

Bangladesh

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Quarterly



How Bangabandhu Became a Great Political Leader (1920-1975)

Golden Jubilee of Independence: Bangladesh and Bangabandhu Entwined Inseparably

Bangladesh Development Surprise: 2009-2020



Bangladesh

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President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina offered prayer after placing wreaths at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman marking his birth anniversary and the National Children's Day at Dhanmondi on March 17, 2021



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As decided by the government, on the occasion of the centennial birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the 'Mujib Borsho' which started on 17th March last year will continue till 16th December 2021. To be a great and successful political leader, a person must have some good qualities and characteristics like leadership capability, integrity, charity, philanthropy, generosity, motivation, moral courage and, above all, love for the people and the country. Bangabandhu was not an exception. From the very school life, his dynamic leadership role and skills began to be evident through different activities and from his boyhood, he was very philanthropic by nature. The nation is celebrating the centennial birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation in a befitting manner.

Bangladesh is also celebrating the Golden jubilee of Independence that commenced on 26th March this year. In the last 50 years, Bangladesh became a miracle in the realm of global development. Bangladesh is no more an agro-based country now, rather its economy is mostly propelled by the services and industrial sectors. Even the growth rate in Bangladesh has remained positive, when most of the countries of the world have recorded negative growth rates owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. If this unprecedented development march of Bangladesh continues, then Bangladesh would be accorded the status of a developed nation by the middle of this century.

During the last 12 years the present government has made significant progress in different sectors. At present the GDP of Bangladesh is more than US\$ 300 billion with about 7 percent annual growth rate and the per capita income has exceeded US\$ 2000. Bangladesh is also self sufficient in food production.

It is hoped that the readers will find the articles useful on the above subjects along with other write-ups accommodated in this issue.

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How Bangabandhu Became a Great Political Leader (1920-1975)

Dr. Md. Matiur Rahman Khan

the attention of the people and thus he earns name and fame and becomes an influential political role model among the people of the country. His feelings for people always lead him to stand by those who are in distress. His objectives are to emancipate people and make the society or country free from the exploitation and repression of the autocratic rulers or government. He fights for the establishment of justice, rights of the people in order to ensure the freedom of people in every sphere of life. A successful leader has command and control on the people of the country. And the people of the country spontaneously obey him and accept his leadership. A key and true leader can easily understand the mind of the people and also can easily mingle with them as one soul.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib, the Supreme Command of the Liberation War, Father of the Nation, and sculptor of Bangladesh was an uncompromising leader who struggled for the emancipation of the Bengali people from the suppression and subjugation of the Pakistani rulers. And he could ultimately free the Bengali people and brought them an independent country- Bangladesh. This has been possible because of his tested leadership abilities and qualities. In leadership position, he ranks with the world leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Nelson Mandela, Mao Zedong (founding father of the People's Republic of China).

Bangabandhu's life from his boyhood was very eventful, active and hectic. From the very school life, his dynamic leadership role and skills began to be evident through different incidents and activities. From his boyhood, he was very philanthropic and altruistic by nature, and was a great friend to the needy and the poor. Students at that time usually would go to school on foot through rain and sun without any umbrella. This miserable condition of the poor students who did not

To be a great and outstandingly successful political leader, a person must have some good qualities and characteristics in order to get public opinion, gain popularity and win the souls of people. An ideal leader earns and builds up confidence, reliability and trust of people through his personality, integrity, honesty, capability, charity, philanthropy, generosity, motivation, moral courage and duties to uphold humanity and, above all, love for the people and the country. He must have positive listening attitude towards the people and at the same time must have effective communication skills for and outlook on the common people too. His dedication, sacrifice, benevolence, altruism and motivational power are important attributes that draw

have any umbrella gave Mujib much pain. He tried to help the poor students and minimize their sufferings. And with this end in view, he very often gave his own umbrella to the students who did not have any. For his beneficent acts, the family needed to buy for him a few umbrellas every month.

He was so humane that he could not put up with the pain and privation of the poor people. In this connection, an event of Bangabandhu needs to be mentioned here: Once upon a time Bangabandhu's mother was standing under a mango tree waiting for her Khoka (Mujib) to come. After a short while, she saw that Khoka was coming with his body wrapped in a wrapper. Later, the reason was discovered that he did not have his dress on. It is because he gave his wearing dress to a needy and poor boy who had a very shabby and worn out dress on.

The life of this great leader is full of exciting and thrilling episodes and bold occurrences. Such unusually bold and daring occurrences began to happen from the very early life of Sheikh Mujib. It happened while Sheikh Mujib was a student of Gopal Ganj Mission School in 1938. In the same year, the then Chief Minister of Bengal, A K Fazlul Huq, and the Commerce and Rural Development Minister Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy went to visit Gopal Ganj Mission School. At that time, the students' hostel of the Mission School was so dilapidated that rain water seeped in the room through the cracks and the pores of the roof of the hostel building. The roof was not repaired despite repeated applications to the concerned authorities. However, after the school visit, while the two ministers were returning to Gopalganj Dak-Bungalow, they found a young student along with some of his classmates was standing on the way obstructing their passage. The ministers were surprised at the boldness of the boy. On approaching near the boy, the Chief Minister said to him 'Who are you? What do you want? Why are you obstructing our way?' My name is Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the others are my classmates. 'We have come here with a complaint, sir'. The young student Sheikh Mujib replied. 'Complaint, what type of complaint?' said Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy. 'Sir, rain



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

water seeps in our hostel room through the cracks and pores of the roof of our hostel building, and this water drenches and soaks our books and beds and we cannot sleep or stay in. We applied to the authorities for repair of the roof but they paid no heed to our appeal. The ministers were amazed at the bold but true statement.

Then the ministers went to the Dak-Bungalow. Thereafter the Chief Minister declared that he had donated Tk 1200.00 from his discretionary fund for the repair of the Gopalganj Mission School Hostel. Then commerce Minister Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy created still a greater surprise by sending out a slip of paper to Sheikh Mujib with a request to meet him in the Dak-Bungalow that night. He then discussed many things with Mujib. Suhrawardy could understand that he got in him the merit and spark that he was looking for throughout his political life. Suhrawardy gave Mujib his address of residence in Kolkata and asked him to meet him there. Thus, Mujib got his political mentor and started gradually to be involved in politics with Suhrawardy and began developing his political career.

After passing the Matriculation Examination from Gopalganj School, he got himself admitted in the Islamia College in Kolkata and started putting up in the



Baker Hostel, Kolkata

Baker Hostel. There he was elected Secretary General of the Students' Union of the Islamia College. From that college, he passed his BA in 1947. Then he came to Dhaka and got himself admitted in the Department of Law in Dhaka University. Thereafter, in March, 1949, a general strike of the third-and -fourth-class employees on their certain just and rightful demands was going on. Sheikh Mujib lent support to the

legitimate claims and strike of the employees. As a result of his support, he was expelled from Dhaka University. Moreover, he was arrested on 19th April and was sent to jail on the ground that he took part in sit-in-strike in front of the Vice-Chancellor's official residence. Then after many days, he was released from jail. However, by that time, a new political party Awami Muslim League was formed on 23 June of the same year while he was still in jail. Despite that he was inducted Joint secretary of its elected committee. Mujib from here started his active political career.

In connection with this context, it may be pointed out that Pakistan was already created on 14th August, 1947, and after its creation, a severe food crisis visited Purbabangla (eastern part of Pakistan) and it continued up to 1949. During the critical time of food shortage, Liaquat Ali Khan came to Dhaka and on the ground of his coming to Dkhaka on 11 October 1959; a demonstration was organized

throughout the country against the provincial government and the terrible famine. As a result of the demonstration, police arrested 11 leaders including Sheikh Mujib and Maulana Bhashani on the charge of leading the 'Hungry People's Procession'. Sheikh Mujib was confined in jail for more than two years and five months at a stretch.

Incidentally it may be mentioned that the despotic and oppressive rulers of West Pakistan had been showing the discriminatory and differential treatment in political, administrative, military, economic, educational, developmental, sectors with the Bengali speaking people in the then Purbabangla since the independence of Pakistan. The ruling leaders took advantage of the people of Purbabangla (later East Pakistan) and deprived them of their privileges in various ways. As a result, the sufferings and hardship of the Bengali speaking people grew more and more. More importantly, the Pakistani rulers tried to gag and silence the mother tongue of the Bengali people by imposing Urdu as the state language of Pakistan. Over that period, only a minority of 3.27% of people spoke Urdu and on the other hand, a majority of 56 % of the total population of Pakistan spoke Bengali. In spite of being the Bengali speaking people the vast majority, Pakistani rulers imposed Urdu as the state language. But the Bengali speaking people demanded that Bangla must be given the status of state language.

At that time Sheikh Mujib was involved in student politics. Mujib was very proactive during the strikes and protested against the language policy of Pakistan government. In the early phase of the language movement at the beginning of 1948, Mujib played a key role in shaping the language movement into a mass movement. He organised rallies and strikes for building awareness against the discriminatory language policy. With this end in view, an 'All Party Action Committee' was formed. A strike was called on 11 March, 1948 to press the demand of recognising Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan. During early days of March, 1948, Mujib organised the students of the districts of Faridpur, Jashore, Doulatpur, Khulna, and Barisal to build up public support for the movement. During the strike, Mujib led the protesters in Dhaka city. Shortly thereafter, police assaulted and arrested him and his associates. Later the government was compelled to release him and his associates. Then Mujib went campaigning around the country to garner support for the language movement. The whole province began vibrating with rallies, processions and relentless slogans. The first Governor General of Pakistan Mohammad Ali Jinnah on March 21, 1948, in the Ramna Racecourse Maiden and on March 24, 1948 at the Convocation Ceremony of the University of Dhaka declared, 'Urdu, and only Urdu shall be the state language of Pakistan' This declaration angered and enraged the students and the people alike.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, organized the movement against that declaration. Then a political party 'Purbo Pakistan Awami Muslim League' was formed on 23 June, 1949 with the founding president Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani. Sheikh Mujib as a young politician joined the party and played his active role. However, to make it acceptable as a secular political party equally to the Muslims and the Hindus, Purbo Pakistan Awami Muslim League was renamed as 'Awami League' on October, 1955 in the Awami Muslim League Session. The branches of this new political party were established in both parts of Pakistan.

However, thereafter an 'All-Party State Language Struggle Council' was formed

to resist the imposing of Urdu as a state language. In 1952 the movement was intensified to establish Bangla as the state language. Student community organized protest processions, rallies and meetings in demand of Bangla as the state language. On February 14, 1952 just a week before the movement was reaching its peak, Mujib got arrested. During February 1952, imprisoned Mujib was admitted at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. While in captivity Mujib stayed in constant touch with those who waged the movement.

On 21 February, 1952, in defiance of the ban imposed under section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code, students held rallies and demonstrations in front of the Medical College Hostel in Dhaka and blocked the legislators' way. The Pakistani barbaric Armed Police forces opened fire where the students held demonstrations. In consequence of firing, a number of students including Abdus Salam, Rafiq Uddin Ahmed, Abul Barkat, Abdul Jabbar and others were martyred by the bullets of the Pakistani forces. Actually since then the seed of the movement against the Pakistani rulers for a separate land was sowed. On 21 February, 1953 Mujib led the procession commemorating the language martyrs. He and his fellow commemorators raised a demand that 21 February as Shaheed Dibosh. The demand also included Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan with immediate effect. Thenceforth, the Pakistani rulers were involved in criminal and political conspiracies one after another against the Bengali speaking people. But as luck would have it for the Bengali people, the landslide victory of the United Front and the debacle of the Muslim League in the election of 1952 made the power base of the ruling people of Pakistan shaky.



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

Then the political scenario changed. Ayub Khan proclaimed martial law in 1958, formed 'Sharif Commission' in order to reform the Education System of the country. Sharif Commission submitted its new Education Policy in 1960, where Urdu was recommended as the universal language and free education was reported as useless. The recommendations in the report were full of in controversies. Though the Education policy was implemented with effect from 1960, no protest could be organized because of martial law in the country. But movement started against Ayub Khan on different issues from 1962. Sheikh Mujib the leader of Awami League was directly involved in the student movement against the Education Commission. He was also involved in the strike of the educational institutes held on September 17. And under Mujib's direct

instruction, Chhatra League and Chhatra Union organized movement across the country against Ayub Khan.

By this time, great leader Sheikh Mujib understood that the people of the then East Pakistan would not be safe from the Pakistani rulers until the people of East Pakistan got their autonomy. With this objective in mind, Mujib prepared the six-point demand, a charter of emancipation of the people of the then East Pakistan. Thereafter, Sheikh Mujib the President of Awami League (1966-1974) placed and highlighted the 6-point demand in the convention of the opposition held on 5-6 February, 1966 in Lahore. On hearing the 6-point demand, the present 735 representatives turned down the demand right away on the spot. Sheikh Mujib in protest left the convention and came back to the then East Pakistan. Later, as a sequel to 6-point demand, Sheikh Mujib was implicated as an accused on a charge of sedition in 1968 and was put on trial in the historic Agartala Case in which there were 35 accused of which Mujib was number 1. The case led to mass upsurge in 1969 and the government was forced to withdraw the case and release him on February 22, 1969. On the occasion of his release, a grand public reception rally was organized on the Racecourse Maiden on February 23, 1969. In that big rally, the appellation of 'Bangabandhu' was conferred on Sheikh Mujib in Raman Maiden.

Thereafter, came the election of 1970, Awami League emerged as a single largest party in the National Assembly and Provincial Assembly by winning absolute majority of 98% votes because of Sheikh Mujib. Therefore, in recognition of his unparalleled role for the nation, the 'All Party Students' Action Council' arranged a vast public meeting at Palton Maiden in Dhaka, where Sajahan Seraj the then General Secretary of Chhatra League read out the communiqué of the party. In the communiqué with unanimous and harmonious consent Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib was declared the 'Father of the Nation' because he taught and made the Bengali Nation to hold its head high by dint of his effective leadership.

However, in spite of glorious and great victory of Awami League in the Election of 1970, the then military ruler of Pakistan dictator Yahya did not hand over the power to the elected representatives of Awami League. The common people of East Pakistan including students, workers, government and nongovernmental officers, and employees burst into violent protest. But defying and disregarding the sentiment of the people, Yahya started to dilly-dally and shilly-shally to hand over the powers to the elected leaders. He plotted a conspiracy to annihilate the



Bangabandhu attending first time in liberated Bangladesh at Dhaka Racecourse Ground, 10 January 1972

entire Bengali nation. Sensing the sinister motive of Yahya, Bangabandhu called a meeting on the 7th March, 1971 at the Race Course Maiden where there was a large and vast meeting. Bangabandhu made a clarion call to the large gathering for independence and said, 'The struggle this time is the struggle for our liberation. The struggle this time is the struggle for our independence'. Actually at the call of Bangabandhu, the non-cooperation movement started from 7th March, 1971 and continued till 25th March, 1971. Shrewd Yahya, the military ruler in the name of holding talks came to Dhaka and ended the talks with no fruitful result. But before he left Dhaka on March 25, he gave the soldiers directives to annihilate the people.

Thereafter, on the black night of 25th March, 1971, the barbaric and brutish soldiers of Pakistan indiscriminately killed unarmed Bangalee men, women and children. They captured Bangabandhu from his residence, took him to West Pakistan and put him in Mianwali Central Jail there. Liberation war started in full swing and continued for about 9 (nine) months. During the Liberation War of 1971, 30 lakh people embraced martyrdom and about 2 lakh women lost their chastity and the country was ravaged by the marauding barbaric soldiers. Bangabandhu was confined in Mianwali Central Jail in West Pakistan. His grave was dug by the lock-up to bury him there. But dauntless, heroic, brave and valiant Bangabandhu did not give in nor did he yield to any fear or favour of the Pakistan Army.

Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India took vigorous steps and wrote letters to 67 governments of the important countries with a request to put pressure on Pakistan government to stop the trial of travesty, save his life and release him from captivity of Pakistan. Again Indira Gandhi personally met the governments



Japanese Survey team called on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to discuss the feasibility for building a bridge on the river Jamuna, 1972.



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took oath as President on 12 January 1972

of 5 European countries and the government of the USA and worked hard in order to create the situation in favour of Bangladesh. By this time international pressure in order to release him mounted on Pak Army to such a great extent that at one stage the Pak Army was compelled to release him on 8 January, 1972. Bangabandhu returned home on 10 January, 1972. He was given a warm, enthusiastic and rousing reception in Dhaka. On 12 January 1972, Bangabandhu became the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. However, after some years, on 25 January 1975 the country switched over to the presidential system of governance and Bangabandhu became the president of the country and continued his office till he, along with the other members of his family, received martyrdom on 15th August, 1975. We pray for the salvation of their souls.

