementation will be a major challenge. The government needs to prepare a concrete master plan through extensive discussions with relevant stakeholders. To support emerging technology, regulatory frameworks must be promptly modified. There should be policies in place to support and protect technology IP (Internet Protocol) valuation.

However, it is good to note the government is running on the right track mapping out a number of ongoing projects which will further bolster our ICT sector. Reportedly the government is working to integrate efficient technologies to commercialize new products, protect intellectual property rights, support young innovators and create a platform to develop new ICT concepts. Hence, it can be said that the hope for digital Bangladesh has become just a matter of time. The successful implementation of smart Bangladesh depends on effective utilization of information and communication technology.

The vision of 'Smart Bangladesh' is Sheikh Hasina's final interpretation of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu's dream for Golden Bangla. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the visionary of Digital Bangladesh, has taken Bangladesh to a unique height which has been proven development philosophy in the course of more than an era. The slogan of the fiscal year's (2023-2024) budget has been fixed as 'Across the long journey of development towards Smart Bangladesh'. We hope Smart Bangladesh - 2041 vision to establish Bangladesh as a knowledge-based economy and an innovative nation.

Hasina Akter, Director, Department of Mass Communication



Relay Wheat: A Step to Greening the Fallow Coast

Dr. M. G. Neogi



Relay wheat seeds are seeding in standing aman rice field on 14 November 2022

The agriculture cultivation of entire coastal region is being threatened by climate change through increased salinity, high tides, water-logging, uneven rainfall, flood, drought, extreme heat, decreasing of winter season etc. through which Bangladesh is rated as the third most vulnerable country in the world.

According to SRDI (Soil Resource Development Institute), around 4 lakh 30 thousands (0.43 million) hectares of land remain fallow during dry season in coastal region of Bangladesh. Most farm households in the coastal region are cultivate only one crop in a year, i.e. long duration aman rice in monsoon from July to December. After harvesting the aman rice in

December, most of the land lies fallow due to increased salinity in dry season and also scarcity of suitable water for irrigation.

Normally after harvesting of aman rice in December, soil salinity reaches such an extent that no other crops can be planted until the monsoons arrive, leaving the lands fallow for about seven to eight months each year.

To feed the increased population, food production in coastal areas during dry season must be increased in any means. Rice alone cannot meet the food requirements of the country. On the other hand, Bangladesh is becoming highly dependent on wheat importation as dietary preference are changing such that wheat is becoming a highly desirable food



Irrigation provided to relay wheat cropping, just immediate after aman rice harvest

supplement to rice. Among the cereals, wheat is second to rice in economic and consumption importance. In last five years, wheat consumption has risen in the country which can be linked to increased population and changes in eating habits.

Right now, Bangladesh imports around 7.5 million tons wheat each year to cover local demand while

production in the country is around 1.2 million tons from around 0.8 million hectares of land. The scope to expand crop cultivation in other part of Bangladesh, especially in north-western Bangladesh is almost zero due to other competing crops like potato, maize, boro rice, etc. Thus, the fallow coastal belt in Bangladesh during winter dry season is the only area, where crop cultivation could be introduced.

As coastal region is highly affected for scarcity of suitable water for irrigation and as water requirement for wheat cultivation is very low while only 2-3 light irrigations are sufficient to complete its life cycle as well as wheat has relatively salinity tolerant nature while its salt tolerant capacity is around 4-8 dS/m, thus, wheat could be a good option to cultivate in coastal fallow land during dry season.

Wheat is a cold loving crops requires below 15°C in its vegetative growth and panicle initiation stage which is normally available during second half of December to first half of January in southern Bangladesh weather. In that case, mid-November planting of wheat in southern Bangladesh is the best for its maximum production. Due to mid-November to end-November planting, the wheat crops may avail such below 15°C temperature in its vegetative and panicle initiation stage which to be available during second half of December to first half of January in southern Bangladesh weather.

Also mid-November planting of wheat enables farmers to fully utilize the residual soil moisture when soil salinity levels are still tolerable. So, without any further land preparation or plowing, farmers will get good yield where production cost is too minimum.

But, in November, standing rice crop is still be available in the rice field in southern Bangladesh which mostly will be harvested in December. So, it may not possible to planting wheat after harvesting of rice in coastal region in November.

To overcome this bottleneck, Dr. Neogi realized that the relay wheat cropping may be an alternate option to seeding wheat seeds in standing rice field in November.



Relay wheat farmer Sarwar really surprised to see his relay wheat cropping in saline fallow land

The relay cropping is such a technology to seeding wheat seeds in the standing rice field as second crop on the same land where standing rice is close to harvest. Dr. Neogi then discussed with the farm households on relay wheat cultivation technology and its prospects to cultivate wheat as additional crop after aman rice.

Then, the University of Western Australia (UWA) under ACIAR-CIM-2014-076

project comes forward and signed an agreement with the Poverty Eradication Program (PEP) in 2021-22 to conduct field research on relay wheat cropping in standing aman rice field in farmers field of coastal region.

Based on this UWA-PEP sub-contract, the University of Western Australia (UWA) and Poverty Eradication Programme (PEP) along with the farmers jointly established the relay wheat blocks under the leadership of Dr. M. G. Neogi, the Deputy Project Leader of the University of Western Australia in 28 farmers field at their 28 bighas of land at Doulatpur village of Nilgonj union of Kalapara upazila. Dr. Md. Mustafa Khan of Bangladesh Wheat and Maize Research Institute (BWMRI) also visited the relay wheat blocks during his visit of BWMRI programs and provided necessary advices.

28 farmers were seeded BARI GOM 30 wheat seeds on 14 November 2022 in their standing aman rice field in relay system, just 20-25 days before of harvesting rice. During mid-November, rice panicles are becoming greening to yellowish color while rice plants are turning to ripen. During this period, residual soil moisture are available in the soil while wheat seeds under relay wheat cropping fully utilized the residual soil moisture when soil salinity levels are to minimum. No one can imagine that wheat seedlings are growing nicely of these 28 farmers field in a favorable climate under these rice plants.

After ripening of aman rice along with relay wheat cropping, the aman rice crops were harvested on 5 December 2022. During harvesting of rice crops, farmers were careful to harvest the rice plants above 6 inches from soil level to save wheat seedlings which was grown around 2-3 inches after seeding the seeds on 14 November. Normally farmers of coastal regions are cutting their rice plants in such a way.

After harvesting of rice, farmers provided a light irrigations and then provided fertilizers as per recommendation of Bangladesh Wheat and Maize Research

Institute (BWMRI). Also farmers provided irrigation once again with nitrogen fertilizer as top dress after 55 days of seeding, just before panicle initiation. Then once again light irrigation was provided in the wheat field after 80 days of seeding the wheat seeds as third irrigation. This year, farmers used three irrigations as there is no rainfall occurred during this time.

Due to climate change, it is now observed that early rainfall occurs almost in every year which is good for wheat cultivation. In that case, farmers should ensure good drainage facilities in their land before cultivation to save their wheat crop from any heavy shower. As wheat crops may not survive in stagnant water, thus, wheat crops should not be cultivated without adequate drainage facilities. However, light rainfall during December or January or early February is good for wheat cultivation. If such rainfall occurs during wheat cultivation, farmers may not require further irrigation or may require less irrigation which may help to reduce the production cost.

In addition of these relay wheat, the UWA-PEP sub-project also established general wheat cultivation technology, just after harvesting of rice in 17 farmers field on 12 December 2022 to assess a comparative study between relay wheat in aman rice field and normal wheat cultivation after rice harvesting as usual.

It is our observation that the performance of relay wheat looks better than normal cultivated wheat in terms of vegetative growth, number and size of panicles formation, yield, etc. while production cost is less in relay wheat cultivation compared to normal wheat cultivation. Better performance of relay wheat which we observed might be for the appropriate planting time in mid-November, through which, favorable temperature availed by the crops during its vegetative stage that falls during late December to early January. Also due to availability of residual soil moisture during planting time in mid-November as well as less salinity in November has been favored to relay wheat cultivation for its normal growth of wheat plant with sufficient healthy panicle formation.