The independence that we enjoy now is the result of Bangabandhu's bold and organised activities and commitment to emancipate the nation from the bondage. During his political career, he served the term of imprisonment for 4,682 days in jail that was more than 12 years in different times on different issues during his political life. He was incarcerated 18 times in jail, and he stood in the dock of the accused at court in 24 cases. We find that Bangabandhu's love for the country and the people, his indomitable courage and, above all, his leadership abilities and his firm determination to free the nation and the people from the shackle of slavery and servitude led him to be the great leader both in national and international levels. We feel proud of this great leader.

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



The 7 March Speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and its Background

Lt. Col. (Retd.) Quazi Sajjad Ali Zahir, Bir Pratik

The political situation of the East Pakistan became agitated for realizing various demands since the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. From that time, he addressed public gatherings in many occasions for establishing rights of the mass people. The speech of 7 March of 1971 was a prominent address of those addresses. This speech was an ultimate directive for successive movements for liberation from the long exploitation, deprivation and belittling of the Bangalee nation. By that time, Awami League led by Bangabandhu won absolute majority in both the assemblies through the general elections held on the 7th and 17th December 1970. Before taking oath in the national and provincial assemblies, Bangabandhu and the members of his party set an example in the history of parliamentary democracy. On the 1st January 1971, they demanded that Pakistani military ruler Yahya Khan had to call parliament session without any delay, and that session would be held in Dhaka. On 3 January, Bangabandhu administered the oath taking of the members of parliament of Awami League in the Race Course Maidan. The party MPs took their oath to frame the constitution of the country on the basis of 6 points and 11 points charter and stay loyal to the people. Then till 13

The greatest Bangalee of all times Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a farsighted politician. He was the proclaimer of the Independence of Bangladesh, steward of the War of Liberation, architect of the Independent Bangladesh and the undisputed leader of the helpless, oppressed and suppressed, toiling and starving masses. The hard working people had always been close to him.

Bangabandhu, The War of Liberation and Bangladesh are tied in a single thread. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a legendary personality in the thousand year old history of Bengal. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is one of the memorable personalities who came out wreaking the darkness of our contemporary national life though their own shining achievements. He stewarded the Bengali nation to the right direction of liberation breaking the shackles of darkness, subjugation, reign, repression and exploitation. Because of his uncompromising struggle and courage, unparalleled love for the country and the countrymen and leadership, we are sovereign today.

January, there were meeting after meeting between President Yahya Khan and Bangabandhu. Yahya Khan while departing for the West Pakistan informed journalists in the Dhaka Airport; Sheikh Mujibur Rahman would be the next Prime Minister of Pakistan soon. On the national parliament session, he said, the date of the parliament session had not been fixed yet, and for that if needed, he might come to Dhaka again. It was his ill- motivated speech.

On 16 January, Yahya Khan sat in a secret meeting with the officials of military and intelligence departments in Karachi and it was disclosed to media on that day that the President would leave Karachi on the following day to hunt birds. On 17 January, in the name of bird hunting, the large team boarding three helicopters landed in the garden of the palace of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in Larkana. On that night, they did not make plan for bird hunting, rather, they chalked out blueprint for Bangalee hunting. This was the meeting known as 'Larkana Conspiracy'. The Pakistani Ruling Junta kept them engaged in the following days just for implementing this conspiracy. They decided that they would never hand over power to the Bangalee and hundreds of thousands soldiers would be sent from the West Pakistan to Bengal. They continued discussions with Bangabandhu during this time so that their real plot could not expose to the public. In line with this conspiracy, the Pakistan government started taking actions one by one. They continued sending troops in the East Pakistan using the air force's flights, some aircraft of PIA and some hired from Holland and some large vessels (for example, MV Swat, MV Endurance) . In this side, they continued fruitless discussions so that their motive could not spread among the people. Replacing Lt. General Yakub, punjabi Lt. General Tikka Khan, a butcher of Balochistan, was posted as commander of the Eastern command. By this time, Bangabandhu came to know various information like the conspiratorial large scale troops deployment in the East Pakistan, postponement of the parliament session by Yahya Khan on 1 March. So, he called non-cooperation movement and hartal programme from 1 March. He then decided to deliver a speech on 7 March on the Ramna Race Course Maidan to prepare the Bangalee nation for the future movement by uniting them and giving directives.

As per earlier declaration, at the call of Bangabandhu, the Race Course Maidan became a human sea on 7 March. At the time of danger, the people want directives from a courageous and virtuous leadership. That is why, the whole nation was very eagerly waiting to listen to his address. Bangabandhu delivered his instructive address in presence of tens of thousands of people on the Race Course Maidan at 3.30pm. The speech delivered by him is considered as an outstanding address in the world history. The 7 March speech of



Bangabandhu climbing on the stage



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

Bangabandhu was an extempore speech without having any written script. On that day, he delivered what he believed and what he realized from the core of heart. He, in his address, called for forging movement to liberate the country, what means, he indirectly called upon the countrymen for the Struggle of Independence. He said, 'If I am not able to convey order, it is my request to you, build up fort in every house. Combat the enemy with what you have, ...since we have already had to shed blood, we'll have to shed a lot more of it, by the grace of God, however, we'll be able to liberate the people of this land.....' Bangabandhu, in his address, urged the Bangalee nation to get preparation for the War of Independence to liberate the country and gave directive to continue the movement until the ultimate victory is achieved. This was his call for independence. This address by him inspired the countrymen resonating a deep revolutionary spirit. On that day, Bangabandhu, standing before a million of people, not only addressed 75 million more people deprived of rights in Bangladesh, rather through this address, he also triggered billions of exploited and oppressed people of the world to achieve independence and also would continue to do so in future.

Bangabandhu, in his address on that day said, 'The struggle this time is a struggle for freedom---the struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation.' Fire sparked from his voice. Though Bangabandhu was not a linguist or philologist, he is memorable for the depth, clarity and articulation of his speech on that day. Since the delivery of this address, the administration of the East Pakistan including all the offices, courts, schools, colleges, banks started running as an individual state following the directives of Bangabandhu. The 7 March speech of Bangabandhu was a direction and call for the War of Liberation. Being a member of the public, keeping shoulder to shoulder with all on that time, he got involved in the imbalanced war as a struggle for existence of a nation. As per instruction given in

this speech, the nation headed towards the struggle from that day. He highlighted the struggle and deprivation of the people of Bengal in his address in a easy and spontaneous style. The only way for the Bangalee to be free from the military rule of the West Pakistan is achieving independence, this was the message he very strategically pinned at the heart of the audience through his speech. Each and every word of his address created a deep impression in the mind of the people. This address would give guidance to the persecuted and the rights deprived people of the world era after era to their struggle for realizing their entitlement and materializing freedom. And that is why, UNESCO on 30 October 2017 included the 7 March Speech of Bangabandhu in the Memory of the World International Register as a World Documentary Heritage.

Many people compare the 7 March Speech of Bangabandhu with the addresses of great world leaders like 'Gettysburg Address' by US President Abraham Lincoln, 'I have a dream' by Martin Luther King, 'Give me liberty or give me death' by Patrick Henry. However, they had not to address under a pressure of the sky-high aspiration of 75 million people facing gun-point of military government in a very unprotected condition as Bangabandhu did. Bangabandhu, through his speech, transformed the unarmed Bangalee nation into an armed nation. On that day, the expectation from Bangabandhu as well as also a pressure on him from the people was declaring straight independence. The nation was waiting, would he call for independence just today! The people of the world was also anxious on that day. They could understand—Bangabandhu would no more negotiate with Pakistan, he would march forward to fulfill the long cherished dream of independence what he made the nation dream. But the very strategic Bangabandhu avoiding direct call for independence made the call for the same indirectly. Thus, he parallelly maintained the opportunity for discussion with the Pakistani military government. It was known to him that—a brigade of Pakistani soldiers (18 Punjab regiment, 32 Punjab regiment, 22 Baloch regiment, 31 field regiment, 30 frontier force, 4 armoured trunks), 16 fighter planes and 18 armoured helicopters were kept ready on that day at the cantonment near Dhaka for launching attack. If there was a direct declaration of independence, this huge regiment have had attacked hundreds of thousands of people. Moreover, there was also a risk that the Pakistani intelligence agencies would impose riot through creating anarchy in the meeting venue. He could realize that strength of the people is much more powerful than that of lethal weapons. He was ready to sacrifice himself despite having information on cruelty, deadly conspiracy and inevitable military combat by the Pakistanis and the terrific efforts by the Pakistanis to halt the emergence of the Bangalees. Bangabandhu delivered this speech staying accountable to a tyrant nation. What an extra-ordinary patriotism might lead him to deliver such a speech damn-caring life in an enemy cordoned environment! He delivered this speech expressing solidarity with the people in the struggle of existence. The great leader earned a profound position for him in the heart of the people. The valiant leader of the independence stood beside the deprived people and it gave rise a new hope. He had anticipation power, inspiration and extra-ordinary wit. Though he did not proclaim independence directly in his speech, he made a call for independence very tactfully. He had two options on that day. Either making direct announcement of independence of Bangladesh or delivering a deliberate speech without taking the blame of breaching Pakistan and not being branded as a separatist. The Pakistani military government was trying to

find a pretext to brand him as a separatist. But as he was cautious regarding the issue, he did not give them any such opportunity. Through his speech, he proved that he was a very sagacious leader. The Bangalee nation opted for war on 7 March through the age winning spirit just with the delivery of the speech of 18 minutes 31 seconds containing 1108 words. The 7 March was a grave moment for the Pakistan state, a new era and the greatest time in the life of Bangabandhu and a decision making moment of independence for the Bangalee nation. The nation took its route under his stewardship. Bangabandhu reminded the ordinary toiling masses the torture, injustice and exploitation of long 23 years. On that day, he was a vivid film of turbulent time. After 7 March address, the Bangalee started taking preparation for struggle in the call of Bangabandhu. The context of this preparation was the movement built up by the Bangalee against the long exploitation and deprivation caused by the Pakistani ruling regime and dillydally to handover power despite victory in the elections.

There is no doubt that when the historians and the researchers will evaluate the 7 March Speech of Bangabandhu, they would draw different conclusions. But they will express unanimous views without any hesitation on a single agenda and recognize that it was a call for independence and it was proved by the address that Bangabandhu was a strategist statesman. The High Court verdict on the historic Ramna Race Course Maidan said, Bangabandhu 'called for independence' on 7 March and on the first hour of 26 March, he made 'proclamation of independence'. In true sense, from 7 March to 25 March, Bangladesh was run as an independent state under the directive of Bangabandhu. Responding to his call, preparation for war and also training were continuing. As a sequence of this, with the attack on 25 March, a people's war began in the soil of Bengal.

When the destiny of a nation was being inevitably shattered by the stormy wind of history, at that point of time, Bangabandhu, through forming unity among the people of Bengal, called upon all to get prepare for making supreme sacrifice. Because, the leader could understand, welfare of the people of Bengal, their family happiness and flourishment in life in future embedded in bravery and self-sacrifice. It was known to him, in this soil, a new entity is going to get its own identity involving much pain as well as immense potentialities. The people of Bengal have grown a vast golden rice field pouring blood drop by drop and they would not backtrack after advancing such a long way. He accomplished the unfinished song of freedom of the thousand year-old Bangalee nation. In this speech, he reminded his another speech delivered in the Pakistan Parliament on 25 August 1955 in which he told, 'Jhulum math koro bhai' (brothers, stop torture). The more time will pass, the more the 7 March Speech of Bangabandhu will serve as the source of inspiration to the new generation of the world. On listening this speech, they would be imbued with patriotism to elevate the sonar(golden) bangla as dreamt by the Father of the Nation to the world arena as a developed country. And that is why, Cyril Dunn, a journalist of the London Observer said, 'Mujib is a full blooded Bengali—his courage and charm that flowed from him made him a unique superman in these times'.

Translated by Md. Saifullah, Senior Deputy Principal Information Officer, Press Information Department

The Author is an Independence Award Recipient, Padma Shri

Courtesy : Press Information Department



The Mujibnagar Government and Civil Servants' Role in the Liberation War

Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. But overall preparations were not yet ripe for an armed confrontation. Thus 25 March 1971 came as a shock to all, especially for those Bangali police, riflemen, bureaucrats and members of the army who put up the initial resistance.

The civil servants of Bangladesh, including members of the Police and Ansar forces, technical and professional personnel, played a crucial role in the days leading to the declaration of independence by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the subsequent War of Independence in 1971. As the non-cooperation movement against the Pakistani military regime gained momentum in March 1971, many in the eastern wing of the then Pakistan felt the impending need for an armed struggle. This was reflected in the historic 7th March speech delivered at Ramna Racecourse ground by the leader of the movement and victor in the General Elections of 1970 –



Mujibnagar Complex, Meherpur

In the backdrop of the historic 7 March call for independence by Bangabandhu, the then East Pakistan Association of CSP (Civil Service of Pakistan) officers informed all district administrations that they would no longer cooperate with the Pakistani regime. The CSP Officers' Association then started working in accordance with the instructions of the Awami League. The EPCS (East Pakistan Civil Service) officers of the province also joined hands with them in the non-cooperation movement.

On the night of 25 March 1971, genocide was started in Dhaka by the Pakistani military from 11.30 pm near midnight. The military campaign started according to the blueprint 'Operation Searchlight' prepared in Dhaka Cantonment on 18 March. Between March and December 1971, the Pakistani Army was encouraged to undertake indiscriminate armed attacks against unarmed Bangali civilians in the name of Islam and Pakistan. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the independence of Bangladesh in the early hours of 26 March 1971, shortly before he was arrested. His message was transmitted all over the country through the EPR transmitter.

Following the crackdown by the Pakistani Military on the night of 25 March, the Awami League leadership went into hiding. Later, they moved on to the liberated areas and Indian territories with the aim of leading the nation in its war of independence. On 10 April 1971, the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was constituted through a proclamation of independence issued from Mujibnagar. It confirmed the earlier declaration of independence made by Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu was named the President while Syed Nazrul Islam was made the Vice President. In the absence of the President, the Vice President was empowered to exercise the powers, duties and responsibilities of the President.

After the formation of the government, Chuadanga was declared the interim capital of independent Bangladesh. This invited intensified air attacks on Chuadanga by the Pakistani forces. Instead of getting bogged down by this onslaught, the Bangladesh government stuck to its decision to hold a formal inauguration ceremony at a place somewhere in the liberated areas of Chuadanga. This event was finally slotted for 17 April 1971, the venue being Mango Garden of Baidyanathala village (renamed Mujibnagar) under Meherpur subdivision. Local sector commander of the liberation forces Major Abu Osman Chowdhury was asked to remain present at the ceremony along with his troops. Battalion commander of the Indian Border Security Force Lieutenant Colonel Chakravarty was entrusted with the task of constructing the stage and other related arrangements including the provision of security.

The morning of 17 April saw hundreds of people thronging at the designated venue. At 9 am, Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam and Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad arrived at the scene, accompanied by Sub-divisional Officer of Meherpur Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury and the Sub-divisional Police Officer of Jhenaidaha Mahbubuddin Ahmed. Both of them had earlier defected to Bangladesh and were instrumental in launching the initial resistance against the Pakistani forces in the Kushtia-Jashore region.

In his memoir, Honorary Captain Dr. Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury (a former CSP



Mujibnagar, April 17, 1971: C-in-C Col. Osmany, Acting President Syed Nazrul Islam, and Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmed at the swearing in ceremony of the first Bangladesh government

and winner of the gallantry award 'Bir Bikram') described the inauguration ceremony of the Mujibnagar government as follows: "Some chairs collected from nearby villages were gathered at the venue. Not all the chairs were structurally complete – some lacked hands, whereas legs were missing in a few. Food was cooked for those Ansars who were guarding the place. I and Mahbub prepared a program for the event and showed it to others. A few platoons of EPR and Mujahids were deployed for presenting the Guard of Honour. As directed by Mahbub, they were rehearsing for the occasion. I was discussing with General Osmani some issues that cropped up. Around two thousand people had gathered at the venue. They included over one hundred journalists, photographers and TV cameramen".

"The mango garden was silent. The attending village-people had never witnessed such an occasion in the past. We had also kept the program a secret. I could easily decipher what the vacant gazes of the village-people implied. They were as if watching a mishap – staring in astonishment and disbelief".

"The much-awaited ceremony started at 11 am. Riding a jeep, I drove Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmad and General MAG Osmani up to the archway, which was 50 yards from the dais. Syed Nazrul Islam then inspected the Guard of Honour commanded by Mahbub. General Osmani stood behind Syed Nazrul. When Syed Nazrul raised the flag, the journalists surrounded him".

"A small group then started to sing 'Amar Sonar Bangla' (My Golden Bengal) in a chorus. We were witnessing the moment of birth of a nation-state. I had read the tales of many such births in history books. But I really could not believe that a new-born state had started pulsating with life in front of my very eyes".

"After the Guard of Honour was over, the members of the cabinet took their seat on the stage. Syed Nazrul formally announced the formation of a sovereign Government of Bangladesh. One by one, he introduced the ministers to the audience".

"The Acting President then delivered his speech. After that, Prime Minister Tajuddin Ahmad spoke at a press conference. He asserted that Pakistan was buried under the corpses of lakhs of martyrs. And a new nation had emerged out of that grave. That nation was Bangladesh. The audience applauded".

Many civil servants working in different districts of Bangladesh played immensely patriotic role and even embraced martyrdom during the independence war of the country. Mention may be made here of HT Imam, who was serving as the Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong Hill Tracts district during March 1971. He put up resistance against the Pakistani military during the initial stages of the war with the help of Bangali civil and military officers and later joined the Bangladesh government-in-exile as the Cabinet Secretary. As mentioned earlier, the then Sub Divisional Officer (SDO) of Meherpur Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury Bir Bikram played a key role in building up resistance against the Pakistani army in the Kushtia region and in organizing the oath-taking ceremony of the Bangladesh Government-in-Exile in Mujibnagar.

Civil servants such as Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Faridpur ANM Yusuf, DC of Barisal Nurul Amin, DC of Pabna Nurul Kader Khan, DC of Rangpur Syed Shamim Ahsan, DC of Tangail Jalaluddin Ahmed and DC of Khulna Nurul Islam sided with the independence movement even before the start of the war. Of them, Nurul Kader Khan retreated to Indian Territory to join the government-in-exile. ANM Yusuf was taken captive by the Pakistani military along with Superintendent of Police (SP) Nurul Momen Khan and SDO of Rajbari Syed Rezaul Hayat; other captives included DC of Barisal Ayubur Rahman, SDO of Rajbari Shah Mohammad Farid and senior engineer of T&T Lokman Hossain. They were released only after the victory of liberation forces in December 1971. The SDO Jalaluddin got engaged in the war of resistance along with DC Khandakar Asaduzzaman in Tangail, and later moved to Sirajganj by crossing the river Jamuna. Jalal returned to Tangail later on.

The SDO of Pabna Shamsuddin Ahmed continued the war of resistance for a long time alongside the DC of the district Nurul Kader Khan. But he was later arrested by the Pakistani army and had to embrace martyrdom while in captivity. Another CSP officer who embraced martyrdom at the hands of the Pakistani army was the then Deputy Commissioner of Comilla Shamsul Haque Khan. Prominent martyrs from among the police forces included the then DIG of Rajshahi range Mamun Mahmud and the then SP of Rajshahi district Shah Abdul Majid, who had sided with the freedom fighters after the declaration of independence.

Other civil servants who gallantly fought and built up resistance in their localities included ADC Syed Abdus Samad of Chittagong Hill Tracts, SDO of Rangamati Abdul Ali, SDO Kamal Uddin Siddiqui in Narail, SDO Waliul Islam at Magura, SDO of Brahmanbaria Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad, SDO of Habiganj Akbar Ali Khan, and Assistant Commissioner Saadat Husain at Jashore. Engineer MH Siddiqui of the Jashore-Kushtia region also played a heroic role in organizing the

war efforts. The project manager cum superintending engineer of Kaptai Hydroelectric Project Shamsuddin Ahmed was killed by the Pakistanis following his brave role in the fight against the occupiers.

The civil servants who crossed over to India after building the initial resistance and joined the Mujibnagar Government lodged at Theatre Road of Kolkata, West Bengal, also included the Commissioner of Rajshahi division Shamsuddin Ahmed, DC of Dinajpur district Fayez Uddin Ahmed, Dr. Faruque Aziz Khan, and EPCS officers Md. Abul Kashem Khan, Abdul Momen, Lutiful Haque, JJ Bhowmik and BB Biswas. They were all given important assignments in the structure of the government-in-exile.

To sum up, members of the civil and military bureaucracy as well as the police and Ansars in occupied territories of Bangladesh tried to build up resistance in their own way against the Pakistani army with the help of local political activists and citizens, after switching their allegiance to Bangladesh, even in the absence of any clear-cut political directives on the issue. Almost everywhere, the local civil administration came forward to assist the masses in their pursuit of freedom.

The civil servants of Bangladesh also played a crucial role in running the Bangladesh Government-in-Exile at Mujibnagar. The following were 11 ministries/ divisions in the Mujibnagar Government, where the civil servants served as the administrative heads: (1) Ministry of Defence; (2) Ministry of Foreign Affairs; (3) Ministry of Finance, Industries & Commerce; (4) Cabinet Secretariat; (5) General Administration Division; (6) Ministry of Health & Welfare; (7) Ministry of Information & Broadcasting; (8) Ministry of Home Affairs; (9) Ministry of Relief & Rehabilitation; (10) Parliamentary Affairs Division; (11) Agriculture Division, (12) Engineering Division.

There were a few other agencies who worked directly under the control of the cabinet. These were: (1) Planning Commission; (2) Board of Industries & Commerce; (3) Board of Control for Youths & Reception Camps; (4) Relief & Rehabilitation Committee; (5) Refugee Welfare Board. In addition, the following bodies also provided valuable support to the war efforts: Council for Youths and Training; Bangladesh Hospital; Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra; Joy Bangla (periodical); Bangladesh Bulletin; Overseas bodies in support of liberation war; Bangladesh Teachers' Association; Swadhin Bangla Football Team; Bangabandhu Shilpi Goshthi; Bangladesh Torun Shilpi Goshthi; Bangladesh Chalachchitra Shilpi O Kusholi Samity; Bangladesh Sangrami Buddhijibi Parishad; New York Bangladesh League; Bangladesh Students' Action Committee, London; Liberation Council of Intelligentsia.

The War of Liberation in Bangladesh was in fact a people's war, where the country's civil servants rose to the occasion and played a valiant role in it both in the building up of initial resistance against the Pakistani occupiers and also as key functionaries of the Government-in-Exile at Mujibnagar. However, as is the usual case, there were also many unsung heroes whose tales might not have received due recognition in the narratives of most historians and scribes of the country.

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Contributions of Ekushey: At Home and Abroad

Ahmad Rafiq

language was transformed into a complete language movement. The slogan was then not limited to merely the state language. Various slogans were raised everywhere in the country (province of East Bengal) at that time: "We want state language Bangla; we seek release of political prisoners; introduce Bangla at all levels (of national life)".

Just as the first slogan indicated a nation-state, the second slogan reflected the demand for democratic rights; and the third one expressed a nationalistic spirit for establishing mother-language and state-language Bangla at all levels of national life including in higher education, higher courts, etc. Just as the colloquial language coming out of a mother's mouth or the mother-language consolidates the linguistic and nationalistic emotions of a people around their homeland through exchange of ideas, composition of literature, etc., similarly the potential for creating a nation-state based on a state language becomes a certainty through relating it with livelihoods.

The state language movement became and took the shape of a nationalistic language movement after reaching the Ekushey (21 February) episode of 1952. Its mutuality and autonomous character become clearer if the social-cultural-political aspects of language are considered. Its negative aspect like 'racial pride' may be contrary to humanistic spirit, but the nationalist ethos and nation-building become inevitable by the urge for establishing the self and bringing about economic

The language movement demanding Bangla as state language had commenced from the year 1947 – even before Pakistan was born by partitioning India through an orderly process. Even at that time, the then Muslim League leaders were repeatedly uttering the same thing: the only state language of future Pakistan shall be Urdu, and no other language. At that juncture, a few Muslim teachers-journalists-writers spoke and wrote in favour of Bangla as the principal state language in a logical fashion by gathering enough courage. They included Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah, Abdul Haque, Dr. Quazi Motahar Hossain, Dr. Muhammad Enamul Haque, Dr. Abul Quasem, et al.

After crossing this preliminary or theoretical phase, a massive movement was launched from March 1948 that lasted up to 1950. Then its huge nationalistic contour found expression in February 1952, when the movement for state

prosperity of the people. Class consciousness occasionally concedes defeat in such situations. It retreats. Such examples are visible in many countries of the world.

In fact, Ekushey became the seed-bed for nationalistic spirit and a future nation-state based on language. This path was never smooth; it was strewn with unwanted complexities. Because of the divisive policies of British rule in India and its agricultural policy in Bengal, the Bengali Muslims were lagging behind in education and socio-economic status not only in comparison to their neighbours from the Hindu community, they were also behind compared to the Muslims of northern and western India. Studies of researchers from northern India like Irfan Habib offer proof of that. Places ranging from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh to Bombay, Punjab and Gujarat provide proof of that as well.

Naturally, the Bangali Muslims suffered from an inferiority complex. Therefore, the distinct world of Jinnah's politics of separateness (Pakistan) appeared to them to be attractive and a realm of dream in their quest for self-development and self-assertion. They took time before they could disentangle themselves from this unwanted politics. This journey led to the bath of freedom after reaching the decade of 1950s.

Prior to the partition, Pakistan became a land of dreams for the Bangali Muslims. The central political leaders of Pakistan starting from Jinnah to Liaquat took advantage of their infinite liberality. The provincial election of 1946 bore testimony that the backdrop for establishment of Pakistan was laid through the votes of the Bangali Muslims. They cast their votes collectively in the ballot box of the Muslim League. With the exception of two seats won by Fazlul Haque, all other seats were captured by the Muslim League.

But the election results in Muslim-majority western India was different and mixed. Anti-Muslim League cabinets were formed in Punjab and the frontier province. In Sind, the league could painstakingly form the cabinet only with the support from the European bloc. To cut it short, it was the Bangali Muslims who created the real setting for the establishment of Pakistan.

And after the founding of Pakistan, West Pakistan devoured all the honeys with the blessings of the Urdu-speaking central leadership due to the infinite liberality of Bangali Muslims. Instead of Dhaka, at first Karachi became the capital of Pakistan. Later, the capital was shifted to Rawalpindi and finally to Islamabad by spending a huge amounts of money. Dhaka was not even conferred the honour of an alternative capital.

Most of the loans and grants from British and American foreign aid were spent in different towns of West Pakistan, in development programs like building various types of industrial zones and modernisation of Karachi port. But Chittagong Port remained the same as before. The Urdu-speaking non-Bangalis were the owners of jute and textile mills in East Bengal. A huge socio-economic disparity was built up between the east and west over the years.

The students and youths were the main driving force in the 1946 election and the Pakistan Movement. The demand for Pakistan reached the general masses due to their tireless labour and the campaign of the Muslim League. The demand became universal everywhere.

The driving forces behind the language movement that brought an end to this

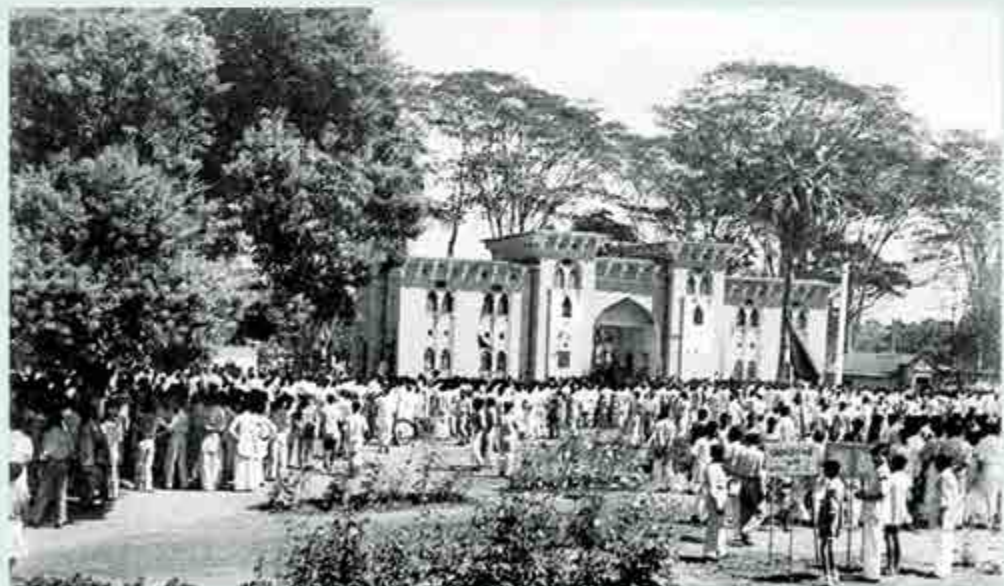
political character were again the conscious students and youths. Through their toils, ideals and self-sacrifices, the multidimensional demands for language (recall the slogan) and the movement of Ekushey spread from Teknaf to Tentulia, from Chatmohar to Meherpur, that is from north to south, from east to west, up to the villages. This was mainly centred in the educational institutions. The movement assumed a universal character, but was quite the reverse of 1946. It clearly followed a non-communal, liberal-democratic, progressive and nationalistic trend.

As pre-partition character of politics underwent transformation, the state-language movement (1948-52), especially that of Ekushey, was founded on linguistic nationalism. The infinite courage and bravery of the students-youths and masses was expressed at one stage of this movement.

The Dhaka administration imposed section-144 in Dhaka city on 20 February 1952 afternoon in order to thwart the program announced by the students and youths for 21 February. As the carrot of election was hung before them, the politician-dominated All-Party State-Language Action Council adopted a resolution against breaking the section-144, although the main segment of the student-youth leadership as well as the general students did not accept that. They were determined to observe the declared program at any cost, even by breaking section-144.

With that objective, the students assembled at the arts building compound of Dhaka University in the morning of 21 February by sticking to their unwavering stand. Then the small processions of ten students at a time went out towards the medical college hostel compound by breaking section-144 amid baton-charges and tear-gas shells fired by the police.

An extraordinary event took place at noon on that day. The police opened fire on



Students breaking 144 section during Language Movement at Dhaka University area on 21 February 1952



The first Shahid Minar

night-long labour on their hostel compound. That beloved monument of the Dhaka city-dwellers was broken by the police in the afternoon of its very inaugural day on 26 February; and all its bricks were also taken away.

But a martyrs' monument cannot die, just as the linguistic spirit of humans remains undying in their minds. Meanwhile, martyrs' monuments were built at all places from Rajshahi to Narail town, even on the compounds of rural schools, through the efforts of students and youths. Later on, efforts were also made through government initiative to construct a central martyrs' monument (Shaheed Minar) that underwent building, breaking and rebuilding process. Finally, the present martyrs' monument came into being by modifying the original design. But it did not capture the original design of Hamidur Rahman and the sculpture of Novera Ahmed.

The language movement and Ekushey have presented two permanent and vitally important symbols to the nation, the country (People's Republic of Bangladesh) and the government. The first one is the 'Ekushey February' that could materialise

the students and masses, who were chanting slogans on the hostel compound after failing to break the strong police barricade. Rafiq-Jabbar-Barkat et al embraced martyrdom as a result. The day later became marked as the Martyrs' Day. The whole province including Dhaka city became tumultuous in protest against the incident. That included an amazing protest of red and white in Dhaka, which was also participated by the inhabitants of Old Dhaka.

Dhaka became a city of processions on 22 February. A new slogan 'May the martyrs' memory become immortal' was added to the old ones. The politically inclined students of Dhaka Medical College built a martyrs' monument having 10-feet height and 6-feet width by putting in

due to the self-sacrifices of the martyrs; and the second one is the 'Shaheed Minar' (martyrs' monument). The nation bows its head in reverence at least once a year not only at the Central Shaheed Minar, but also before numerous martyrs' monuments of various shapes (small and large) built all over the country.

Emanating from the memory of self-sacrifices of the martyrs, the 21st February has been recognised on the one hand as an occasion of grief, and on the other hand as an inspiration for protests and democratic movements. The day involves a memorial procession from the Shaheed Minar as well as afternoon gatherings. The whole country observes the day from the first hours of midnight as a national holiday.

The martyrs' monument is not something different in this respect. It's symbolic significance covers sorrow for the martyrs, abhorrence of any despicable regime, protests, and above all an inspiration for democratic movements. At the same time, it remains as a fountain of cultural pursuits.

Another glorious contribution of the language movement has been the declaration of Ekushey as the 'International Mother Language Day', which is a matter of pride for all Bangla-speaking people. The primary credit for this goes to two expatriate Bangladeshis named Rafiqul Islam and Abdus Salam Naser. At the same time, credit goes to the then Awami League government, especially the efforts of education minister A S H K Sadeq and eminent Bangladeshi diplomat Syed Muazzem Ali. The declaration came on 17 November 1999 from the 30th annual meeting of UNESCO.

The contributions of the language movement and Ekushey (1952) has remained a matter of pride for us all in this way, although its important slogan 'Introduce Bangla at all levels' has not materialised yet. The royal language of colonial era – English – still prevails in many fields including higher education and higher courts. The mother language Bangla lags far behind in that area and in fact is still neglected in practice. The only exception is the domain of literature and culture.

The concluding remarks in this monologue would be that the greatest contribution of the language movement has been an independent Bangladesh that could emerge by treading the path of blood-drenched nationalistic spirit, strong winds for self-rule through the 6-point and 11-point demands, the mass upsurge of 1969, and the liberation war of 1971. What was gained included a new flag, a new map, an extraordinary constitution, and a single state-language Bangla mandated by the constitution. Bangla is now the state language of the republic.