The relay wheat was ready to harvest on 28 February 2023 which requires 106 days from seeding to maturity. However, farmers harvested relay wheat on 6 March 2023 where yield was 2.8 to 3.1 ton per hectare while Dr. Neogi commented that if farmers may able to cultivate this relay wheat by using a salt-tolerant wheat variety, the production will be some more.



Australia high power delegates visited field on 13 Feb, 2023



Fully matured relay wheat in saline fallow land at Daulatpur village of Nilgonj union of Patuakhali district

Individual farmers received around 400 kg wheat from 33 decimal of land under relay cultivation system. The present market price of this amount of wheat is Tk. 20,000 at the rate of Tk. 50 per kg. The total cost of production per bigha was calculated as Tk. 4,810 that means Tk. 15,190 was the net profit from one bigha of land which was totally vacant.

The normal wheat was harvested on 12 March which required 90 days and yield was around 1.8 to 2.3 ton per hectare that means one ton less yield per hectare compared to relay wheat where production cost was also high, calculated as Tk. 5,810 per bigha. This reduced yield might be for delayed planting time as well as planted in dry soil condition when salinity level is being increased. Also due to stress condition with increased salinity and unfavorable weather, the life time of normal wheat has been reduced in 90 days compared to relay wheat cultivation which required 106 days. In addition, production cost of normal wheat cultivation was also high compared to relay wheat cultivation. Thus, it is undoubtedly pointed that the relay wheat cropping in coastal region will be a wider opportunity to greening the coast in dry season.

I, hope that the honorable Prime Minister, Agriculture Minister and Member of Parliament as well as Agriculture Secretary will critically analyze the relay wheat cropping in saline fallow land in favor of coastal farm families while requesting to provide only irrigation facilities and availability of wheat seeds which could be a revolution to greening the south fallow saline land. At least, this year, in coming wheat season at November 2023, the government will take an initiative to implement the relay wheat cropping at community level as test case while ACIAR-UWA-CSIRO is ready to provide useful technical assistance to make it success.

Dr. Neogi, is the Deputy Project Leader of the University of Western Australia and Independence Awardee in science and technology in 2021; can be reached mgneogi@gmail.com

Air Pollution is Affecting Our Body Defence System

Dr. Md. Billal Hossain



Bangladesh government has issued new Air Pollution (Control) Rules 2022. Some of the pollution standards in these new rules are more stringent than the previous standards which were in Bangladesh Environment Conservation Rules 1997 (ECR, 1997). The table below (Table 1) shows that CO, Pb, NO₂, O₃ standards have been tightened as compared to previous ECR 1997 standards. The new rules kept the values of PM 10 and PM 2.5 as before, except for annual average of PM 2.5. The annual average of PM 2.5 increased from 15 to 35 µg/m³. The new rules included values for SO₂ and NH₃ which were not in ECR, 1997.

Air Pollutants standards of Bangladesh

Air Pollutants	Standards (mg/m ³) (ECR, 1997)	Standards (mg/m ³) (APCR, 2022)	Averaging Times
CO	10 mg/m ³	05 mg/m ³	08 Hours
	40 mg/m ³	20 mg/m ³	01 Hour
Pb	.50 µg/m ³ (Annual)	0.25 µg/m ³	Annual
		0.50 µg/m ³	24 Hours
NO ₂	100 µg/m ³	40 µg/m ³	Annual
		80 µg/m ³	24 Hours
PM ₁₀	50 µg/m ³	50 µg/m ³	Annual
		150 µg/m ³	24 Hours
PM _{2.5}	15 µg/m ³	35 µg/m ³	Annual
		65 µg/m ³	24 Hours
O ₃	235 µg/m ³	180 µg/m ³	1 Hour
		100 µg/m ³	8 Hour
SO ₂	-	250 µg/m ³	1 Hour
		80 µg/m ³	24 Hours
NH ₃	-	100 µg/m ³	Annual
		400 µg/m ³	24 Hours

Source: Air Pollution (Control) Rules 2022

This is undoubtedly a positive step by the government. But the reality was that, despite the standards for various air pollutants in the ECR, 1997, the level of air pollution in our environment did not give any positive news to the residents of Dhaka city dwellers. Apart from Dhaka, in many big cities of Bangladesh, ambient air quality was not satisfactory according to Air Quality Index (AQI) of DoE. A new World Bank report published in March this year shows that South Asia is home to 9 of the world's 10 cities with the worst air pollution, and Dhaka is one of them.

This abnormal air quality scenario is not only affecting human health problems but also affecting various defence systems of the human body. The human body has developed many ways to protect itself against toxicants in the environment. Various defence systems help protect against environmental toxicants. Here I will describe how the human body can respond to the many effects of these toxins and what happens when the systems fail.

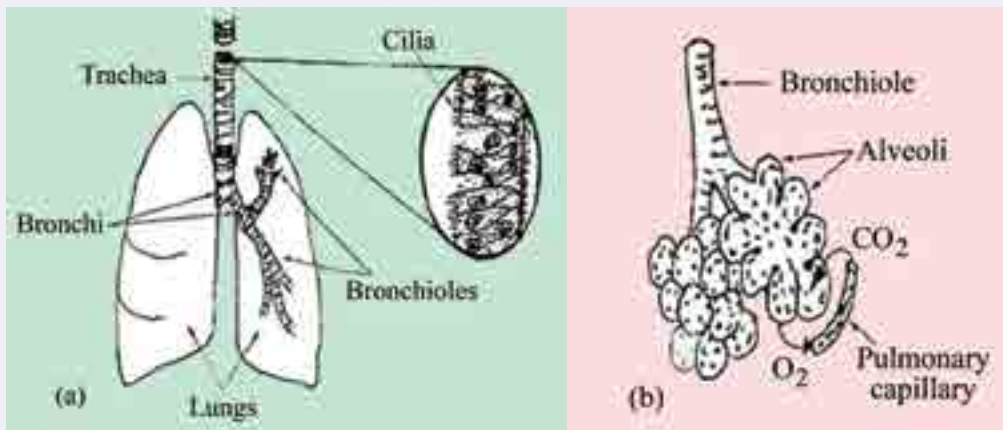
Some of the major body system responses to human toxicants are the respiratory tract, gastrointestinal tract, liver, and kidney.

Respiratory Tract (RT): An adult breathes more than 13,000 liters of air a day, which is very important to life. Air is inhaled through the nasal cavity, nasopharynx, and trachea. The trachea divides into the main bronchi, which goes to the right and left lungs (Figure 01). The bronchi divide into finer and finer tubes, called bronchioles. Located at the ends of the bronchioles are many tiny air sacs called alveoli, these are where the exchange of gases takes place. At the alveoli, a thin sheet of moving blood picks up molecular oxygen (O₂) from the inhaled air and unloads carbon dioxide (CO₂) for exhalation. The respiratory tract is one of the principal ports of entry for air pollutants and is remarkably well equipped to cope with harmful invaders.

There are three main processes that operate in their defence against the invasion of foreign agents: filtration, inactivation, and removal, which are acted upon by different parts of the RT.

Nesopharynx: Air that drawn in through the nose and upper throat is warmed and moistened as it moves to the lungs. Particulate matter (PM) is likewise moistened as it enters the nose. Large particles are filtered and removed by the hairs at the entrance of the nose, while smaller particulates, such as dust, carbon, and pollen spores, are washed out with the aid of mucus. Tracheobronchial areas: The response of the tracheobronchial area to large particulates is contraction of the muscles, causing the lumina of bronchi to be narrowed. The size of particles is directly linked to their potential for causing health problems. Small particles less than 10 micrometers in diameter pose the greatest problems, because they can get deep into lungs, and some may even get into bloodstream (US EPA). The mucus that is secreted moistens the particulates as they accumulate, which are then removed through the cough reflex.