But the introduction of Bangla at all strata of national life has not yet materialised. That is, the royal language of colonial era – English – still prevails in higher education, science education and higher courts. The self-conscious Bangalis, who waged struggles for their language, still wait for the use of state language in accordance with the constitution in all strata of their lives.

Writer : Vetern Language activist

Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

Courtesy: Press Information Department



Golden Jubilee of Independence: Bangladesh and Bangabandhu Entwined Inseparably

Anupam Sen

The golden jubilee of Bangladesh's independence is being celebrated today. The birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman also ends this month. Two dates of this month – 17 March and 26 March – are written with golden letters in our history. We are celebrating the golden jubilee of our independence today on 26 March. We also celebrated the birth centenary of Bangabandhu with infinite pride. Those who joined the liberation war, and those from our new generation who are celebrating the fifty years of independence are all co-sharers of a unique and everlasting glory.

When Pakistan was created at midnight of 14 August 1947 after the cessation of British rule, the inhabitants of East Bengal thought they got independence. But they did not get real freedom. The Bangalis really achieved independence on 26 March 1971 after a thousand years' existence by establishing their own state, where people were made the source of all power. After presenting the first constitution of the Bangalis at the constituent assembly on 4 November 1972, Bangabandhu had said, "It is probably the first instance in Bangla's history that Bangalis are being given their first constitution. Not probably, it is really the first time". This constitution declared the country's citizens as the source of all powers of the state. It was moreover declared that Bangla would be the sole state language.

The freedom of the Bangalis – the independence of Bangladesh – was a long-term outcome of the Bangalis' language movement. Bangabandhu himself said this during the post-independence era. His role in the language movement was pioneering, memorable. The then student leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the main initiator of the founding of East Pakistan Muslim Chhatra League on 4 January 1948. It was this Muslim Chhatra League which formed the 'language action council' and raised the demand for according Bangla the status of a state language in Pakistan. Bangabandhu discharged the main responsibility for enforcing the strike that was called on 11 March 1948 to realize this demand. He was arrested on that very day along with 70-80 of his colleagues who were involved in that movement. Through this arrest, the 13 years of his remaining behind bars during 23 years of Pakistan's existence also commenced.

The Pakistan Constituent Assembly drafted a constitution in 1956 after nine years of the creation of Pakistan. But no election was allowed to be held in accordance with that constitution. The civil-military bureaucracy of Pakistan thought that it



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivering a speech at a mammoth rally arranged in support of 6-Point demand at Racecourse Ground, 7 June 1969

would not be possible to suppress East Pakistan if a free and fair election was held. For this reason, the president of Pakistan Iskandar Mirza suspended the constitution of Pakistan on 7 October 1958 and imposed martial law throughout the country. Ayub Khan then deposed Iskandar Mirza on

27 October and declared himself as the martial law administrator. Bangabandhu was arrested immediately after the imposition of martial law. Whenever the sword of the West Pakistani rulers fell on the Bangali people, the symbol of Bangalis' rights – Bangabandhu – was instantly sent to prison. Ayub Khan presented Pakistan with yet another constitution in 1962. But the people did not get any real democratic rights. The shackle of economic exploitation of East Bengal was not relaxed the slightest through this. Rather, it was tightened in many areas. East Pakistan remained completely unprotected during the Indo-Pak war of 1965. There was not even a division of soldiers for defending East Pakistan. A conference of Pakistan's opposition parties was convened in Lahore on 6 February 1966 in protest against the Ayub-Lal Bahadur Shastri ceasefire agreement for ending the war. Bangabandhu presented his 6-points during this conference. Bangabandhu put forward these demands for freeing the Bangalis of East Pakistan from the naked colonial exploitations of West Pakistanis. All Bangalis, especially the new generation, should know why Bangabandhu raised the 6-point demands.

Although the Bangalis accounted for 56 per cent of Pakistan's population, the centres of everything including the military, economy and politics were based in West Pakistan. A lion's share of the annual budget of Pakistan was spent in West Pakistan; and in some years about 50 per cent of the budget was spent for defence. Pakistan built up a strong defence force in this way.

According to available data, there were 2,220 military officers from West Pakistan, but the number of Bangali military officers from East Pakistan was only 80. It shows how nakedly discrimination was practiced between the two wings in the defence sector. Similar discriminations were observed in the area of central civil servants. Whereas there was not a single secretary from East Pakistan, the number of West Pakistani secretaries was 19. The total number of civil servant officers was 690. But there were only 80 from East Pakistan! Although there were about 400 thousand soldiers in the Pakistani military in 1970, the number of Bangali soldiers from East Pakistan was only about 20 thousand.

The magnitude of economic exploitation perpetrated by the civil-military

bureaucracy of Pakistan can be gauged when we recall that the GDPs of East and West Pakistan were 12,374 million rupees and 12,091 million rupees respectively during 1949-50. While during 1969-70 the GDPs of East Pakistan and West Pakistan stood at 22713 million rupees and 31563 million rupees respectively. But the subsequent disparity was created by transferring the resources of East Pakistan to West Pakistan. The main source of foreign exchange for Pakistan during the 1950s and 1960s up to 1967-68 was jute and jute goods. About 70 per cent of Pakistan's export income during the first decade and about 60 per cent during the second decade were earned by East Pakistan. But East Pakistan's share in imports remained confined within 30 per cent of the total. East Pakistan had huge surpluses in external trade (with the exception of 1963-64, 1964-65) over these two decades. But the import deficits of West Pakistan were met from these huge surpluses of East Pakistan. Mainly coming from the jute sector, this trade surplus of East Pakistan was used as the primary capital for massive development of West Pakistan. The reserves for this primary capital were created by looting the fruits of labour of the East Pakistani peasants. At that time, the value of Pakistani rupees was kept artificially high. The exchange rate of 1 US dollar was 4.76 Pakistani rupees. But the open market rate was 8 Pakistani rupees. As a consequence, while the jute farmers were paid at the rate of 4.76 rupees, the industrialists and businessmen were paid at the rate of 8 rupees. As a result, the deprivation and exploitation of jute farmers was 3.24 rupees per dollar. As all the jute mill owners and jute cum jute goods traders like Adamjee, Bawani, Dawood, Amin etc. were based in West Pakistan, their capital was invested for developing the industries, services and agricultural sector of West Pakistan.

Pakistan received foreign aid worth 6,500 million US dollars over two decades during 1950-70. Of this, 4,558 million dollars were spent in West Pakistan, while only 1,942 million dollars in East Pakistan. Bangabandhu placed the 6-point demands for severing this nakedly colonial bondage of Bangladesh with West Pakistan, and to bring about economic, political and cultural emancipation of the Bangalis.

The principal demand of the 6-points was that, Pakistan would be a federation. There would be two separate exchangeable currencies for East and West Pakistan, and there would be two separate accounts in the central bank for them, so that resources earned by one region could not be transferred to the other. The role of central government would



Freedom Fighters rejoicing after the victory



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

remain limited to foreign affairs and defence. The provinces would have unlimited powers in matters of foreign trade. The requirement for foreign exchange at the centre would be met through mutual consent of the provinces. The provinces would also have the power to form militias of their own. It was clear that these 6-points had the vision of two states. Rejecting the 6-points, Ayub Khan told Bangabandhu that if he did not withdraw the six

points, then the language of arms would be applied for forcing him to do so. But Bangabandhu did not backtrack.

An independent Bangladesh could emerge because the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu did not withdraw the 6-points. It is for this reason that Bangladesh and Bangabandhu are inseparably intertwined. The independent existence of two regions was to be given shape through those six points. The then president of Pakistan Yahya Khan and the main political leader of West Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to Dhaka in March 1971 for eliciting Bangabandhu's agreement to withdraw those demands.

Bangabandhu claimed at the very start of the greatest speech in world history, which amounted to a declaration of independence, on 7 March 1971 at Dhaka's Racecourse Ground in front of a million-strong audience that the Bangalis were deprived of all rights – cultural, political and economic. Bangabandhu was not ready to compromise on the question of freedom from exploitation and bondage. Therefore the last words in his epic speech were: "The struggle this time is for our emancipation, the struggle this time is for our independence". That speech reflected a blend of extraordinary pragmatism and heartfelt deepest emotions. He declared independence through that speech, but it was not possible to brand it as a secessionist address. That is why, when the Pakistani military struck on 25 March night and started genocide in Bangladesh, the world community and almost all countries of the world held Pakistan responsible for the situation and sought the release of Bangabandhu.

The Bangalis achieved their independence on 16 December 1971. Bangabandhu returned to independent Bangladesh on 10 January 1972 from Pakistani prison as the symbol of hopes and aspirations of the countrymen. He was soaked with tremendous love of the people. He inherited a devastated land. But the Father of the Nation made the shattered economy stand up within one year. He rebuilt the thousands of destroyed culverts, the Bhairab and Hardinge Bridges. With Soviet help, he revived the Chattogram Port within one year by removing some sunken ships and mines. The hindrance to external trade was thereby removed. About 10 million people who had taken shelter in India as well as around 15 million internally displaced citizens were rehabilitated. He constituted the Planning Commission swiftly for rejuvenating a collapsed economy. He presented an extraordinary constitution to the nation on 4 November 1972 within 10 months of Bangladesh becoming independent. The people were declared the owners of the state in that constitution. It was declared that the democracy of Bangladesh would be for the exploited, not the exploiters. And there were three pillars of the state: socialism, secularism and Bangali nationalism.

15 August 1975 was an indelibly ignominious and dark night in the thousand year-old history of Bangladesh. The shadow of that dark night still lingers. But the deep darkness started to recede when the eldest daughter of the Father of the Nation Sheikh Hasina returned to this soil on 17 May 1981. She came back as a 'flame of democracy'. Getting elected in 1996 by representing those on the side of the liberation war after a long gap of 21 years, and again coming back to power in 2009, the Desh-Ratna Sheikh Hasina started a march for development in order to accord human prestige to all citizens of this country. As a result, the country's per capita income rose threefold to 2,064 US dollar today from a mere 770 US dollar in 2007.

Bangladesh is today a miracle in the realm of global development. Growth rate in Bangladesh has remained positive, when most of the countries of the world have recorded negative growth rates due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Whereas growth rates in India and Pakistan were negative during 2019-20 financial year, Bangladesh's growth rate was about 5.2 per cent. Bangladesh is no more an agro-based country; its economy is mostly propelled by the services and industries sectors. A majority of workers in Bangladesh are now employed in these two sectors. Electricity has now reached about 96 per cent of villages in Bangladesh. The civic facilities have also been taken to the doorsteps of rural people. About 130 million people now use the internet, and even more people use mobile phones. If this unprecedented development march of Bangladesh continues, then Bangladesh would be accorded the status of a developed nation by the middle of this century. The Bangla of Gold as dreamt by Bangabandhu would then materialise.

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Courtesy : Press Information Department

The Padma Bridge Unveiling New Horizons of Bangladesh's Economic Potential

Md. Azgar Ali



Introduction: Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, was a Roman architect and engineer of the 1st century BCE. In particular, Pollio has become one of the most famous architects for his erudite multi-volume treatise. It has been said that he advised the Roman Emperor that 'structures shall be safe, functional, and beautiful!' Although these requirements are still valid today, at present, we must add economy to the list. Therefore, today's standard should be that 'structures shall be safe, functional, beautiful and economical!' A successful bridge that is 'safe, functional, beautiful and economical' will provide both comfort and convenience.

In the history of human civilization, whatever the art of building bridges over rivers, paradoxically, Marcus well-thought-out ideas have opened the door to a breakthrough in our lives, livelihoods, security and economic prosperity through the implementation of the Padma Bridge. However it may be Padma Bridge being a superstructure that is a first and foremost communication advance tool of Bangladesh which involves high technology and lots of resources.

Physical Component of The Padma Bridge: The Padma Bridge is 9.73 km with a 3.8 km connecting bridge with the 6.15 km main bridge. 1.48 km at the Mawa end of the connecting bridge and 1.6 km at the Jazira end. And there are kilometers of rail connecting bridges at both ends with the main bridge. There are CCTV



Padma Multipurpose Bridge

cameras on the Padma bridge. About 60 local engineers, including engineers from 14 countries, were involved in the construction of the Padma Bridge. There was no place in the world where piles were placed so deep under a pier. Padma bridge being a superstructure that is the first and foremost communication advance tool of Bangladesh which involves high technology and lots of resources.

Historical Background: Father of the nation Bangabandhu's dream Bangladesh is going to be realized. Bangabandhu didn't fight not only for a piece of independent land and a flag all his life but also his vow was how to seek the overall welfare of the exploited and oppressed people. He had a horrendous life surrounded by many conspiracies. The conspiracy did not leave him behind; he too is walking the path with a firm determination, crushing the shackles of the conspiracy. Even his competent daughter, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has become an indomitable leader of economic and social emancipation of the nation in her own right, even in the midst of conspiracies. This has been waiting for the last 20 years. In 1999, then the Awami League government examined the pre-feasibility of the Padma Bridge. The hope of building the bridge was created from that year. The dream has also become a reality as it is visible due to the structure of the Padma Bridge. She has thwarted all the evil conspiracies.

What kind of economic potential and field of development

Be it the scene of the last span of the Padma Bridge being visible, how the people of the south-west of Bangladesh have expressed their emotions and feelings just as we rejoice when we find a lost precious object. Although it is not the subject of this article to measure the level of happiness of the common people on both sides of the Padma, it is a matter of wondering how far-reaching its economic impact will be in our national life. Many small traders like Habib, a fruit seller from Madaripur district, who regularly come to Dhaka by crossing the Padma. Habib was speaking in the light of his petty meditative ideas that farmers in the south and south-west are also waiting for the Padma Bridge. They think that if the Padma Bridge is opened, they will get higher prices for crops like in the north. They will be able to easily send perishable grains, vegetables and fish to Dhaka. Entrepreneurs will set up factories if it is easy to bring raw materials and products with waiting capital. Young people are waiting, they want to find work. Transport businessmen want to take more buses. The dream has also become a reality as it is visible due to the structure of the Padma Bridge.

The government and the experts of the bridge project hope that the bridge will be operational in the next one and a half years as all the complex work has been completed. An economic study has been done on the impact of the Padma Bridge on the socio-economic condition of the people of the southern district.

The launch of the Padma Bridge will have a big positive impact on the overall country's economy. There will be positive growth in GDP. The survey found that the bridge would boost the country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth by 1.23 percent. Dhaka is the largest economic, social and cultural market in Bangladesh, a living example of how the bridge will have a positive impact. Easy



Padma Multipurpose Bridge



Padma Multipurpose Bridge

communication with this market will increase economic activity in the southern and south-western districts. Indirectly increase the demand for goods and services. Construction work on the two sides of the Padma Bridge will increase by 29 percent. Agriculture in the region will grow by 9.5 percent. Besides, the work in the transport sector will increase by 7 percent. As a result, direct or indirect employment of 50 million people will be created by 2030. According to the report of the Department of Economics of Dhaka University, since the inauguration of the Padma Bridge; the average annual traffic will be around 35,000. The revenue from this will be Tk 6.22 million.

Revenue income will be around 10 billion taka. In 2030, it will increase to 56 thousand vehicles. Revenue income will be 13.63 billion. In 2035, it will increase to 6 thousand vehicles and the revenue will be more than 15 billion. Thus, the number of vehicles will increase to 6 thousand in 2050. Revenue income will increase by Tk. 16.50 million. As a result, the poverty rate in the south-western part of the country across the Padma River will be reduced by 1 percent. Reducing poverty in the region will have an impact across the country. Then the national poverty rate will be reduced to zero point six percent. This picture has come up in the research of several organizations. The country's economists, experts and other concerned people think that this bridge has created immense potential in the country's economy. According to them, if the bridge is launched, the economy of South Bengal will be connected with the national economy.

New industrial establishments will be formed around the southern region. This will increase investment and employment. Besides, foreign investors will also be attracted. Overall, these activities will create a positive trend in economic growth. This bridge will increase national, international and regional connectivity and will also be connected to the Asian Highway. If it is introduced, the economy of South Bengal will be connected with the national economy. Because with the Padma Bridge, many infrastructures of the region are being developed. These developments will attract foreign investors and increase foreign investment. Besides, there are plans to establish contacts with India, Nepal and Bhutan. In particular, the benefits of Payra and Mongla ports will be associated with the country's main economy.

Meanwhile, various industrial groups have become interested in investing in the south region. Already they have started taking initiatives to set up factories here. Specially many ready-made garment factories will be set up. The real estate business will expand rapidly. Hotel business, tourism will flourish and benefit in the region. Every year a large number of tourists visit various destinations in the south. Especially in the Sundarbans and Kuakata, there will be a crowd of domestic and foreign tourists besides; there is a possibility of urbanization on both sides of the Padma due to the Padma Bridge. In the meantime, many housing companies have taken up projects on both sides of the road from Dhaka to Mawa. Many are showing interest in these housing projects in the expressway that has been built because of the bridge. As there is a lot of agricultural land in the southern area, agro-based industries will also develop quickly.