Cilia: A very important feature of the trachea is the action of cilia, hair like structure that beat rhythmically back and forth in the air passage with a speed of 1300 beats per minute, billions of cilia function like a broom to sweep noxious foreign agents out of the system. The condition commonly called bronchitis is caused by infection of the air passages, starting at the nose, and extending through the bronchioles. Acute bronchitis may result from inhaled irritants, such as smoke, dust, and chemicals. It can also be due to allergies. Chronic bronchitis develops slowly and appears in people past the midway point of their lives. It occurs approximately four times more often in men than in women, and more often among city dwellers than rural residents. Several studies have shown that in environments with air pollution, the cilia in the human respiratory tract become shorter or are missing, which affects their ability to clear the respiratory tract. In addition, mucosal cilia clearance may be inhibited due to factors such as quantity of contaminant concentration and duration of exposure (Cao Y et al., 2020).



Generalized structure of human lungs: a) the tracheobronchial area, with microscopic view showing a section of the ciliated epithelium that lines the passages (inset), and b) alveoli. (Source: Ming-Ho Yu, 2005)

Gastrointestinal (GI) Tract: Gastrointestinal tract, also called digestive tract or alimentary canal, pathway by which food enters the body and solid wastes are expelled. The GI tract is the pathway food takes from mouth, through the esophagus, stomach, small and large intestine. In the GI tract, nutrients and water from foods are absorbed to help keeps body healthy.

Whatever isn't absorbed keeps moving through GI tract until get rid of it by using the bathroom. The small intestine is the main part of the gastrointestinal tract where nutrients from the diet are absorbed into the bloodstream. A toxic agent may be absorbed into the bloodstream through the same route. Mechanisms involved in the removal of noxious agents from the gastrointestinal tract include spastic movements in the stomach and bowels. Spastic movements in the stomach, and bowels, leading to vomiting and speedy propulsion of fecal matter through the entire intestinal tract.

Readily soluble toxicants may be promptly absorbed into the bloodstream, whereas less soluble chemical agents are carried into the lower portion of the bowels and eliminated with feces. Small particles, up to 50 μm in size, can penetrate the intestinal wall between epithelial cells and be transported through lymphatic system and blood vessels to the liver and other organs which can affect the liver systems. In passing through the intestinal tract a toxic agent may induce diarrhea and spastic pains or constipation. Mucus and blood may often be observed in the stool. If the poisoning extends over long periods, chronic changes occur.

Liver: The largest solid organ of the body, plays the foremost role in detoxifying xenobiotics. It is a blood reservoir and a storage organ for some vitamins, and for digested carbohydrate, which is broken down releasing glucose to sustain blood sugar levels. Manufacturing site for enzymes, cholesterol, proteins, vitamin A, blood coagulation factors, and other molecules. Although the liver is noted for its ability to regenerate (under certain conditions), it can nevertheless be severely damaged.

A recent epidemiological study found significant associations between long-term exposure to ambient AP and MAFLD (Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Fatty

Liver Disease) in the Chinese population. Their findings add to the growing evidence of ambient pollution's damaging effects on metabolic function and related organs. They also found that unhealthy lifestyles and the presence of central obesity may exacerbate these harmful effects (Bing Guo et al., 2022). Another study done by researchers from Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, experimented with the high concentration airborne particle matter called PM 2.5 to investigate the effects of air pollution on the liver (Jong Won Kim , 2014).

A research team led by Kezhong Zhang (2015) at the Wayne State University School of Medicine's Center for Molecular Medicine and Genetics, has discovered that exposure to air pollution has a direct adverse health effect on the liver and causes liver fibrosis, an illness associated with metabolic disease and liver cancer. Their work demonstrated that inhalation exposure to high-concentration airborne particulate matter PM 2.5 has direct effects on the liver, triggering liver fibrosis, a pathological condition characterized by accumulation of the extracellular matrix protein collagen that occurs in most types of chronic liver diseases.

Kidneys: One of the main organs that provide purification of the organism from endogenous and exogenous toxins, and at the same time, this organ is at higher risk to damage as being the target action of toxicants. Approximately one fourth of the blood pumped by each beat of the heart passes through the kidneys. The kidneys incessantly filter various substances from the blood, reabsorb some of them, and concentrate wastes created by metabolic processes in urine. The kidneys remove metabolic waste products and foreign particles from the body, as well as maintain the water volume and the concentration of various ions within the body. It continuously filters various substances from the blood, reabsorbs some of them, and concentrates wastes created by metabolic processes in urine. Metabolism of chemicals within the kidney may produce substances that are either more or less toxic than the parent chemical.

Emerging studies have suggested that exposure to air pollution is closely relevant to increased risk of chronic kidney disease (CKD), CKD progression and end-stage kidney disease (ESKD). Inhaled airborne particles may cause vascular injury, intraglomerular hypertension, or glomerulosclerosis through non-hemodynamic and hemodynamic factors with multiple complex interactions. The mechanisms linking air pollutants exposure to CKD include elevated blood pressure, worsening oxidative stress and inflammatory response, DNA damage and abnormal metabolic changes to aggravate kidney damage (Chen Y et al., 2021).

In conclusion, the human body has several defence mechanisms to protect against pollutants. The respiratory system, for example, has cilia and mucus to trap and remove particles from the air. The liver and kidneys are responsible for filtering toxins from the bloodstream and excreting them from the body. The gastrointestinal (GI) tract, also known as the digestive system, plays a crucial role in the human body by facilitating the digestion and absorption of nutrients, elimination of waste, and maintaining overall health. However, exposure to high levels of pollutants over extended periods can overwhelm these defence mechanisms and lead to adverse health effects. It is hoped that strict enforcement of the Air Pollution (Control) rules in all major cities of Bangladesh will reduce the emissions of harmful gases, which are responsible for air pollution.

The author is an Environmental Specialist, DEIEDP, Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority, and Adjunct Faculty, Dept. of Environmental Science, State University of Bangladesh



Summer Breeding Migratory Birds of Bangladesh

Professor Dr. A N M Aminoor Rahman

their habitat become unfit for their living including food scarcity. This migration is not for fun or travelling, rather an urge to save lives which is an integral part of their life cycle. Therefore, these countries can be called their second home.

Although migratory birds mainly refer to the winter birds, however, we also have some summer visitors or migrants which migrate here from nearby countries for the duration of the summer and sometimes monsoon mainly to breed and produce their progeny. These birds includes different species of cuckoos, two species of pittas, one species of bee-eater as well as one species of kingfisher. Various species of cuckoos arrive in the country from March to April, lay their eggs in the nests of other suitable birds known as the host, the host birds incubate the eggs and finally they return to their winter habitats in autumn, *i.e.* August to September with the nestlings. On the other hand, two species of pitta come to the country from February to March, build their nests between June and July, lay eggs, incubate and raise nestlings, the nestlings grow up and after spending 7-8 months in this country return back to their winter home in the middle of September. These are known as summer visitor, summer breeder or summer breeding migrants.

Among the different species of cuckoos found in Bangladesh, Western (or Asian) Koel, Common Hawk Cuckoo, Plaintive Cuckoo, Banded Bay cuckoo and Square-tailed (or Asian) Drongo Cuckoo are resident bird. Large Hawk Cuckoo and Hodgson's Hawk Cuckoo are rare winter visitors. Rest of the cuckoos of Cuculidae family are either summer breeding migrants or passage migrant. Although Eurasian (or Common) Cuckoo and Lesser Cuckoo are considered as

Among the 722 species of birds listed to occur in Bangladesh, about 340 are permanent residents which stay in the country throughout the year, breed, lay eggs, incubate and raise their nestlings. These are the resident birds of Bangladesh. In addition, more than 370 species of birds are migratory which visits Bangladesh at a certain time of the year, live for a few months and move to their original habitat in time. These birds used to be known to the people of this country, even today, as 'visitor birds'. A large number of these birds visit Bangladesh in winter for warmth, fatten up for their return trip, and leave the country from late winter to early spring. They normally do not breed in Bangladesh and are known as winter migrants. When we actually think of migrant birds, we automatically think of these winter migrants. They migrate from the colder areas of the universe to different countries of Africa, Australia and Asia including Bangladesh when

passage migrant, but they could be summer breeder as well. However, I once seen a Common Cuckoo in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University campus, Gazipur in 23rd November 2011. Although IUCN Bangladesh mentioned in their Red Data Book (2015) that Violet Cuckoo and Grey-bellied Cuckoos are rare, and Indian cuckoo is common resident of Bangladesh, however, others are in dispute and considered them as summer breeding migrant. Therefore, other frequent summer breeding cuckoos of Bangladesh includes Jacobin Cuckoo, Chestnut-winged Cuckoo and Asian emerald Cuckoo.

On the other hand, out of five species of pitta, only two are summer breeder, namely Hooded Pitta and Indian Pitta. Besides these, Blue-tailed Bee-eater, a member of Meropidae family, is also a summer breeding migrant. Although, not actually a visitor of summer but monsoon, however, the Dwarf Kingfisher is also considered as summer breeder. Some of these summer breeding migrant birds of Bangladesh are briefly described below:

1. Indian Cuckoo (*Cuculus micropterus*): This common summer breeder (or according to IUCN resident bird) belongs to the Cuculidae family is widely distributed throughout the country.



Indian Cuckoo at Adampur Beat, Moulvibazar

Its Bangla name is ‘Bou Kotha Kou’. Besides Bangladesh it is also found in other countries of Indian sub-continent, South-east Asian countries, China, Korea, Japan, Philippines and Russia. It is more or less slender bird with a length of 33 centimetre (cm) and weight of about 130 grams (g). Plumage of upperparts of body is grey-ash. Throat and upper portion of the breast of male are brown-ash. Underparts are white with black bars. Black bill and yellow legs.

The bird can be seen in well wooded areas, gardens, parks as well as mixed evergreen and deciduous forests of the country during summer.

This diurnal and crepuscular bird is mostly seen alone or in pairs, which mainly feeds on caterpillars, soft insects and ripe fruits. Its voice almost sounds like the Bangla name ‘bou-kotha-kou’ or ‘boko-tako’. The bird mainly breeds during April to June. Like the other brood parasitic birds, it never build a nest. Lays eggs in the nest of Black Drongo, Black-hooded Oriole, Common Mynah, Jungle Babbler and similar-sized birds. Usually lays 1-2 eggs in more than one nest which are incubated by the host bird and are hatched few days ahead of the host eggs. Nestlings are fed by the host birds. Lifespan is about 7 years.

2. Asian Emerald Cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx maculates*): This rare summer breeder is also known as Emerald Cuckoo. The species is restricted to hill forests of Northeast (Sylhet division) and Southeast (Chittagong division) regions of Bangladesh. It is known as ‘Panna Kokil’ or ‘Sobijav Kokil’ in Bangla. Global distribution range includes different countries of South and Southeast Asia. It is a smaller cuckoo with a head-body length of only 17-18 cm and weigh only



Asian Emerald Cuckoo at Rema-Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary, Chunarughat, Hobigonj

23-30g. Male and female are different. Male has glossy green upperparts and throat with golden-bronze sheen. Black bar on white underparts. Head and neck of female is golden-red. Back is bronze-green. Both sexes show a white band on the underwing in flight. Female has coppery-green upperparts, rusty brown crown and nape, and green-barred underparts. Bill is orange-yellow with black tip. Legs are blackish brown-green.

This diurnal bird is seen alone, in pairs or in groups of 4-6 birds in the mixed evergreen hill forests. It forages along tree-tops and eats caterpillars, soft insects and bugs. Voice is loud and

descending ‘chiror-chiror-chiror----’. The breeding season extend from April to July. Brood-parasitic to sunbirds or spiderhunters. Female lays 1-2 eggs in different nest. Lifespan is more than 4 years.

3. Violet Cuckoo (*Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus*): This uncommon summer breeder (or rare resident according to IUCN) is the smallest cuckoo in Bangladesh. It is also a hill bird which is distributed in the mixed evergreen forests of Northeast and Southeast regions. The Bangla name is ‘Beguni Kokil’ and global distribution range includes different countries of South and Southeast Asia as well as China. The smallest cuckoo’s body length is only 15-17 cm and weight is only 20-21 g. Male has purple upperparts and white underparts with black bars. Female has glossy brownish upperparts that barred with a slight greenish tinge. Bill is dull yellow and legs are brownish-green.

Both habits and habitats of violet cuckoo are same as the Asian Emerald Cuckoo. It is also diurnal and occurs singly, in pairs or groups of 4-6 birds. The very shy bird forages along tree-tops and eats caterpillars, soft insects and bugs. Voice is loud with ‘che-week--che-week--che-week---’ notes. The species also breeds from April to July and brood-parasitic to sunbirds or spiderhunters like the Asian Emerald Cuckoo. Female lays 1-2 eggs in more than one nests. Lifespan is more than 4 years.



Male Violet Cuckoo at Kaptai National Park, Rangamati

4. Jacobin Cuckoo (*Clamator jacobinus*): This common summer migrant breeder is also known as Pied Cuckoo or Pied Crested Cuckoo. It is widely distributed in a wide range of habitat throughout the country. Its Bangla name is ‘Chatok’, ‘Piukaha’,

‘Papia’ or ‘Pakra Kokil’ whose global range extends through most of Africa and South Asia including some Middle-eastern countries. It is a long-tailed crested bird with a body length of 33 cm (tail is 16 cm long) and weight of 65-70 g. The bird has black upperparts and white underparts with black crest. A white spot on the wing and white border at the end of tail is seen. Bill is horny-black and legs are slaty-grey.



Jacobin Cuckoo at Bijoinar, Rajshahi

The diurnal cuckoo is seen in the middle strata of the forests, gardens, parks and rural forests. It occurs solitary or in pairs, which feeds on caterpillars, soft insects and soft fleshy fruits. Its voice is loud, musical and repeated ‘piu-pepee’. The bird breeds from March to July and like other cuckoos never makes a nest. Female lays 2 or more eggs mainly in jungle babbler’s nest. Generally 2 nestlings are found in the host nest. Lifespan is more than 4 years.

5. Chestnut-winged Cuckoo (*Clamator coromandus*): This is an uncommon summer breeder, which is also known as Red-winged Crested Cuckoo. It is widely distributed in and around forested areas of Bangladesh. Its Bangla name is ‘Lal-dana Kokil’ or ‘Lal-pakha Kokil’ and global distribution range includes different countries of Southeast Asia and parts of South Asia. Like the Jacobin it is also a long-tailed crested cuckoo whose body length is 38-46 cm and weight is 66-86 g. The cuckoo has chestnut wings, white half-collar and orange wash to throat and breast. The cap and the crest is glossy black, which has a long black tail with whitish feather tips. Bill and legs are black. Breast and belly are white. Juvenile has shorter crest and scaly rufous upperparts.

It is found in all types of forests and well wooded areas near forests. Like the Jacobin, it is very shy and not easily noticed as it hides in thick bushes or leafy trees.



Chestnut-winged Cuckoo at National Botanic Garden, Dhaka

The diurnal bird is seen alone or in pairs and feeds on caterpillars and soft insects. It has a ‘breep-breep-breep’ metallic whistle like voice. The species breeds from March to August and lay very spherical eggs in the nest of laughingthrush. Lifespan is more than 4 years.

6. Lesser Cuckoo (*Cuculus poliocephalus*): This is a very rare summer breeding migratory species, which was seen only a few times in mixed evergreen forests of Southeast (Kaptai) and Northeast (Moilvibazar), woodlands of

Northwest (Rajshahi) and very recently in the National Botanical Garden of Mirpur, Dhaka. It can be called as ‘Choto Kokil’ whose global distribution range includes different countries of Asia, Africa and Russia. The bird is 26 cm long with a dark grey head, neck, back and rump. The underparts are white with relatively broad dark bars and buffish-white vent. Hepatic female is very rufous with lightly barred upperparts; although some may have unmarked crown, nape and rump. Bill is blackish with yellow base and legs are yellow. It differs from other cuckoos by combination of small size, dark eyes and rump.



Male Lesser Cuckoo at National Botanic Garden, Dhaka

This diurnal bird usually occurs solitary, which feeds on caterpillars and soft insects. It has crackling voice like ‘chick-chuck-chuk-chuk’. Although until now the bird has no nesting record in Bangladesh, but considering its recent activities in the country it can be assumed that the bird could be a breeding migrant in Bangladesh.