Potential unforeseen adversities and solutions

The Bangabandhu Bridge was built to meet the expectations of industrial development in the north-western part of the country, which would create employment opportunities for the people, solve unemployment and reduce mass migration towards the capital. Although there has been some benefit in marketing and supplying agricultural products produced in the region to other parts of the country, but the main objective has not been fulfilled. The root causes are lack of export oriented ports, investment friendly environment for domestic and foreign investors, structural defects in the transport and communication system and traffic congestion and so on. To get investment benefits centered on the Padma Bridge, specific plans and investment policy reforms need to be strengthened. If these things can be reformed quickly, then the benefits can be reaped very quickly. At the same time, the link roads need to be renovated to reach the people of the villages and areas that are connected to the Padma Bridge. Not conventional, timely new toll system should be introduced. These alternative trends in keeping the economy afloat are to be welcomed and toll rates must be kept affordable and low. Particularly, the full benefits of the Padma Bridge cannot be enjoyed if the traffic congestion at these two entrances and exits of Dhaka is not controlled. Come what may, success of a country's economy predominantly depends on the efficient delivery of communication services of which efficient transportation system can identify as the key element of any development. An adequate and efficient transport system is a pre-requisite for sustainable economic development. In this regard, it should be bear in mind that bridges play a crucial role in various aspects of communication connectivity which enabling us to get to work and contributing to the country's economic development.

The Padma Bridge is a development milestone. This will be a source of new inspiration to the people of Bangladesh and has a dream to go to a high income country by 2041. It is hoped that the spirit and inspirations of the Padma Bridge will be used to meet all future development and challenges. Finally yet importantly, it should be remembered, if the mega projects associated with the Padma Bridge can be successfully implemented, we believe that Bangladesh will be the main leader of the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' and beyond.

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Bangladesh Development Surprise: 2009-2020

Dr. Shamsul Alam

Economy of Bangladesh is rising. The rise is unprecedented and surprising. Probably, no other country's story of success has been subject to so wider discussion in international arena, than that of Bangladesh during the last decade. Recently, the issue has shined in the headlines following a report by International Monetary Fund (IMF). The report says, Bangladesh will overtake India in terms of per capita GDP in December, 2020. Due to Corona pandemic, per capita GDP of India will be shrunk by 10.3 percent to 1877 US\$ while

Bangladesh will achieve a 4 percent rise of GDP to 1888 US\$. The fact is even couple of years before; per capita income of India was significantly higher than that of Bangladesh. Per capita income of Bangladesh has more than tripled since 2009. An estimate by Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation reports, Bangladesh will be among 26th largest economy by 2030. Centre for Economics and Business Research of the UK projected Bangladesh will become 25th largest economy in the world by 2035. In 2018, Bangladesh has earned praise from its global peers after meeting all criteria for graduation from Least Developed



Bangabandhu Satellite-1 was launched from Kennedy Space Center, Florida, United States on May 12, 2018



Sheikh Hasina Software Technology Park, Jessore was inaugurated to spread the benefits of developments in the ICT sector to Bangladesh's southwestern region

Country status to a developing country. As of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, graduation to Developing country from Least Developed Country will elevate the prestige of Bangladesh. It will raise the confidence and strength level of political leaders. Bangladesh's success in social indicators such as education, health, infant mortality, life expectancy along with economic indicators, has been remarkable. Through launching of Bangabandhu satellite, Bangladesh entered into a new era of communication technologies. So what are the underlying factors that have driven this success we may focus into?

Visionary leadership and the charter of change

The present government came in power after winning a landslide victory in 2008 election with election manifesto of "Charter for Change". That manifesto indeed laid foundation for the Vision 2021 or Digital Bangladesh. The government started journey at a time when both economic and political situations were abysmal. There was widespread prevalence of terrorism, corruption, inefficiency, mismanagement. Further, power sector was mired in extreme deficiency, and health, education, agriculture and transport sector were



Bheramara 410 MW combined cycle power plant inaugurated on April 12, 2018

stuck in sluggishness. The government formulated first perspective Plan 2010-2021 of Bangladesh with the aim to eradicate hunger, poverty, illiteracy. Priorities of the government in that time was attaining Economic Stability and curbing inflation, effective action against corruption, ensuring economic usage of oil, gas, coal, hydro power, wind power and solar energy, elimination of poverty and inequity, establishment of good governance. Digital Bangladesh was built on four pillars -digital government, human resource development, development of ICT and promotion of industry and connecting citizens. The philosophy underlying the vision 2021 includes improving the lives of people by ensuring democracy, people's right, transparency, accountability, ensuring delivery of government services to the citizen's doorsteps. With deft and visionary leadership of Prime



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received ICT Sustainable Development Award from Houlin Zhao, ITU Secretary General, at a gala dinner programme at UN headquarters in 2015

Minister Sheikh Hasina, Digital Bangladesh is now a reality, not a utopia.

Success in MDGs

The last decade has been unforgettable for Bangladesh awarded with number of international accolades and praises. Among all of those, successes in MDGs remained the most glowing. As an individual, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina prided the country by receiving numerous awards from countries and international organizations. Bangladesh was accorded first award on



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received Global Women's Leadership Award from Irene Natividad, President of Global Women Summit, while visiting Australia in 2018



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received Vaccine Hero Award from Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Dr. Seth Barkley, Board Chair of and CEO of GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization) respectively in 2019

MDGs for reducing child mortality from UNDP in 2010. The next year, International telecommunication Union, UN Economic Commission together conferred Bangladesh with the South-South Award. Other important awards include United Nations World Food Organization's (FAO) Diploma Award in 2013 for reducing poverty and malnutrition, South-South Award for ensuring food security and reducing poverty, ICT Sustainable Development Award in 2015, UN Environment Award, Planet 50:50, from UN Women Agent of Change, Global Women Leadership Award by Global Summit of Women in 2018 for Women



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates new residential buildings for officials and employees of the Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital in 2017



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates 'Panchagarrh Express' intercity train service through video conferencing in 2019

leadership. Other achievements for the Prime Minister are the International Achievement Award and Special Distinct Award for Leadership from IPS International in 2018, Vaccine Hero by Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization (GAVI) in 2019, Champion for Skill Development for Youth from UNICEF in 2019. Bangladesh received the prestigious UN public Service Award 2020 for promotion of transparent and accountable government institutions in 2020. It is a long list indeed for the last decade. This paves the way for the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030).

Middle Income country and graduation from LDC to a Developing Country

2021 will be the year of the golden Jubilee of Bangladesh's independence. Vision 2021 is prepared bearing in mind the milestone targets to be attained by 2021. The main goal of the Vision 2021 was to make Bangladesh a middle income country by 2021. Countries are classified into four categories by income according to World Bank Classification as lower income country, lower middle income country, upper middle income country, high income country. Bangladesh crossed the threshold of lower middle income country in 2015. Bangladesh attained



Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant under construction at Pabna



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates two brand new Dash 8-400 aircraft, Akash Tori and Shwetbalaka from Ganobhaban via videoconferencing on Sunday, March 14, 2021

another glaring success by meeting all criteria for graduation from LDC status to a developing country by UN, CDP (Committee for Development Policy). Three conditions are to cross threshold of per capita income, human asset index and economic vulnerability. Very recent update from UN shows Bangladesh is most likely to meet all criteria for the second time in February 2021 again. As a result, Bangladesh will be considered a developing country in 2024. Mainly, the above two glaring successes boost the confidence of policy makers to devise a plan for Vision 2041, the broad goals of which are to become a upper middle income country by 2031 and a high income country by 2041.

Progress in socio-economic indicators

As like of economic progress, progress in social indicators have also been in similar pace. In the last decade, Bangladesh stands second in terms of GDP growth rate in the world. Bangladesh even left behind India in GDP growth rate. Recently

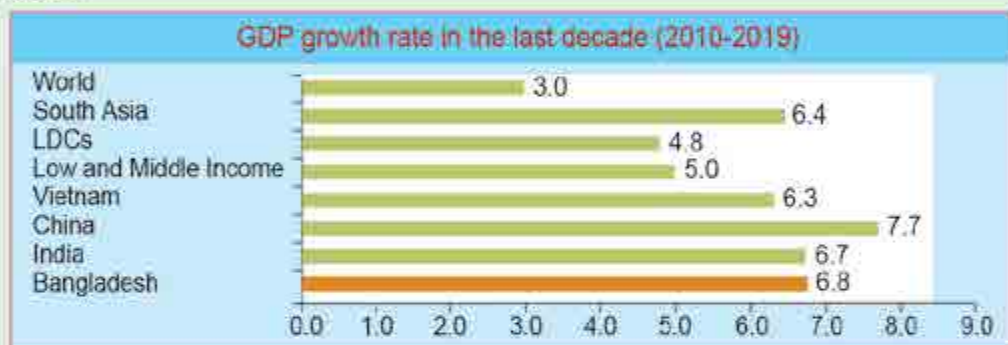


Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated and laid foundation stones of 65 uplift schemes including 24 economic zones through video conferencing in 2019



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi jointly inaugurated the Chilahati-Haldibari rail link through video conferencing on December 17, 2020

foreign reserve risen all time high to 43 billion US dollar, which was just 7.5 billion US dollar in 2007. Other important factor of the economy, remittance increased to 21.7 billion US dollar in 2019-20 from merely 9.7 billion dollars in 2009. The following barchart depicts a comparison of growth rate across the globe:



Source: World Bank

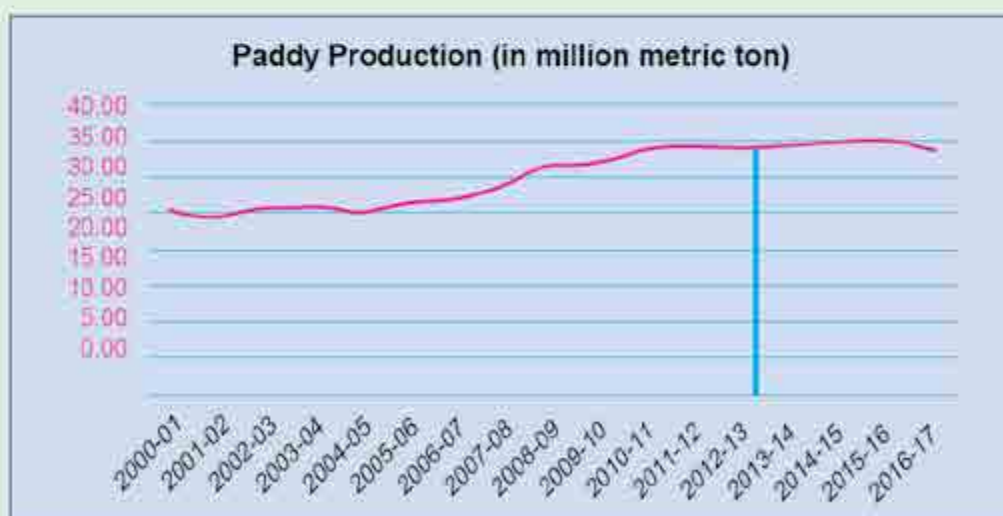


Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inspects Sheikh Russel Gastro Liver Institute and Hospital after its inauguration in the capital in 2018.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has commissioned five modern ships to Bangladesh Navy through a videoconference from her official residence Ganobhaban on November 5, 2020

Since 2009, foreign direct investment increased five times. This will be even accelerated further, if 100 economic zones many of which are under construction and when fully operationalized. In the meantime, some of works have already been completed and the flow of investment started poured in. Investors from China, India, Singapore, Japan, and Korea are showing great interest in Bangladesh. Further, mega projects if completed will facilitate buoyant economic activities. The biggest underlying strength of Bangladesh economy is domestic consumption. The market for 165 million people is huge. Perspective Plan 2021-2041 projects foreign direct investment to be around 3 percent of GDP. One of the targets of Vision 2021 was to be self-sufficient in food grain production by 2012. Bangladesh already achieved self-sufficiency in food grain. One of the successes of Bangladesh is more than tripling rice production since Independence.



Source: World Bank



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gives her signature on a digital device for the new e-passport, at Ganobhaban on January 19, 2020

The last decade is also characterized by success of poverty reduction. According to BBS estimate, each year on an average poverty has been reduced by one percentage point in the last decade. Extreme poverty also declined by around one percentage point. World Bank estimate shows the incidence of poverty by 1.90 dollar PPP per person fell down to 9.2 percent in 2019 from 14.8 percent in 2016. Commendable progress is also made in reducing malnutrition. Rate of malnutrition fell to 13 percent in 2017-2019 (3 years average) from 16.6 percent



A cluster of houses at Rugganj, Narayanganj built under the Ashrayan-2 project for the landless and homeless families to mark Mujib Borsho



Metro Rail Project under construction in Dhaka

in 2008-2010. Gross enrollment rate in the secondary schools increased to 72.6 percent in 2019 from merely 48.8 percent in 2009.

Social progress has been attained mainly by reduction in maternal mortality, reduction in infant mortality, neonatal mortality, under-5 mortality. The following table shows the change in the last decade:

Year	Maternal mortality (per 100000 live birth)	Neo natal mortality (per 1000 live birth)	Infant mortality (per 1000 live birth)	Infant mortality (per 1000 live birth)
2009	259	28	39	50
2019	165	15	21	28

Source: BBS

Infant mortality (per 1000 live birth) Infant mortality

Neo natal mortality rate, Infant mortality rate, Under 5 mortality rate were made possible to reduce by half in the last decade. Inclusive growth requires massive investment in health, education, social protection, infrastructure and research which drew high attention of the Government during the last decade. Along with improving business environment, private investment will be encouraged to generate employment. The government is now eyeing on building knowledge based society, curving corruption, employment generation as part of implementing Vision 2041.

Courtesy: Press Information Department

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Some comparative facts of development and success achieved under leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

Achievement	During the period of Bangladesh Awami League (2009-2020)	2006
National Budget	National budget amounting to Tk. 5 lakh 68 thousand crore for the fiscal year 2020-21 adopted.	Budget was only Tk. 61 thousand 6 crore.
GDP Growth Rate	GDP growth rate was achieved above 8 percent during last two consecutive fiscal years. It was increased to 8.15 percent in 2018-19. Even amid corona virus pandemic, 5.24 percent GDP growth rate was achieved.	Growth rate was 5.04 percent.
GDP Size	The size of GDP of Bangladesh at present is Tk. 28 lakh crore.	It was Tk. 4 lakh 82 thousand crore.
Per Capita Income	Per capita income at present is US\$ 2065.	Only US\$ 543.
Remittance Income	Remittance income US\$ 21.74 billion in 2020.	US\$ 4.8 billion.
Export Income	Export income US\$ 48 billion (including service sectors).	US\$ 10.52 billion.
Foreign Exchange Reserve	Foreign exchange reserve US\$ 43 billion.	US\$ 3.5 billion.
Poverty Rate	Poverty rate declined to below 20 and ultra-poverty rate 10 percent.	It was 41.5 and 24.2 percent respectively.
Winning Maritime Boundary	Bangladesh established its right on the maritime area of 1 lakh 11 thousand 631 sq. km. from Myanmar and 19 thousand 467 sq.km. from India through international court.	There was no initiative in this regard.
Padma Bridge	The complete structure of Padma Bridge, dream of Banglali nation, is now visible. On the completion of the 6.15 Km. long bridge, GDP will increase at the rate of 1.5 percent.	Various conspiracies involving allout efforts were made to halt the Padma Bridge Project.
Metro Rail	The construction work of 20 km long metro rail from Uttara to Bangladesh Bank is progressing fast.	There was no concept or initiative of metro rail.
Karnaphuli Tunnel	The construction work of 3.4 km long tunnel under the river Karnaphuli is advancing fast.	There was no idea or initiative.
Payra Seaport	The operational activities in the Payra Seaport (third seaport of the country, is going on since 2016. Till date, the government earned Tk. 236 crore through the completion of operational activities of 104 foreign commercial vessels.	No initiative was taken to build the port.
Matarbari Deep Seaport	Construction work of deep seaport at Matarbari in Cox's Bazar is progressing fast. MV 'Venus Triumph' carrying the flag of Panama, as the first vessel, anchored in this port on 29 December 2020.	No initiative was taken to build port.