7. Indian Pitta (*Pitta brachyura*): Being a member of the Pittidae family, this uncommon summer breeder is found in the Central (Dhaka division), North (Gozni forest) and Northwestern (Rajshahi and Rangpur division) regions of Bangladesh. Its Bangla name is ‘Sada Hali’, ‘Sumcha’ or ‘Nowrong’ whose global distribution range restricted to South Asian countries. This small stubby-tailed and colourful bird is only 19 cm long and weigh only 55 g. A broad black stripe runs over the eyes to neck and the throat is white. Greenish crown mixed with yellow sheen and reddish colour. Breast and belly are yellowish-buff. Back is deep green. Leg is yellowish and bill is black.



Indian Pitta calling at a woodland, Shahjahanpur, Bogura

The diurnal and terrestrial bird occurs singly or in pairs in deciduous and rural forests of the country. It forages by hopping on the ground and feeds mainly on insects, caterpillars and worms. The bird become very noisy during breeding season from April to August and utters a ‘pree-treer’ like double noted whistle. It builds a globular nest of twigs on a fork of a tree about 4-5 metre above the ground level with a circular opening on one side. Female lays 4-6 eggs, which hatches in 15-20 days. Lifespan is more than 4 years.

8. Hooded Pitta (*Pitta sordida*): This uncommon summer breeder is also known as Green-breasted Pitta,



Hooded Pitta at Shatshika, Bagerhat

reddish-brown crown. Back is olive-green mixed with blue. Abdomen is rose-red. Edges of wings are blue. Upperparts of the small and stumpy tail bird is blue. Breast and belly are oily bluish-green. Legs and bill are black.

This diurnal, crepuscular and terrestrial bird is seen alone or in pairs. Like other pittas, it also forages by hopping on the ground and feeds mainly on insects, caterpillars, other invertebrates and lizards. The bird become very noisy during breeding season from April to September and utters ‘whee-whee’ like double noted whistle. It builds tent-like nest on the ground or little bit higher from the ground with twigs, leaves etc. Except villages of Fakirhat, until today no report of nest, chick or nestling was recorded. Female lays 4-6 eggs, which hatches in 15-20 days. Lifespan is more than 4 years.

9. Blue-tailed Bee-eater (*Merops philippinus*): This is a common summer breeder of the Meropidae family that is distributed throughout the country, but more common in the hilly areas of Northeast and Southeast as well as Southwest and Northwestern (Rajshahi) regions of Bangladesh. Bangla name of this species is ‘Nil-lej Suichora’ or ‘Nilpuccho Banshpati’ whose global distribution range extend through South and South Asian countries. The body length is 35-37 cm with a weight of 38-50 g. It has blue-green plumage with blue-rump and tail. Eye-stripe is black. Chestnut throat, brown upper breast and apple green belly. Tail with pin-like elongated central tail feathers. Bill and legs are black.

The species lives in different types of habitat including open woodlands, sandy areas, charlands, hills and mangroves. It is diurnal and occurs in small flocks, which perches on brunches of trees, wires and on the ground like other bee-eaters. The bird hunts flying insects, e.g. dragonflies, bees, butterflies etc in mid-air. It breeds

which is distributed in the mixed evergreen forests of Northeast and Southeast, rural forests of Southwest (Fakirhat and places bordering the Sunderbans) and Central (Modhupur and Mirpur) regions of Bangladesh. It is known as ‘Halti’ ‘Sabujav Sumcha’ or ‘Nil Pakhi’ in Bangla whose global distribution range restricted to South and South Asian countries. Like the Indian Pitta, it is also a small stubby-tailed colourful bird with same body length and weight of 65 g. Hooded Pitta is even more colourful than Indian Pitta with black eyes, chin and throat, and



Blue-tailed Bee-eater at Rajshahi University campus, Rajshahi

from March to June and excavates tunnel-nest on sandy cliffs or vertical river banks. Female lays 6 eggs, which hatches in 21-26 days and nestling flies in 20-27 days. Lifespan is more than 6 years.

10. Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher (*Ceyx ithaca*):

This very rare and endangered summer breeder is the smallest kingfisher of the country, which is only found in certain areas of Northeast and Southeast regions. The member of the Alcedinidae family is also known as the Black-backed Kingfisher or Three-toed Kingfisher. Bangla name is 'Bamon Machranga' or 'BunoMachranga'



Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher at Adampur Beat, Moulvibazar

whose global distribution range extend through South and South Asia. The tiny bird is only 13 cm long and weigh only 14-21 g. It has three toes that's why sometimes called Three-toed Kingfisher. The species has spectacular plumage colour, which is mostly orange at first look. Both males and females have a black spot on the forehead; blue and white patches on the side of the neck; a lilac-rufous crown, rump, and tail. Back and wings are dark blue. Chin and throat are white. Underparts are pale yellow-orange. Legs, feet and bill are coral red. Juveniles are duller and have less lilac colouring; a white chin, throat and belly; yellow-orange bill with pale tip.

The species is found besides the streams in the dense forests of Northeast and Southeast during summer and monsoon. The diurnal bird occurs solitary or in pairs, which can fly very fast along the stream. It jerks its tiny tail from time to time and feeds on small fish, aquatic insects and crustaceans. The bird makes 'chit-chit' call in flight. It breeds from April to September and digs up to 100 cm tunnel for making nest on the vertical river banks of hilly streams, lays 5-7 eggs, which hatches in 17-18 days. Nestling flies in 18-20 days. Lifespan is 4-5 years.

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



FOSWAL Literary Award conferred on Father the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was handed over to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban on April, 2

2 April, 2023

**FOSWAL's
Literary Award for
Bangabandhu
handed over to PM
Sheikh Hasina**

The FOSWAL Literary Award, conferred on Father the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was handed over to his daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April, 2.

Noted writers and researchers Ramendu Majumdar and Mofidul Haque handed over the award to her at the latter's official residence.

At the time, the premier was given a letter and book written by eminent

Punjabi novelist and FOSWAL Founder President Ajeet Cour as well as a centenary-old Phulkari cloth sheet (Chadar) as gifts. Extending thanks to all the concerned, Hasina said Bangabandhu stood tall like the Himalayas as a politician. Besides, he also had left the signs of the unique talent in his writings, she added.

On March 26, the Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature (FOSWAL) conferred 'Special Literary Award' on Bangabandhu for his trilogy -- The Unfinished Memoirs, The Prison Diaries, and New China 1952.

FOSWAL Founder President Ajeet Cour handed over the award to Ramendu Majumder and Mofidul Haque at its 63rd Literature Festival in New Delhi.

In the citation, it was stated, 'Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the architect of Independent Bangladesh, 'Bangabandhu' to his people, is a towering figure of national liberation of oppressed people of the world. Like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King he was brutally murdered by the forces of darkness, but no power on earth can erase him from history.' SAARC Literary Award is an annual award conferred by the Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature (FOSWAL) since 2001. *Source:*

The Financial Express



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivering speech at the second meeting of the Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Affairs National Steering Committee at Ganobhaban on April, 2

Don't go abroad thru' middlemen, says PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April, 2 stressed the need for ensuring that seekers of jobs abroad must not fall prey to the frauds and middlemen.

'So we always have to consider that these people could go abroad through proper channel and get appropriate job. It is very important for us to ensure that these people must not fall prey to fraudulent people and middlemen,' she said.

The Prime Minister was delivering her introductory speech at the second meeting of the Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Affairs National Steering Committee at her official residence Ganobhaban.

She asked the authorities concerned to find new destinations for sending manpower alongside making them skilled through giving appropriate training on different trades. *Source: The Financial Express*

3 April, 2023

Bangladesh-France relations reach strategic partnership: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April, 3 expressed satisfaction over the growing relationship between Bangladesh and France, saying it has extended further towards the objective of a strategic partnership.

'France is always a trusted partner of Bangladesh. The relation has extended further towards the objective of a strategic partnership guided by our common goals of the sustainable development,' she said.