Achievement	During the period of Bangladesh Awami League (2009-2020)	2006
Social Security Programme	Total budget allocation in the fiscal 2020-21 is Tk. 95 thousand 574 crore. At present, 1 crore 20 lakh people are getting various allowances of 145 programs.	Only Tk 373 crore was allocated in the social safety sector.
Free Textbooks Distribution	A total of 366 crore free textbooks were distributed among the students since the formation of the government in 2009	Free textbooks never distributed.
Educational Institution Nationalization	26 thousand 193 primary schools were nationalized. And the job of 1 lakh 42 thousand teachers of these primary schools were also nationalized.	There was no initiative for the nationalization of educational institutions.
Houses Awarded to the Poor	8 lakh 82 thousand houseless families will be provided with shelter during the Mujib birth centenary.	There was no such initiative.
Literacy Rate	At present, the rate of literacy elevated to 74 percent. Rate of primary level school enrolment is about 100 percent.	Rate of literacy decreased to 44 from 65 percent.
Number of Internet and Mobile Phone	At present, the number of users of internet is over 11 crore and that of mobile SIM is about 16 crore and 71 lakh.	It was only 35 lakh and that of mobile SIM was 2 crore 18 lakh.
Digital Bangladesh	Two hundred 70 digital services are being provided through 6 thousand 686 digital centers and 8500 e-post offices. On an average, 45 lakh services are being rendered in every month.	Though there was a scope of having free submarine fiber optic cable connection in 2004, that opportunity was not availed.
Access to Satellite Era	With the launching of Bangabandhu satellite-1, Bangladesh earned the prestige of being 57th satellite Projecting country of the world.	There was no concept or initiative.
Nuclear Power plant Establishment	The construction work of 2 thousand 421 megawatts nuclear power plant at Ruppur in Pabna is progressing fast.	There was no plan of building up any nuclear power plant.
Power Production	Power production capacity increased to 24 thousand 421 megawatts. At present, 99% people are getting electricity facility. Electricity coverage will be extended 60 percent during Mujib birth centenary.	Electricity production was only 3200 megawatts which covered 47% people.
Community Clinic	Fourteen thousand 500 community clinics were established to reach medical services to the door-steps of the people. More than 23 thousand physicians were recruited.	Community clinics were shutdown.
Average Life Acceptancy	As social security and medicare systems have developed, the life acceptancy of the people has increased to 73.2 years.	It was only 65.4 years.
Child and Maternal Mortality	Currently, child mortality rate in the country is 22 (in every thousand) and maternal mortality rate 1.69(in every lakh).	Child mortality rate was 50 and maternal mortality rate was 3.48.
Quami Madrasha Education	Through offering masters equivalence to the Dawra-e-Hadith, the highest level degree of QuamiMadrasha, about 35 lakh students of this madrasha system were brought to the main stream education system.	There was a mockery with them in the name of recognition.

Achievement	During the period of Bangladesh Awami League (2009-2020)	2006
Model Mosque cum Islamic Centre	It was decided to build a total of 560 model mosque cum Islamic cultural centers covering every district and upazila. By this time, 200 mosques are visible.	Islam, as a religion, was used as a political weapon.
Temple based Mass Literacy Program	Through 6 thousand 450 pre-primary educational centers, pre-primary, ethical and religious knowledge was offered to 17 lakh 23 thousand children during 2009-19.	Religion was used as a political weapon.
Development of Buddha Bihars	Tk. 4 crore 10 lakh from Hon'ble Prime Minister's Relief Fund was given to various Buddha Bihars as donation. Moreover, Pagoda based Pre-Primary Education Project is being implemented. Three hundred educational centers are working to educate 14 thousand buddhist children.	Attacks were repeatedly unleashed on the other religious communities during the period from 2001 to 2006.
Development of Christianity	The Christian Religious Welfare Trust Act 2018 was formulated. On the occasion of Christmas Day, Tk. 1 crore 38 lakh was donated from Prime Minister's Relief and Welfare Fund to 224 churches and other related religious organizations.	Church was attacked in 2001
Various Privileges for Veteran Freedom Fighters	It was decided to give veteran freedom fighter Tk. 10 lakh interest free house building loan. The government also introduced monthly honourarium, ration facility, festival allowance, new year allowance, Victory Day allowance and allowance for wedding ceremony of the female children.	There was no such initiative. The freedom fighters, in many cases, were deprived of due honour.
Establishment of 100 Economic Zones	The government has taken an initiative to establish 100 special economic zones for attracting investment. These economic zones would provide employment for 1 crore people	There was no such initiative.
Delta Plan	A 100-year Delta Plan has been adopted to lead the advancement of Bangladesh like the developed world.	There was no such initiative.
Women and Children Development Policy	National Women Development Policy-2011, National Children Policy-2011, Domestic Violence (Prevention & Protection) Act 2010 and Women and Children Repression Prevention (amended) Act 2020 were formulated for the overall development of women.	There was no such initiative.
e-Mutation of Land property	Currently, e-mutation program is going on at 485 upazila land offices & circle offices and 3 thousand 617 union land offices. Services of the e-mutation program have already been provided to more than 1 crore people.	There was no such initiative.
Assistance/ Donation for Journalists	The government formulated Bangladesh Journalists Welfare Trust Act 2014 through which financial assistance of Tk. 17 crore 87 lakh was provided to 5,263 journalists till date. During Corona Pandemic, financial assistance has been provided to the journalists which is unique in the sub-continent.	There was no such initiative.

Courtesy: Press Information Department



Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Bangladesh

Md. Quddus Khan

peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.' Giving the rationale of the Declaration the preamble reads, 'Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people'.

Summary of UDHR

Universal Declaration of Human Rights embodies rights and freedoms of mankind in its 30 (Thirty) Articles. The articles of Declaration may be discussed dividing it into 5 groups viz.

(N.B: Asterisk marked () articles of UDHR mentioned below have similarity with articles of Bangladesh constitution.)*

Group-1: Positive Nature of Rights

Right to life, liberty and the security of person (*3), all are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of the law without discrimination (*7), presumed to be innocent in case of penal offence and have guarantee of defense (*11.1), marry and found a family by man and woman of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion (16.1), own property individually and jointly (*7.1), take part in the government of his country directly or through freely chosen representatives (*2.1), equal access to public service in his country (*21.2), true democratic rule i.e. the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government' expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedure (*21.3), social security subject to limitation of resources of each state, providing economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and free development of personality (*22), right to work and guaranteed employment (*23.1), protection against unemployment (23.1), equal pay for equal work (*23.2), just and favourable remuneration and also social protection (*23.3),

In the aftermath of world War-II the United Nations organization (UNO) was established on October 24, 1945 to secure rights and freedoms of the human family to establish justice and peace in the world. At present, United Nations (UN) has 193 states as its members and world population stands at 7.8 billion i.e. 780 cores. The general assembly of United Nation proclaimed Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on December 10, 1948 and citing its objectives and scope the preamble of the Declaration reads, 'as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations... to promote respect for these rights and freedoms... to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the people of members states themselves and among the

form and join trade union (23.4), rest and recreation including limitation of working hour and periodic holiday with pay (*24), an adequate standard of living for himself and his family including food, clothing, housing and Medicare and also social services. Also right to social security in the event of unemployment due to sickness, disability, old age and other lack of livelihood in circumstances (e.g. covid-19) beyond his control (*25.1), all children whether born in or out of wedlock shall enjoy the same social protection. Also motherhood and childhood are entitled to especial care and assistance (25.2), the right to education-elementary education shall be compulsory (*26.1), the protection of the moral and material interest resulting from scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author (27.2).

Group-2: Freedom Related Rights (Positive in Nature)

Right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state (*13.1), marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses (16.2), freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief (*18), freedom of opinion and expression (*19), freedom of peaceful assembly and association (*20.1),

Group-3: Conditional Rights (Positive in Nature)

Everyone has right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution, barring persecution arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of United Nations (14), exercise of rights and freedom shall be subjected to the limitations set by law for securing the same for others and meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and general welfare in a democratic society (*29.2),

Group-4: Negative Nature of Rights

Slavery and slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms (4), no one shall be subjected to torture or cruel in human or derogatory treatment or punishment (*5), no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile (*9) no one shall be held guilty of any penal offence, which was not so when committed and no higher punishment can be given than applicable then i.e when committed (*11.2), no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence and nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation and he will enjoy protection of law (*12), no one shall be deprived of his nationality (15.2), no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property (*17.2).

Group-5: Enabling provision for rights and freedoms (UDHR)

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights (1), everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, religion etc. And also distinction of political jurisdiction or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs (*2), ensure trial by the competent national tribunal for violation of fundamental rights guaranteed to him by the constitution or by law (*8), fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal (*10), everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration (UDHR) can be fully realized (28,)

A Review of UDHR

A perusal of the rights and freedoms under UDHR mentioned in the proceeding

para-2 shows that the rights and freedoms mentioned in group 1,2 and 3 of the para-2 namely positive rights, freedom related rights and conditional rights respectively are basically positive in nature. Positive nature of rights refer to the 'Presence of material and mental conditions essential for survival and development of life, availability of basic necessities of life (e.g. food, clothing, housing, Medicare etc.), social security against unemployment caused due to old age, widowhood, covid-19 etc. freedom of movement and expression, legal and governance structure and facilities (e.g. government, courts etc.) for enforcement of rights and freedoms'. These rights can be seen in groups 1, 2 and 3 of para-2. Rights mentioned in group-4 namely negative rights are basically negative in nature which refer to the 'absence of physical and mental conditions such as absence of arbitrary arrest, detention, exile etc. essential for exercise of positive rights (e.g. freedom of movement), non-interference with property right is essential for exercise of positive right (e.g. right to property). Examples of negative rights can be seen in group 4 of para-2. Group 5 refer to the enabling provisions for enjoyment of rights and freedom under UDHR. Individuals will enjoy these rights without any distinction of race, colour, religion, sex, nationality, territory etc. individuals will enjoy trial by independent tribunal in case of violations of rights and also be entitled to a social and international order in which rights and freedoms of the Declaration will be fully realized. Review of UDHR also shows there is no mention of any extra or especial rights for women in any one of total 30 Articles of the Declaration except mentioning 'equal rights of man and woman' in the preamble of the Declaration and of course motherhood has been recognized for special care and assistance (Art 25.2). The Declaration has carefully avoided recognizing dissimilarities among individuals and nations, though it is a fact and reality. As a result the Declaration suffers from strength of solid foundation. It may be for the reason that the Framers of the Declaration wanted to establish 'unity in diversity' among the members of the globe. Despite limitations, universal Declaration of human rights is a proud possession in the history of mankind.

UDHR and Bangladesh Constitution

Bangladesh constitution is one of the best constitutions in the world. It may be seen from preceding para-2 that most of the articles related to rights and freedoms embodied in the UDHR are also embodied in our constitution as articles and are same or similar to UDHR. More or less 21 out of 29 positive natures of rights and 5 out of 7 negative natures of rights under UDHR are same or similar to Bangladesh Constitution. Major rights of UDHR have been included in our constitution in two forms viz Fundamental Principles of State Policy-FPSP (Articles 8-25) & Fundamental Rights-FR (Articles 26-47A).

State of Human Rights

1. Establishment of human rights embodied in UDHR is a gigantic challenging task. It is easy and less challenging in true democratic state than in non-democratic state. When we look at the present day world we find examples of human rights violations in many countries- including developed, developing and underdeveloped countries. Racial discrimination (Black and White) in USA, racial discrimination (religious) in Myanmar between the Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims, are a few examples. Refuge problem is a burning issue of Human rights violation. According to UNHCR there are at present 26 million refugees in the

world who took refuge in different countries like Bangladesh, Germany, Turkey, Lebanon, Pakistan, Uganda, Iran, Sudan, Ethiopia, Jordan, Congo, Chad, Kenya, France etc. It may be mentioned that 85% of refugees took shelter in developing countries. Right to nationality is a human right. But long struggle of Palestinians for a state, struggle of Rohingya Muslims for citizenship of Myanmar etc. remains a dream yet. UN failed to solve refugee problems across the world. Failed to stop conflicts in Syria, Middle East etc. It is a fact that UN could not achieve success in cases of human rights violation when big powers were involved in the game. That is why Myanmar's human rights violation remained unpunished for intervention of some big powers. However, UN showed success in socio-economic fields- such as social security, education, culture, women and children's development.

2. Bangladesh has achieved mentionable success in providing basic necessities of life (Food, Clothing, Housing and Medicare etc.) including education. Provided social security in the form of public assistance in the event of unemployment due to old age widowhood, covid-19 etc. But violation of human rights at individual level (e.g. Rape) is a major issue in Bangladesh. Recently government of Sheikh Hasina has raised the punishment of rape to life term from transportation for life. Our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina declared zero tolerance against the violators of human rights, irrespective of their political and other identities. Weakness of our political parties in practicing democratic values, weakness of concerned organizations and institutions of the state have impacted on the functioning of democracy in Bangladesh. Our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a great champion of Human Rights. In his historic 7th March (1971) address he said, 'I do not want Prime Ministership. We want to establish rights of the people.' Justifying his fast until death movement at Faridpur Jail in 1950's he said, 'One day I have to die. If I die protesting injustice, that death can bring more peace for me' (Ashamapto Atmojiboni, P-200) on his homecoming day (from Pakistan jail) on 10th January (1972) he said at Dhaka Airport, 'The world is divided into two camps- the oppressors and the oppressed. I belong to the oppressed'.

Conclusion

Establishment of Human Rights is not only a mere national and international issue. It is also an issue of individuals and societies. Individuals must inculcate values of mutual respect for each other's right. Societies also must nourish values of human rights and develop respect for it among its members. Nations also must do their best to establish human rights through economic development, social security, legal protection, human resource development etc. The charter of United Nations may be amended to curtail veto power of super powers in case of human rights violation issue. The International Human Rights Day is being observed on 10th December every year. UDHR proclaimed, 'everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized (Article-28)'.

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'SHACHITRO BANGABANDHU' UNVEILED



Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud unveiling the book on Father of the Nation 'Sachitro Bangabandhu' while the State Minister for Information Dr. Md. Murad Hasan, Director General of the Department of Films and Publications S.M. Golam Kibria and Director and Senior Editor of the book M. Quamruzzaman were also present

An album on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, titled '*Sachitro Bangabandhu*' (Illustrated Bangabandhu) released by the Department of Films and Publications was unveiled by Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud marking birth centenary of Bangabandhu and the celebration of twelve years of present government at the meeting room of the Information Ministry

at the Secretariat on 6th January 2021.

Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud, State Minister for Information Dr. Md. Murad Hasan, Director General of the Department of Films and Publications S.M. Golam Kibria and Senior Editor (Sr. DPIO) of the book '*Sachitro Bangabandhu*', M. Quamruzzaman, spoke on the occasion.

The Minister said, many rare pictures have been included in this bilingual book with Bangla and English captions and foreigners will also get to know about Bangabandhu. The contribution of the Department of Films and Publications for recording Bangabandhu's speech on 'March 7' will be written in golden letters in the history of the nation, he added.

State Minister for Information Dr. Md. Murad Hasan said, 'We all have to continue working together under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, daughter of Bangabandhu, to build the Bengal of gold the dream of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the father of the greatest Bengali nation of all time'.

The Director General of the Department of Films and Publications S. M. Golam Kibria said 'We try doing our level best to create some different works marking the birth centenary of Bangabandhu and we feel happy to bring out this publication.

Senior Editor of the book '*Sachitro Bangabandhu*', M. Quamruzzaman thanked the Minister and the State Minister to grace the occasion. He also praised the team members who worked relentlessly day and night for the last couple of months to finish the album. The book includes rare photographs and depicted brief life history of great leader in 38 chapters, he added.

The officials of the ministry were present in the programme which was covered by electronic and print.

Halima

Genocide Day observed at DFP



State Minister of Information and Broadcasting Dr. Md. Murad Hassan visiting the photo gallery while Director General S.M. Golam Kibria, Director General of National Institute of Mass Communication, Shaheen Islam, Director General of Department of Mass Communication, Bidhan Chandra Karmakar, Director General of Bangladesh Betar, Ahmed Kamruzzaman were present

The Department of Films and Publications arranged a remembrance programme marking the Genocide Day on March 25 at the auditorium of Tatthya Bhaban with due solemnity and fervour. The programme was inaugurated by the State Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Dr. Md. Murad Hasan MP while the Director General of DFP, S.M. Golam Kibria and other heads of the department of the ministry were also present.

A weeklong photo exhibition on mass killing history and liberation war of Bangladesh was also included in the days programme. Moreover in a separate gallery, the printed copies of supplements published in the newspapers and posters brought out on different national days and occasions were displayed. In the discussion session the State Minister and others took part in speech on the dark of Genocide day. The officials of different government organizations and mass people attended the day long programme.

Megha

DEVELOPMENT CHRONOLOGY

Major National Events

January-March



On behalf of the Prime Minister, Education Minister Dipu Moni and State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Zakir Hossain handed over new textbooks to the students of primary at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital, which is inaugurated through video conferencing by Sheikh Hasina from Ganobhaban on December 31

31 December, 2020

Online study to continue until educational institutions reopen: PM

Noting that online study will continue until the educational institutions reopen, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on December 31 reiterated her call to countrymen to maintain proper health guidelines to stop Covid-19 spread.

The premier said this while inaugurating free textbook distribution activities for

preprimary, primary and ethnic students for 2021 at Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC), joining virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban. Sheikh Hasina said the students can continue their study staying at home as educational institutions are running academic activities using online platforms such as Zoom, Messenger, Facebook, Youtube etc. Amid the Coronavirus, the government is distributing new books to about 4.5 crore students free of cost at the beginning of the New Year. A total of 34, 36, 62, 412 text books are being distributed in the academic calendar- 2021. *Source: The Financial Express*

3 January, 2021

Give highest importance to human rights, rule of law: PM to police

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 3 asked members of the police force to attach highest importance to basic right, human rights and rule of law while discharging their professional duties.