The Prime Minister made the remarks when newly appointed ambassador of France to Bangladesh Marie Masdupuy



French Ambassador Marie Masdupuy pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban on April, 3

paid a courtesy call on her at her official Ganobhaban residence in Dhaka. *Source: The NewAge*

7 April, 2023

President urges JS bodies to ensure govt's transparency, accountability

President Md. Abdul Hamid on April, 7 called for making the standing committees on various ministries truly effective under the parliamentary system to ensure transparency and accountability of the government.

Our parliament has overall three important duties and roles. Firstly, to represent



President Md. Abdul Hamid addressed the 'Special National Parliament Session' marking the parliament's golden jubilee on April 7

the opinions of the society irrespective of class, profession and gender; secondly, to enact laws and control of public expenditure and thirdly, to ensure the accountability of the executive branch through supervision,' he said.

'The transparency and accountability of the government can be ensured if the standing committees on various ministries can be made truly effective under the parliamentary system,' he stated.

President made the call in a memorial speech in the parliament to mark the 50th anniversary of the national legislature. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placing a motion in the House on the occasion of the golden jubilee of Jatiya Sangsad on April 7

Stability of democracy behind massive development

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on April, 7 told the Parliament that the stability of parliamentary democracy since 2008 created a scope for massive development in Bangladesh.

'During the last three terms --2008, 2014 and 2018-- in line with the constitution,

the continuous progress of Bangladesh National Parliament, the consistency of parliamentary democracy and political stability created a field for massive development of Bangladesh,' she said.

Hasina, also the Leader of the House, said this while placing a motion in the House on the occasion of the golden jubilee of Jatiya Sangsad (Bangladesh National Parliament). *Source: The Financial Express*

11 April, 2023

ECNEC approves 11 projects worth Tk 13,656 crore

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council on April, 11 cleared 11 projects involving the overall estimated cost of Tk 13,655.98 crore.

The approval came from the ECNEC meeting presided over by ECNEC chairperson and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the NEC conference room in the city's Sher-e Bangla Nagar area.

Among these, seven are new projects, while the remaining four are revised ones.

Of the total estimated cost, Tk 10,526.11 crore – 77 per cent — will come from the external sources as foreign loans, while the rest Tk 3,129.87 crore will be drawn from the fund of the government. *Source: The NewAge*

14 April, 2023

Bengali New Year: Country celebrates Pahela Boishakh

People across the country celebrated Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bengali New Year, upholding the rich cultural heritage of the Bengalees on April, 14.

Chhayanaut, the country's esteemed cultural institution known for welcoming the Bengali new calendar year with its traditional flagship event on the morning of April 14, kicked off the festivity at 06:15 am under the Banyan tree at Ramna (Ramna Batamul).

Meanwhile, the Dhaka University's Fine Arts faculty brought out their Mangal Shobhajatra to celebrate the Bengali New Year 1430 this morning.

Outside the capital, the Bengali New Year was being celebrated across the country with a multitude of arrangements including Shobhajatra and other cultural festivities. *Source: The Financial Express*

17 April, 2023

Mujibnagar Day observed

The country observed the historic Mujibnagar Day on April, 17 through various programmes. On the day, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid tribute to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

She paid homage by placing a wreath at Bangabandhu's portrait in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in the capital's Dhanmondi in the morning.

Flanked by central leaders of Awami League, Sheikh Hasina, also the president of the party, placed another wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu on behalf of AL.

On this day in 1971, Bangladesh's first government in exile was formed at the Baidyanathtala mango orchard in Meherpur, then under Kushtia.

The place was later renamed Mujibnagar as a tribute to Bangabandhu who had been declared as the president of the government-in-exile.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid tribute to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing a wreath at his portrait in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in the capital's Dhanmondi on April, 17 morning, marking the historic Mujibnagar Day

Syed Nazrul Islam was appointed the acting president in the absence of Bangabandhu. Tajuddin Ahmad was appointed the first Prime Minister, while Captain M Mansur Ali and AHM Quamaruzzaman were made cabinet members.

The successful leadership of the core cabinet steered the Liberation War to victory on December 16 that year. *Source: Daily Star*

24 April, 2023

Mohammed Shahabuddin sworn in as President of Bangladesh

Mohammed Shahabuddin is sworn in as the 22nd President of Bangladesh on April 24. Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury administered the oath of office to the new President at a ceremony at Bangabhaban at 11am.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, cabinet members and distinguished guests attended the event. Family members of the new president, including his wife Dr Rebecca Sultana, attended the function.

Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, Members of Parliament, the chief election commissioner, Supreme Court judges, political leaders, chiefs of the three services, diplomats, senior journalists, and high-ranking civil and military officials witnessed the oath-taking event. Cabinet Secretary Md. Mahub Hossain conducted the programme.

Mohammed Shahabuddin succeeds Md. Abdul Hamid, whose second successive term ended on April 23. Mohammed Shahabuddin was elected president



Speaker Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury administers oath to Mohammed Shahabuddin, the 22nd President of Bangladesh, at Darbar Hall of Bangabhaban in Dhaka on April 24. Outgoing President Md. Abdul Hamid was also present.

unopposed on February 13 this year as a candidate of the ruling Awami League.

Source : *The Financial Express*

25 April, 2023

Reprinted book titled ‘White Paper on the crisis of East Pakistan’ unveiled

Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud MP unveiled the reprinted publication ‘White Paper on the Crisis of East Pakistan’ published by the then government of Pakistan on August 5, 1971 at Ministry’s conference room on April 25. The book is reprinted by the Department of Films and Publications (DFP), Dhaka.

The Minister said, ‘this is an important publication, which is very helpful in knowing the history of our freedom fight. This publication will be helpful in removing confusion about the liberation war.

Dr. Hasan Mahmud gave an example and said, In



Dr. Hasan Mahmud MP unveiled the reprinted publication ‘White Paper on the Crisis of East Pakistan’ on April 25. SM Golam Kibria, DG, Department of Films and Publications (DFP) was also present (right).

the third chapter of the white paper, the war of liberation has been termed as terrorism in East Pakistan. About March 7, it was written there, ‘Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announced the establishment of a rival government and formally issued a series of directives.’ The minister also said, it has become clear from that book that the liberation war was being conducted in the East Bengal under the direction of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It is necessary to reach the book to all writers, orators, journalists, he added.

26 April, 2023

President pays tributes to Bangabandhu in Tungipara

President Mohammed Shahabuddin paid tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Tungipara of Gopalganj on April, 26.



President Mohammed Shahabuddin pays tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing a wreath at his mausoleum in Tungipara of Gopalganj on April 26

He placed a wreath at the mausoleum of the late leader in Tungipara and stood in solemn silence for some time.

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

President Shahabuddin offered fateha and munajat seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of Bangabandhu as well as other martyrs of August 15 carnage.

Alongside, the President signed the visitors’ book kept on the mausoleum premises.

Mohammed Shahabuddin took oath as the 22nd President of Bangladesh. *Source: The Financial Express*

Dhaka-Tokyo ties turn into ‘Strategic Partnership’,

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on April, 26 Bangladesh and Japan successfully elevated the bilateral relations to a ‘Strategic Partnership’ from the existing ‘Comprehensive Partnership’.

‘Prime Minister Kishida and I have discussed today the entire gamut of our bilateral relations. We are happy that Bangladesh and Japan have successfully elevated the bilateral relations to a ‘Strategic Partnership’ from the existing ‘Comprehensive Partnership’, she said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made the remarks in a joint statement after exchanging several instruments signed between the two sides following bilateral talks with her Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida at the Prime Minister’s Office.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida held a bilateral meeting at the latter's office in Tokyo on April, 26

‘Our two sides have signed agreements and memorandums which will further institutionalize our future cooperation in the areas of agriculture, customs matters, defence, ICT and cyber-security, industrial upgrading, intellectual property, ship recycling and metro rail,’ she added. *Source: The Financial Express*

2 May, 2023

WB to provide \$2.25b for five BD projects

The World Bank will provide Bangladesh with loans worth US\$2.25 billion to finance the growth, regional connectivity, and disaster preparedness programmes.