‘I hope that during the professional duties, police force will give highest importance to people’s basic rights, human rights and rule of law,’ she said.

The Prime Minister said this while addressing the training completions programme of 37th BCS (police



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was presented with a souvenir at Ganobhaban on the occasion of the concluding parade training of 37th BCS (Police) batch held at Sarda on January 3.

cadre) at Bangladesh Police Academy, Sarda in Rajshahi virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban. *Source: The Financial Express*

7 January, 2021

'BD earns self-dignity in last 12 years': PM

Bangladesh is doing everything in its power to import the COVID-19 vaccine and the frontline works in the fight against the pandemic will be prioritised for the doses. The infection rate and death too (from COVID-19) in Bangladesh are still quite low. We're trying our best to keep the pandemic under control Prime Minister. Sheikh Hasina speech to the nation on the second anniversary of the current Awami League government on January 7. Sheikh Hasina formed the government for the third consecutive term after her party Awami League's landslide victory in the 11th parliamentary polls held on December 30, 2018. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing to the nation on the occasion of the completion of two years of the present government on January 7

10 January, 2021

Homecoming speech had guidelines to run country

Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina on January 10 said Bangabandhu's January 10, 1972 speech has all the guidelines required to run and independent state.

'The January 10, 1972 speech of Bangabandhu at the Racecourse Maidan on his return to the country from Pakistani captivity has all the required guidelines to run a independent state. There was no written speech in his (Bangabandhu's) hand.

The PM said this while presiding over a discussion meeting virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban marking the historic Homecoming Day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The Awami League (AL) organised the meeting from the party's central office at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Avenue in the capital.

On this day (January 10) in 1972, Bangabandhu, The undisputed leader of the nation and supreme commander of the country's Liberation War, returned to the sacred soil of independent Bangladesh from London via New Delhi after 290 days of captivity in Pakistan jail. The Prime Minister called upon all her party leaders and activists, particularly the new generation, to rehear the speech of January 10 alongside the Historic March 7, 1971 address of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. *Source: The Daily Star*

14 January, 2021

Sheikh Hasina urges all to work for people's development

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 14 urged all to work form their respective positions alongside the government for the socioeconomic development of the people to build the country as golden Bangladesh.

While inaugurating a programme virtually from Ganobhaban. The premier launched the programme on sending allowances and stipend money directly to



The Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the allowance distribution ceremony for the vulnerable groups under the social safety net programme through video conferencing on January 14

different vulnerable groups under the social safety net through mobile financial services. The programme was held at Bangabandhu International Conference Center.

The premier said her government wants to celebrate the golden jubilee

of the country's independence and the Mujib Borsho (announced making the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman) through ensuring housing for all homeless people as well as bringing cent percent people under the electricity coverage. *Source: The Financial Express*

17 January, 2021

Produce films on true War history, says PM

Noting that the government will develop cinema infrastructures up to upazila-level, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 17 urged filmmakers to produce quality films upholding the glorious history and spirit of the Liberation War before the future generation in order to counter distorted history.

'The history of our Liberation War was distorted after the killing of the Father of the Nation on August 15, 1975. So, I'd like to request you to uphold the history before all that we are the victorious nation. We snatched victory through the



On behalf of the Prime Minister, Information Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud handing over the crest of the best lyricist to Kamal Chowdhury at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre marking National Film Awards 2019. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joined the programme virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban on January 17

Liberation War. We need to make more such films so that the future generation can know about the history of our victory,' she said.

The Premier was addressing the distribution ceremony of the National Film Awards-2019 at Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC). She joined the function virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban. The awards were conferred upon 33 recipients under 26 categories. On behalf of Prime Minister's, Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud hands over the awards and certificates. *Source: The Financial Express*

19 January, 2021

Beneficiaries get allowances directly thru mobile service: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina January 19 said the government is sending allowances under social safety net (SSN) programme directly to the beneficiaries' mobile wallets to get rid of middlemen.

'We have been trying to send different allowances directly to the hands of the actual beneficiaries since long so nobody is there between the beneficiaries and they can use the money whatever they want, she said.

The premier said this while inaugurating different allowances distribution ceremony at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC), joining virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban. She said the government wants the allowances being given to different segments of destitute people are reached their hands properly and the job is being done by the mobile financial service (MFS) operators- Nagad and bKash. *Source: The Financial Express*

23 January, 2021

PM distributes 66,189 houses to homeless people

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on January 23 the distribution of 66,189 houses among landless and homeless families is a proud moment for the country as it gives people a better hope for the future.

The Premier said this while distributing homes among 66,189 landless and homeless families across the country under the Asharyan-2 Project as part of the



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina distributes deeds of houses and lands to 70 thousand homeless people on the occasion of Mujib Year virtually from Ganobhaban on January 23



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing virtually the Climate Adaptation Summit 2021 held in the Netherlands on January 25

government's pledge to provide houses to all the landless and homeless families on the occasion of 'Mujib Borsho' and 'Golden Jubilee of the independence.'

The Prime Minister joined the inauguration programme virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban and got connected with 492 upazilas across the country. The government has constructed 66,189 houses spending TK 11.68 billion (1,168 crore) for the homeless and landless families, a move the world sees for the first time. Each unit has two rooms, one kitchen, one toilet and a veranda, constructed at a cost TK 0.175 million (1.75 lakh). *Source: The Financial Express*

25 January, 2021

Climate change: PM criticises global adaptation measures, calls for timely action

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said global adaptation over climate change is still far from the pace of devastation just for lack of

funds and political will.

The PM said this while addressing the two-day Climate Adaptation Summit 2021 through a video message. Netherlands' Prime Minister Mark Rutte presided over the event.

The PM said Bangladesh has emerged as a global leader on locally-led adaptation measures and it developed the Bangladesh Delta Plan-2100 with support from the Netherlands.

To celebrate the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, PM Hasina said the government has planted 11.5 million saplings and launched a programme called "Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan".

Source: The Daily Star

27 January, 2021

Get vaccine sans fear: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 27 said some people are out to criticise any initiative as they have a disease of feeling bad over anything good for the nation.

'They feel unwell when good things happen. Feeling unwell is a disease, I don't know whether there is any treatment or vaccine for the disease,' she said, while inaugurating the vaccination campaign at the Kurmitola General Hospital.

The PM said the vaccination programme has been taken following the protocols of the World Health Organization (WHO). She asked all concerned to work with utmost sincerity to make the Covid-19 vaccination programme a success. 'We want protection of all from the coronavirus. I want to say to you all to work with



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates the Covid-19 vaccination campaign through a video conference from Ganobhaban in the city on January 27 while senior staff nurse Runu Veronica Costa of Kurmitola General Hospital became the first person in the country to receive the jab

sincerity to make the Covid-19 vaccination a success. We want cooperation from all so that everything goes well to this end.'

Describing January 27 as a historic day for Bangladesh, she said, 'Many countries of the world are yet to start vaccination But, we have started it despite being a country of vast population and limited resources.' *Source: The Financial Express*

28 January, 2021

Prime Minister pushes for peaceful solution

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on January 28 Bangladesh continues its discussion with Myanmar with a friendly attitude for the repartition of Rohingyas without engaging in any conflict for the sake of regional security and development.

'Responding to the call of endangered humanity, we've given shelter to around 1.0 million Rohingyas despite (our) various limitations, including internal resource constrain. And we didn't engage in conflict with anyone for the sake of regional security and development apart from creating scopes so that the forcibly displaced Myanmar citizens can return to their homeland,' she said.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina virtually speaking at graduation ceremony of the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC) 2020-21 Course held at Mirpur Cantonment, from Ganobhaban on January 28



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina unveils the cover of the book 'The 100 Agro Technologies Atlas' published by Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) marking the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre virtually from Ganobhaban on February 4

Hasina Complex in Mirpur Cantonment in the city, the premier said this. She joined the programme virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Source: *The Financial Express*

4 February, 2021

PM urges more research on local agro Products

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 4 urged agricultural scientists to conduct further research over local fruits and agricultural items to expand their market. 'It's essential to conduct more research on our local fruits and local items. It needs to expand the market of local items conducting more research on

those. I think our local items are tastier, Premier said, while, unveiling the cover of a book titled '100 Krishi Projokti Atlas' at a function in the capital.

The premier unveiled the cover of the book and then addressed the event held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre through a video conference from her official residence Ganobhaban. Source: *The Financial Express*

7 February, 2021

Only repatriation can resolve Rohingya crisis, says Turkey

Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh Mustafa Osman Turan on February 7 said the only solution to Rohingya crisis is their repatriation to their place of origin in Myanmar.

'Turkey always supports Bangladesh in resolving the Rohingya problem and will remain in favour of Bangladesh in the future, too he said while meeting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the latter's official residence Ganobhaban in the city.

The Turkey envoy expressed his gratitude for naming an important avenue of Bangladesh after the name of former Turkish President Mustafa Kamal Ataturk. Assuring the Turkish envoy of extending all-out support during his stay in Bangladesh, she wished his success and good health. The Prime Minister also greeted the Turkish President. Source: *The Financial Express*



Turkish ambassador Mustafa Osman Turan calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban in Dhaka on February 7

8 February, 2021

Bring 40 plus people under mass vaccination: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 8 instructed the authorities concerned for reducing the age limit from 55 aiming to expand and accelerate the drive. 'I've instructed the Minister (Health Minister) and Director General, Health in this regard, and asked the DG to know more about it from the minister. She said.

The PM said this while speaking the weekly cabinet meeting held at the conference room of the Cabinet Division of meeting virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban. She urged the relevant authorities to make a system where a registered person while taking the vaccine shot could come one with him or her and get the jabs for them as well.

The premier said she had given the instruction aiming to bring a significant portion of the country under the coverage of the vaccination within February and March. *Source: The Financial Express*

10 February, 2021

Maldives to get all-out support in fighting climate change: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 10 said Bangladesh will extend its highest possible support to the Maldives in fighting the adverse impacts of global warming. She made the assurance when Male Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid met her at Ganobhaban.

He informed the PM that the Bangladeshis who are staying in the Maldives will get vaccinated for free against Covi-19.

Referring to the two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed between Bangladesh and the Maldives, the PM expressed satisfaction over signing two documents during his visit. The first MoU is on providing a solid frame work for the recruitment of human resources from Bangladesh and the second one is on cooperation between the Foreign Service Institute of the Maldives and Bangladesh over the training development of Foreign Service officers of the two countries.

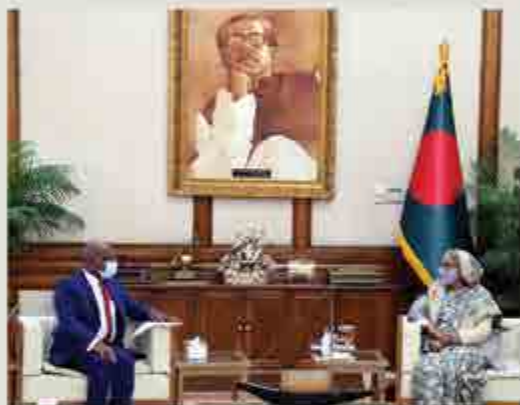
Source: The Financial Express

14 February, 2021

Many countries offering vaccines, says PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on February 14 many countries had expressed their interest to provide Covid-19 vaccines to Bangladesh, and the country would receive all those for ensuring vaccination up to rural level.

'We've procured 30 million (3 corer doses) of vaccine. The Indian government has sent 2 million (20 lakh) doses as a gift. Other countries are willing to provide. We will take all those so that we can ensure vaccination up to rural level. We will take



Foreign Minister of the Maldives Abdulla Shahid calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban in Dhaka on February 10.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone of Kumudini International Institute of Medical Sciences and Cancer Research at Narayanganj virtually from Ganobhaban on February 14

steps for that, she said. While laying the foundation stone of Kumudini International Institute of Medical Science & Cancer Research (KIMS CaRe) at Narayanganj, the premier said this. She joined the programme virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

advance payment when the research was going on and the World Health Organization (WHO) did not give approval, but I made the advance so we can get it early,' she added. *Source: The Financial Express*

'We've made the

15 February, 2021

PM urges authentic war history

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 15 urged all the concerned to present the authentic history of the liberation war before the new generation. History can't be erased. The authentic history of the Liberation War will have to be projected before the new generation, while addressing the 66th trustee board of meeting of the Freedom Fighters Welfare Trust (FFWT) from her official residence Ganobhaban, the premier said this. The other members of the trustee board were connected to it from the Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

The premier has also announced to raise the minimum monthly allowance of valiant freedom fighters to TK 20,000 from the existing TK 12,000. While inaugurating the transfer of allowance to 168,000 valiant freedom fighters and their families through electronic fund transfer system from the Bangladesh Bank every month using the management information system (MIS), she made the announcement. *Source: The Financial Express*

16 February, 2021

PM suggests toll on key highways

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 16 asked the authorities concerned to impose toll on using the country's major highways, and use (Portion of) the collected funds for road maintenance. 'We



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurating the electronic fund transfer system 'Government to Person' (G2P) from her official residence Ganobhaban on February 15. Under the system, freedom fighters will get their allowances directly to their bank accounts

need to impose toll on the key highways, and some funds (collected as toll) should be earmarked for their maintenance,” said Planning Minister M A Mannan, quoting the ECNEC in Dhaka.

Sheikh Hasina direct the authorities to impose toll on the highways, when the ECNEC meeting was discussing the ‘South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC): Dhaka-Sylhet corridor road development project’ for approval. *Source: The Financial Express*

18 February, 2021

Curb food adulteration with iron hand: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 18 directed the authorities concerned to curb food adulteration in Bangladesh with an iron hand, along with creating awareness among businessmen against such offences. You’ll have to make them (unscrupulous businessmen) under stand about such offences on one hand and curb that with an iron hand on the other. It’s essential to take both measures simultaneously, she said. While addressing a programme held at Hotel Intercontinental in the city, marking the National Food Safety Day 2021, the premier said this. She joined the event virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina through a video conference speaking at a programme marking the ‘National Food Safety Day-2021’, held at a local hotel in Dhaka virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban on February 18

This year, the day is being observed with the theme of ‘Tekshoi Unnayan Somriddho Desh, Nirapod Khadyer Bangladesh’ (Bangladesh: A country of sustainable prosperity and safe food. *Source: The Financial Express*

20 February, 2021

52 language movement led to freedom: PM

21 get Ekushey Padak

Reiterating her vow for a dignified Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on February 20 that the language movement had paved the way for achieving the country’s independence.

The premier was addressing the Ekushey Padak (award) distribution ceremony as the chief guest at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city, joining virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Ekushey Padak, the second highest civilian award in Bangladesh, was conferred on 21 eminent persons on the eve of Amar Ekushey and the International Mother Language Day.

মন্ত্রণালয়



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina from her official residence Ganobhaban virtually joined the Ekushey Padak (award) 2021 distribution ceremony held at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city on February 20

On behalf of the Prime Minister, liberation war Affairs Minister A K M Mozammel Haque handed over the awards to the winners.

The awardees are Motahar Hossain Talukdar (posthumous), Shamsul Haque (Posthumous) and Advocate Afasar Uddin Ahmed

(Posthumous), for their roles in the language movement. Other awardees are Begum Papiya Sarowar in music, Raisul Islam Asad and Salma Begum Sujata in arts, Ahmed Iqbal Haidar in Drama and Syed Salahuddin Zaki in film. Dr Bhaskar Bandopandhay in recitation, and Pavel Rahman for photography. Golam Hasanyen, Fazlur Rahman Khan Faruk and Syeda Issabela (posthumous) got the award for their contributions to the War of Liberation while Ajay Dasgupta for his contributions to journalism, Prof Dr Samir Kumar Saha for research, Mahfuza Khanam for education, Dr Mirza Abdul Jalil for economics, Prof Kazi Kamruzzaman for social service, and Poet Kazi Rozy, Bulbul Chowdhury and Golam Murshid for their contributions to language and literature. *Source: The Financial Express*

21 February, 2021

Rich homage to language martyrs

The nation February 21 observed Amar Ekushey and International Mother Language Day in a befitting manner, paying rich tribute to the Language Movement heroes for their supreme sacrifice for Bangla as state language.

Maintaining health guidelines, hundreds of people in bare-foot and wearing black thronged Central Shaheed Minar in the capital and placed floral wreaths at the monument. They stood silent in remembrance of the heroes who embraced martyrdom in 1952. They day was also



On behalf of President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, their Military Secretaries Major General SM Salahuddin Islam (left) Major General Naquib Ahmed Chowdhury (right) respectively placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar on February 21

observed across the globe as UNESCO in 1999 recognised February 21 as International Mother Language Day. In his message, President said Ekushey is a unique remembrance in protecting mother tongue as well as own culture and heritage. In her message, the Prime Minister said, 'We've established the right to language and in the same spirits, we've achieved our independence. In the last 12 Years, we've made tremendous progress in every area of the socio-economic sector of the country, embracing that particular ethos and the logos of the Father of the Nation. Bangladesh is a role model of development in the world today. *Source: The Financial Express*

23 February, 2021

PM desires to build our own fighter jets

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 23 expressed a desire to build fighter jets in Bangladesh to protect its sovereignty.