The financing agreements were signed on five projects during the celebration of 50 years of ‘strong partnership’ between the World Bank (WB) and Bangladesh in Washington, USA on May, 2.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina exchanged views with WB President David Malpass at a meeting on the occasion of 50 years of ‘strong partnership’ between the World Bank and Bangladesh in Washington, USA on May 2

‘Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and World Bank Group President David Malpass commemorated 50 years of partnership between Bangladesh and the World Bank at the institution’s headquarters,’ said a WB statement.

The partnership has helped lift millions of Bangladeshis out of poverty and supported the country’s economic growth and development, it said. *Source: The Financial Express*

11 May, 2023

PM seeks more funds from rich countries to ensure universal healthcare

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May, 11 urged the rich countries to support the efforts to ensure universal healthcare for the lagging-behind countries of the world.

‘Rich countries must step forward to ensure universal healthcare. In this connection, funds (finance) have to be disbursed,’ she said.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina exchanges pleasantries with Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand and co-chair of the Chatham House Commission, at a programme at Hotel InterContinental in Dhaka on May 11

The Prime Minister said this while addressing a high level programme titled ‘Accelerating Universal Health Coverage Towards Smart Bangladesh’ at Hotel InterContinental.

Former Prime Minister of New Zealand and co-chair of the Chatham House Commission Helen Clark also spoke at the programme as the special guest.

The programme was divided in two parts - in the first part the chief guest, special guests and experts answered various questions.

This part of the programme was moderated by Saima Wazed Putul, Adviser on Mental Health and Autism to the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) and Commissioner of the Chatham House Commission on Public Health.

Source: The Financial Express

12 May, 2023

PM urges Indian Ocean countries to foster cooperation, partnership

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May 12 raised six priority areas for the countries of the Indian Ocean region, including fostering maritime diplomacy and partnership, and strengthening maritime security and mutual trust for prosperity for all. ‘Despite its potential, the region faces many challenges. The countries in the Indian Ocean region, therefore, need to foster partnerships and cooperation for ensuring peace, and prosperity for all,’ she said while inaugurating the 6th Indian

Ocean Conference (IOC)-2023 at a city hotel in the capital.

Dhaka is hosting the two-day conference with participation of the high-level government delegations and think-tanks from at least 25 countries.

Addressing the inaugural session, Hasina said given its geographical position, the Indian Ocean holds significant importance for not only Bangladesh, but

for all the countries in the region. Bangladesh has recently formulated its Indo-Pacific Outlook, she said. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaking as the chief guest while inaugurating the 6th Indian Ocean Conference (IOC)- 2023 at a city hotel on May 12



UAE's newly appointed ambassador to Bangladesh Abdulla Ali AlHmoudi paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Ganobhaban on May 17

17 May, 2023

UAE offers support in sea port building, Envoy tells PM

The United Arab Emirates will continue its cooperation with Bangladesh in the development of its infrastructure and sea ports for mutual benefits.

The UAE's newly appointed ambassador to Bangladesh Abdulla Ali AlHmoudi said this during a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban on May, 17.

The ambassador recalled that the foundation of the bilateral relation between Bangladesh and the UAE was laid by fathers of the two nations Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

and Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan through a visit to the Gulf nation by Bangabandhu in 1974.

The PM welcomed the new UAE envoy in Dhaka and assured him of providing all cooperation during his stay in Bangladesh. *Source: The Financial Express*

19 May, 2023

Prime Minister open Hajj Programme-2023

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May, 19 inaugurated the Hajj Programme-2023 (1444 Hijri), urging pilgrims to pray that Bangladesh and its people are protected from any man-made or natural disaster. ‘I would like to request you to pray so that any disaster or crisis -either man-made or natural- can’t damage Bangladesh and the people of Bangladesh,’ she said.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina offers prayer at the inaugural function of the Hajj Programme-2023 (1444 Hijri) at the Hajj Camp at Ashkona in the capital on May 19

The premier opened the programme at the Hajj camp in the capital’s Ashkona and later she exchanged greetings with the hajj pilgrims.

This year, a total of 122,221 pilgrims from Bangladesh are going to perform the holy hajj. But the number of hajj pilgrims from Bangladesh was 57,585 last year due to Covid-19 restriction. *Source: The Financial Express*

23 May, 2023

How BD becomes role model for development, PM tells Qatar students

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May, 23 spelled out seven suggestions, which she earned from the experience of her life, among the students of Qatar for becoming future leaders.

‘I would like to share a few suggestions for future leaders from my life’s experience and struggles: 1st: Represent a value, 2nd: Remain focused on your vision, 3rd: Make concrete plans to realize your vision, 4th: Lead by example and be the change-maker, 5th: Trust your people and team, 6th: Invoke your maternal spirit, and 7th: Embrace the new and the future,’ she said.

She made the suggestions while delivering her speech before the students of Qatar University at its Research Complex auditorium in Doha.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina delivering speech before the students of Qatar University at its Research Complex Auditorium in Doha on May 23

The theme of the event ‘A session with Prime Minister of Bangladesh’ was ‘Bangladesh: a Development Model: Learning from Sheikh Hasina.’

‘In 2015, Bangladesh became a lower middle-income country, and we envision it becoming an upper-middle-income country by 2031 and a high-income one by 2041. Meanwhile, we have been qualified to graduate to a developing country by 2026 from the LDC category,’ she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

28 May, 2023

Peaceful democratic atmosphere helps attain massive progress: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May, 28 said Bangladesh doesn’t want any more conflict rather it wants to improve the quality of people’s lives.

‘We don’t want any more unrest and conflict. We want to improve the quality of people’s lives. And we always wish it,’ she said. ‘Bangladesh has been able to attain socioeconomic development due to the peaceful democratic environment



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveils the cover of the souvenir published on the occasion of the golden jubilee of the conferment of the Joliot-Curie Peace Medal to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on May 28

prevailing in the country since 2008 election as Awami League won the elections and formed the government in 2009,' she added.

The Premier made these remarks while addressing a function organised to celebrate the golden jubilee of the conferment of the Joliot-Curie Peace Medal to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The PM also released a first day cover and commemorative stamp and unveiled a souvenir publication on this occasion.

A documentary on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's JulioCurie Peace Prize award was screened at the programme. Later, the Prime Minister witnessed a colourful cultural programme organised by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founder of the Bengali nation-state and the architect of independence, the forerunner of democracy and peace movement, was awarded the JulioCurie Peace Prize by the World Peace Council on May 23, 1973. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses an event at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka marking the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers on May 29

29 May, 2023

Int'l Day of UN Peacekeepers-2023 observed

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May, 29 said maintaining peace in the world has now become more difficult than in the past as evil forces are using advanced technology against it. 'With the recent development and advancement of technology, new threats of evil forces are increasing,' she said.

The Prime Minister was addressing a programme marking the International Day of UN Peacekeepers-2023 at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC).

The Prime Minister reiterated that Bangladesh believes in peace and would do whatever is required for peace. 'We believe in peace, not in conflict. Bangladesh always believes in peace and it would do whatever is required to establish peace,' she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

30 May, 2023

Significant amount of wealth can bring back lost glory of Muslims, says PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on May, 30 urged the Muslim community to set

aside their differences and work together to regain the glorious heritage the Islamic world once had in science, philosophy, medicine and other fields of enlightenment. ‘Today, Muslims are in possession of a significant amount of wealth. We can bring back our lost heritage by using this resource for the development of science and modern technology. I believe it,’ she said.

The premier was addressing as the chief guest the 35th Convocation Ceremony of Islamic University of Technology (IUT) held on its campus. IUT Chancellor and also OIC Secretary-General Hissein Brahim Taha presided over the function.

Hasina said Muslim scholars had reached the pinnacle of success in the fields of science, history, literature, philosophy, chemistry, mathematics, medicine, astronomy, geography, and in many other branches during the golden age of the Islam. The PM stressed the need for analyzing the reasons behind the fall of the Muslims who once had the glorious heritage. *Source: The Financial Express*

1 June, 2023

Govt unveils Tk 7.61 trillion national budget for the FY 2023-2024

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal placed the annual budget, amounting to Tk 7.61 trillion for FY 2023-24, before the national parliament on June 1. This budget, larger by 12.34 percent than the current fiscal’s \$6.78 trillion budget.

The proposed budget is designed to mitigate inflation, currently a key concern, expand the social safety net, spur job creation, and foster notable growth, all geared towards advancing ongoing development and reducing poverty.

A Tk 2.63 trillion Annual Development Programme (ADP), prioritising the transport and power sectors, has been selected for FY24.

The budget provides for substantial expenditures, including Tk 4,842.03 billion for operating costs. Of this amount, Tk 943.78 billion is earmarked for interest payments, Tk 800 billion for public servant salaries and expenses, Tk 1.10 trillion for subsidies, and Tk 1,262.72 billion for social safety nets.

The government has set annual growth target for the upcoming fiscal at 7.5 percent, compared to the current fiscal’s provisional estimate of 6.03 percent. Efforts will be made to limit inflation to 6.5 percent, which stood at 8.4 percent in April.



Along with Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joins the Budget Session for FY 2023-2024 in the Parliament on June 1, 2023

The total investment target for the next year is set at 33.8 percent of the GDP. The government aims to garner a potential revenue of Tk 5 trillion, approximately Tk 670 billion more than FY23. The NBR is expected to collect Tk 4.30 trillion in taxes, and non-NBR revenue is projected at Tk 200 billion, with an additional Tk 500 billion targeted as non-tax revenue.

The government will focus on the ICT sector and power sector to foster ‘Smart Bangladesh’, and also prioritise the education sector to offset the learning loss from the COVID-19 pandemic. *Source : The Daily Sun*

4 June, 2023

PM Opens new intercity train ‘Chilahati Express’

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June, 4 said her government will be able to implement the Tk 7.62 trillion national budget for 2023-24 fiscal year.

“We’re firmly committed to implementing this budget and we’ll be able to do it. Awami League will be able to do it,” she said



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joined the commissioning ceremony of new intercity train ‘Chilahati Express’ at the Chilahati Railway Station in Nilphamari through videoconferencing from her official residence Ganobhaban on June 4

The premier said this while addressing the commissioning ceremony of new intercity train ‘Chilahati Express’ on Dhaka-Chilahati-Dhaka route. She joined the event at Chilahati Railway Station in Nilphamari through a virtual platform from her official residence Ganobhaban.

She flagged off the ‘Chilahati Express’ which will run on the route six days a week. The capacity of the intercity train is 800 passengers.

The PM said an initiative has been taken to collect 46 more broad-gauge locomotives, 460 broad-gauge passenger carriages, 150 meter-gauge passenger carriages, 125 modern luggage vans and 1,310 new wagons. *Source: The Financial Express*

5 June, 2023

Plant trees to protect BD from climate change: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June 5 called upon the countrymen to plant trees to protect Bangladesh from the adverse impacts of climate changes.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina planted three saplings on the premises of Ganobhaban as part of the inauguration of the World Environment Day & Environment Fair-2023 and National Tree Plantation Campaign & Tree Fair-2023 on June 5

‘I would like to urge all to protect the environment of Bangladesh because it is our duty to protect our country from the adverse impact of climate change,’ she said while planting trees on the premises of her official residence Ganobhaban on the World Environment Day 2023.

The premier planted three saplings as part of the inauguration of the Environment Fair-2023, National Tree Plantation Campaign and Tree Fair-2023. *Source: The Financial Express*

12 June, 2023

PM unveils book titled ‘Bhayera Amar’

Book contains 200 speeches of Bangabandhu

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June 12 unveiled a book containing 200 speeches of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The book titled ‘Bhayera Amar’ was unveiled at the beginning of the cabinet meeting held at the PMO.

The name ‘Bhayera Amar (My Brothers)’ has been given by the Prime Minister herself, according to a release from PMO Press Wing. She also wrote the introduction of the book.

The main feature of this collection of speeches of the Father of the Nation is that it includes all the speeches available so far. All the speeches have been collected, compiled and edited by PM’s speech writer M Nazrul Islam. The book has been published by Genius Publications.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveiled a book titled ‘Bhayera Amar’ containing 200 speeches of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on June 12

The accuracy and reliability of each speech has been duly verified. The book highlights the important parts of each speech and displays them separately. Besides, the content, year and date of each speech are mentioned in the index.

In the introduction of the book, the Prime Minister mentioned, ‘The new generation, especially the leaders, activists and supporters of Awami League, should not only read Bangabandhu’s speeches, but also understand their meaning and practice it in their own lives.’ *Source: The Daily Star*

13 June, 2023

ADB approves \$400m loan to support Bangladesh’s economy

The Asian Development Bank on June, 13 approved a \$400 million loan to Bangladesh to advance reforms in domestic resource mobilization, improve efficiency and productivity of public spending, and help small businesses – especially women-led businesses – to access low-cost innovative bank financing.

This loan is ADB’s second subprogram of the Sustainable Economic Recovery Program that was launched in October 2021 to support economic recovery after the Covid pandemic.

‘The subprogram, with a strong focus on gender, climate change, and digitization, enables the government to strengthen its efforts to support income generation for the poor and vulnerable,’ he added.

The program will enhance income tax collection through the adoption of the new Income Tax Act, reduce tax loopholes, strengthen compliance and enforcement measures, and broaden the country’s tax net. *Source: The New Age*

14 June, 2023

Prime Minister attended ‘World Work Summit’ in Geneva

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on June, 14 urged the international community to invest in social justice in order to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies across the world. ‘We can achieve lasting peace and sustainable development on



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the plenary session of two-day ‘World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All’ in Geneva on June 14

the foundation of social justice. We must invest in social justice in our efforts to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies worldwide,' she said.

The premier was addressing the plenary session of the two-day 'World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All' in Geneva, which is a high-level forum for global voices to address the need for increased, coordinated and coherent action in support of social justice.

The ILO's summit has brought together over a dozen heads of state and government, high-level representatives from the United Nations, other international organizations, and employers' and workers' organizations. *Source: The Financial Express*

15 June, 2023

Make sure 4IR doesn't undermine humanity: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said it must be ensured that the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) tools are not used to hurt or undermine humanity.

Prime Minister said this while responding to a question in a programme titled 'A talk at the event on New Economy and Society in Smart Bangladesh' organised by the World Economic Forum at its office Geneva on June 15.

We want to make sure that 4IR does not create further divides within our society. We must build effective public-private partnership at the

international level for this purpose," she said. In this connection, she said that her government has started preparing youth of the country for 4IR and the future of work. *Source: The Financial Express*

18 June, 2023

Parliament passes Income-tax Bill

The much-talked-about Income-tax Ordinance Amendment Bill 2023 was passed in parliament on June 18 with some changes prescribed by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Finance.

Opposition lawmakers presented 80 amendment proposals to the Bill, which was placed in the House on June 8, 2023.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at a session, titled 'A talk at the event on New Economy and Society in Smart Bangladesh', organised by World Economic Forum in Geneva on June 15

The committee has put forward a set of recommendations, which includes exempting bank depositors with up to Tk one million deposits (credit balance) from the mandatory submission of tax returns.

However, instead, the committee has proposed making return submission mandatory for bank depositors who have term or fixed deposits of the same amount.

According to official sources, many banks are requesting depositors to provide proof of tax return submission, regardless of their deposited amount, even though there is a specified ceiling for this requirement.

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury presided over the House, where the leader of the House, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was also present. *Source: The Financial Express*

20 June, 2023

ECNEC revises nine projects

Executive committee of the National Economic Council in a meeting on June 20 approved 17 proposals while nine of them were revised.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presides over the meeting of Executive Committee of the National Economic Council in NEC auditorium at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar on June 20

Presided over by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the planning commission, the ECNEC approved the revised project proposals.

The approved revised projects include installation of solar-powered irrigation pumps, establishment of Bangladesh Chancery in Germany, construction of a part of Sunamgang-Habiganj road, third urban governance and infrastructure improvement project, Khurushkul special ashrahan project, rural connectivity improvement project, construction of a bridge over Teesta River, making durable rural road by herringbone bond and rehabilitation of Shahbazpur-Kulaura rail line.

Source: The New Age

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



Eye catching *Krishnachura* (*Delonix regia*) & *Sonalu* (*Cassia fistula*) flowers in summer



Department of Films and Publications

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