We're building the Air Force to make it competitive, and we've a desire to build fighter jets in Bangladesh. We're taking preparations to protect our air border with our own (strength), she said. While handing over the national Standard to 11 Squadron and 21 Squadron of Bangladesh Air Force, the premier said this. The programme was held at Air base Birshrestha Matiur Rahman in Jashore, while the Prime Minister joined it virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Referring to the 'Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University' and aeronautical center, she hoped, the research works would be done effectively there. *Source: The Financial Express*

25 February, 2021

Govt. Working to improve Waterways, says Sheikh Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the government has been working to improve the waterways of goods on both the domestic and international fronts. While addressing the 'Mujib Year Graduation Parade' of the 55th batch cadets of Bangladesh Marine Academy (BMA) at Chattogram, the premier remarked this, joining virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban on February 25.

'We are making our river waterways more developed and mobile by restoring the navigability of our rivers so that we can transport goods very smoothly both domestically and internationally. We are paying special attention to that.' she said. *Source: The Financial Express*

27 February, 2021

LDC Graduation

All credit goes to people: PM

Bangladesh graduation to developing one as historic and a matter of pride, Prime



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina through a video conference from her official residence Ganobhaban joins a National Standard Award Ceremony in Jashore while Air Chief Marshal Masihuzzaman Semiabat, on behalf of the premier, is handing over the national flags to 11 Squadron and 21 Squadron of Bangladesh Air Force on February 23

Minister Sheikh Hasina gave the full credit to the countrymen, saying that the milestone has been achieved due to united efforts of all.

‘The people of the country have done it and we have only created the scope giving policy supports,’ she added. She was addressing a press conference on February 27 joining virtually from her Ganobhaban residence in the capital marking the United Nation’s final recommendation regarding Bangladesh’s graduation to a developing country from the LDC one.

She said that she felt proud being part of the achievement and thanked the countrymen at home and abroad and the development partners.

PM Sheikh Hasina said that Bangladesh achieved the status of a developing country after successfully fulfilling all the three criteria such as per capita income, human resources and economical and environmental vulnerability assessed by the United Nations in its this year’s triennial meeting. Earlier, finance minister AHM Mustafa Kamal handed over the UN recommendation to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban. *Source: The Financial Express*

28 February, 2021

PM focuses on edn, skilled workforce in post LDC era



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaking through a video conference from her official residence Ganobhaban marking giving away stipends, tuition fees, admission assistance, and treatment grants among students on February 28



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receives the ‘UN Recommendation for Bangladesh’s graduation from the Least Developed Countries (LDC) to developing countries’ from Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal at Ganobhaban while her sister Sheikh Rehana was also present on February 27

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on February 28 the government committed to sustain Bangladesh’s recognition as a developing country through the expansion of education and building a skilled workforce and worthy citizens,” she said.

While inaugurating a programme of distributing stipends, tuition fees, admission assistance and treatment grants among poor and meritorious students from the PM’s Education Assistance Trust at the Ministry of Education, the premier made the remark.

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

1 March, 2021

PM urges cos to raise awareness about benefits of insurance

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 1 urged insurance companies to take initiatives so the level of awareness

among people could be raised over the benefits of opening insurance policies. "There's lack of awareness among people about the facilities of insurance. I hope those who are involved in the insurance sector will take initiatives so that awareness among people could be increased," she said.

While addressing the National Insurance Day 2021 held at Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC), the premier said this. She joined the programme virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban. The theme of this year's National Insurance Day is 'Mujib Borsher Ongikar Bima Hok Sobar'.

Source: The Financial Express

2 March, 2021

NEC approves TK 1.97tn RADP

The government on March 2 revised the annual development programme (ADP) down by 3.66 per cent to Tk 1.97 trillion for the current fiscal year. FY 2020-21, aimed at streamlining the execution of projects, officials said. Presided over by the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the National Economic Council (NEC) at its meeting in Dhaka approved the revised ADP (RADP), keeping the highest outlay for transport sector.

The government's highest economic policy-making body cut the development expenditure from the original outlay of Tk 2.05 trillion. The PM asked the authorities concerned to complete the projects under the RADP within this FY and said the government from now on would not extend the deadline anymore he added. The planning secretary said the transport sector received highest Tk 492.13 billion or 24.90 per cent of the total outlay in the RADP.

The government allocated second highest allocation of Tk 264.92 billion or 13.40 per cent to infrastructure planning, water supply and housing sector. The third highest Tk 245.72 billion or 12.43 per cent went to the education and religion sector, followed by power sector Tk 219.45 billion or 11.10 per cent and the rural development and rural institutions sector Tk 182.90 billion or 9.25 per cent. *Source:*

The Financial Express



On behalf of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal gives away Bangabandhu Education Insurance Certificates among the marking the National Insurance Day 2021 programme held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, while the premier joined the programme virtually from Ganobhaban on March 1

4 March, 2021

Existing problems should be resolved thru' discussion

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 4 said the existing problems between neighboring countries need to be resolved through discussions.

'There might be problems among neighboring countries. The problems should be resolved through negotiations and discussions,' she told visiting Indian External Affairs Minister S u b r a h m a n y a m

Jaishankar when he met her at the Ganobhaban. PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting. The Indian minister praised Hasina's leadership for meeting the eligibility criteria for Bangladesh's graduation from the LDC group to a developing country.

Jaishankar presented two books, including one titled, 'Liberation War of Bangladesh' written by his father K Subrahmanyam, to Hasina. The Bangladesh Premier also gifted seven volumes of a 14-volume book titled 'Secret Documents of Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman' to the Indian Minister. *Source: The Daily Star*

7 March, 2021

March 7 speech was actual declaration of independence: PM



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina pays homage to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing wreaths at his portrait in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi on March 7.



External Affairs Minister of India Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganobhaban in Dhaka on March 4

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on March 7 the historic 7th March speech was apparently the actual declaration of independence as Bangabandhu uttered twice with utmost assertion 'this time the struggle is for our freedom and this time the struggle is for our independence.' 'He (Bangabandhu) Said twice that 'Ebarer Sangram Muktir Sangram Ebrer Sangram Swadhinatar Sangram' (this

time the struggle is for our freedom, this time the struggle is for our independence) giving utmost assertion in his speech. That means he had clearly said that it'd be the struggle for independence and it'd be a war of independence. So, the 7th March speech can be said as the actual declaration of independence from this point of view,' she said. The premier made the remark while addressing a virtual programme arranged by the Cultural Affairs Ministry marking the Historic 7th March.

She virtually joined the function, held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in the city, from her official residence Ganobhaban. *Source: The Financial Express*

8 March, 2021

Engage yourselves in income-generating activities: PM on Women's Day

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 8 urged the women of the country to engage themselves in income-generating activities instead of sitting idle at home for their economic freedom. 'If we want to advance this society then all, irrespective of women and men, have to go forward keeping their shoulders side by side,' she said.

The premier made this remark while addressing the inaugural function of International Women's Day at Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium, joining virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The theme for International Women's Day 2021 is 'Women in Leadership: Achieving and equal future in a Covid-19 world.'

Mentioning women account for half the country's population, Sheikh Hasina said this society could not advance properly if women remain ineffective. She said it would not be possible to attain the freedom of women by just shouting and delivering speeches. Remarking rights had to be realities was a must to do that, she said, "Qualities will come through education and training." *Source: The Financial Express*

9 March, 2021

Hasina, Modi inaugurate 'Maitri Satu'

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi jointly inaugurate 'Maitri Satu' over Feni river virtually on March 9

Modi on March 9 inaugurated 'Maitri Setu', a bridge built over the Feni river flowing between the two countries.

'We expect that the framework we are inaugurating today (Tuesday) will also help Bangladesh trade more easily not only with India, but with Nepal and Bhutan as well,' she said. The premier made the remarks in a video message to virtually inaugurate the Maitri Setu over the Feni river jointly with her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi. Narendra Modi virtually attended the inauguration ceremony held at Agartala, Tripura.

She said the opening of the Feni bridge was a testimony to the Bangladesh Government's continued commitment to support our neighbour India, in strengthening connectivity in the region, particularly for the North-East of India. "In 2020, the then Chief Minister of Tripura placed a proposal before me to build a bridge over the river Feni." *Source: The Financial Express*

11 March, 2021

Each upazila to get community vision centre, says PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on March 11 the government would set up community vision centers in all upazilas across the country in phases to provide better eye care services to local people.

'Eye care services are costly. General people can't afford these. I am not only the Prime Minister, but also the daughter of the Father of the Nation. So, it's my responsibility ensure healthcare services for every national of the country. I've been trying to perform this responsibility as well,' she said.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaking at the inaugural ceremony of Community Vision Centers in 70 upazilas across the country through a video conference on March 11

The premier made the remark while virtually inaugurating the operation of community vision centers set up in 70 upazila health complexes of 20 districts under five divisions, held at National institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital in the Capital. She virtually joined the inaugural ceremony from her official residence Ganobhaban.

Remarking healthy people was needed to properly take the country forward; she said 'Healthy people are required to build a healthy Bangladesh.' *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurating 'Akashtori' and 'Sltwetbalaka' two new Dash-8 Q400 aircraft of Biman- through a video conference from her official residence Ganobhaban on March 14

14 March, 2021

Take care of Biman aircraft, improve services: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 14 commissioned two new Dash 8-Q400 aircraft in Biman Bangladesh fleet.

The state run airlines inducted one short

haul craft of the same brand. With the addition of these two new Dash planes, the number of Biman's aircraft now stood at 21. "..... the more we can improve the passenger services (of Biman) people will be benefited and the country will be developed," the premier told the commissioning ceremony of the crafts.

The ceremony took place at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport VIP Lounge while the premier joined the function through a virtual platform from her official residence Ganobhaban.

"We all have the responsibilities to brighten the country's image," She said and simultaneously asked Biman to take good care of every aircraft and maintain better passenger services. "The services to passenger will have to be much better," she urged. *Source: The Financial Express*

15 March, 2021

Reserve use for dev funding begins

The first ever loan from the county's foreign exchange reserves was made available to a state agency for implementation of its development project on March 15.

In the maiden allocation, a project for capital and maintenance dredging of Rabnabad channel of Payra seaport received money from the central bank's reserves through a newly-formed facility known as 'Bangladesh Infrastructure Development Fund' (BIDF). A trilateral agreement was signed between the finance divisions. Payra Port Authority (PPA), and Sonali Bank Ltd at the Bangladesh secretariat for the allocation of money from the fund.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina virtually witnesses the tripartite signing ceremony on the dredging programme of Rabnabad channel among Finance Division, Payra Port Authority and Sonali Bank held at Bangladesh Secretariat on March 15

Under the agreement, the Payra port will get 525.56 million euros at 2.0 per cent interest rate with a grace period of three years. It will repay the loan in seven years in six monthly installments. Port and power sector projects will primarily be financed from the fund where the government plans to provide US\$2.0 billion or equivalent in foreign currency. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the fund virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban. *Source: The Financial Express*

17 March, 2021

No chance of looking back: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 17 said there is no chance for Bangladesh to look back as it is time to march forward.

“Overcoming all the obstacles, we shall establish this country as Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s exploitation- deprivation-free, hunger-poverty-illiteracy-free,



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the inauguration ceremony marking the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Golden Jubilee of Independence held at the National Parade Ground while President of Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed and Prime Minister's younger sister Sheikh Rehana were also present on March 17.

non-communal Golden Bangladesh,” she said.

The Prime Minister was delivering her speech as the chair of Inauguration Ceremony of 10-day long Mujib Year and Golden Jubilee of Independence at the National Parade Square. It is not so easy to lower the position that Bangladesh has reached, Sheikh Hasina said, adding that an excellent example of this that the

country has been able to successfully calm down the destructive waves of coronavirus pandemic “But we have to be very careful.”

The nation began the 10-day nation-wide celebration of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s Birth Centenary coinciding with the Golden Jubilee of 1971 Independence with a grand ceremony at the Notional Parade Square. *Source: The Financial Express*

18 March, 2021

Make a vow to implement Bangabandhu’s dreams: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 18 urged all to make a vow to implement dreams of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by building a developed and prosperous Bangladesh. ‘Let’s make a vow that we’ll implement the dream of the Father of the Nation.

The Prime Minister made the call while addressing the celebration of Mujib Year and Golden Jubilee of Independence in the city’s National Parade Square Ground

in the afternoon. Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa was present as the guest of honor at Friday's celebration. Sheikh Hasina, in her presidential speech, said her government will illuminate every house of the country. "No person will remain hungry and homeless in Bangladesh. We'll light up every house," she added. The 10-day special programme is being held at the National Parade Square Ground from March 17 to March 26 marking the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation and the 50 years of the country's independence. *Source: The Financial Express*

PM for promoting translation activities, reading habit

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2021, a yearly event of booklovers and publishers, in the capital on March 18.

The premier opened the book fair, joining its inaugural ceremony at the Bangla Academy virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban in the afternoon. "Now it's a global village. So, there's a scope to know each other. There shouldn't only be trade and business but also know cultural practices, literature, history and all other this. And books give us this scope," she said. This year's fair has been dedicated to the memories of the martyrs of 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh. The main theme of the 2021 fair is "Birth Centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Golden Jubilee of Independence." The Prime Minister Unveiled the cover of 'New China 1952', the official English version of 'Amar Dekha Noya Chin' written by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and published by Bangla Academy. Later, she distributed the Bangla Academy Literary Award 2020 among its recipients at the inaugural ceremony.

On behalf of the premier, State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid handed over the awards to the recipients. The awardees are actress Ferdousi Mazumder (autobiography), poet Muhammad Samad (poetry), Imtiaj Shamim (literary fiction), Begum Akhtar Kamal (essay/research), Suresh Ranjan Basak (translation), Rabiul Alam (drama), Anjir Liton (children's literature), Sahida Begum (research fiction) and Muhammad Habibullah Pathan (folklore).

Biman to fly Dhaka-Male

Bangladesh and the Maldives would have direct flights and commercial shipping links as the two South Asian countries see a huge scope of boosting trade, tourism, and cooperation on human resource development. "The good news is the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has declared that Biman Bangladesh Airlines will start its Dhaka-Male operations very soon. We are expecting another good news that we



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2021 on the Bangla Academy premises on March 18 joining it virtually from her official residence Ganobhaban

can begin a direct shipping line from Chattogram to Male,” Source said

Ibrahim Solih at the Prime Minister’s Office. Momen said the two countries signed four MoUs on the Establishment of Joint Commission for Comprehensive Cooperation, Establishment of Bilateral Foreign Office Consultation; Cooperation in the Field of Fisheries and Pelagic Fishing; and Cultural Exchange Programme for 2022-25. “These instruments are expected to pave the way for further strengthening the relations between the two countries,” he said. *Source: The Financial Express*



Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and his Maldivian counterpart Ahmed Khalil sign a MoU in presence of Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Maldives' President Ibrahim Mohamed at the Prime Minister's Office on March 18.

20 March, 2021

Dhaka, Colombo agree on PTA

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka on March 20 decided to advance the process of signing a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA).

The decision was taken in the bilateral meeting between the two countries where Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Sri Lankan counterpart Mahinda Rajapaksa led their respective sides. Referring to the MoUs on Economic Partnership signed between the two countries in moving towards a bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA), Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen said the two leaders had reiterated their commitment for an early conclusion of FTA for harnessing the available synergies of bilateral trade, which is far below the potential and not commensurate with the political relations. In this regard, both the countries agreed to start feeder services between Chittagong and Colombo ports and to commence coastal shipping services soon, said the minister, adding that they had also agreed to start flight operations by the Bangladeshi carrier to Colombo. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Sri Lankan counterpart Mahinda Rajapaksa witnessed signing ceremony of MoU at the Prime Minister's Office in the city on March 20

22 March, 2021

Dhaka, Kathmandu sign four MoUs

Dhaka and Kathmandu on March 22 signed four Memorandum of Understandings to enhance cooperation between the two countries in different areas, including tourism, sanitation, cultural exchange and railways link. President Md. Abdul Hamid and his Nepalese counterpart Bidya Devi Bhandari, who is in

Dhaka on a two day visit, witnessed the MoUs signing ceremony.

These are MoU on tourism Cooperation jointly signed by Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretary Mokammel Hossain from Bangladesh side and Nepalese Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Secretary Yadav Prasad Koirala. MoU on strengthening Sanitary and Phytosanitary Cooperation signed by Bangladesh's



President Md Abdul Hamid and his Nepalese counterpart Bidya Devi Bhandari witnessed the Memorandum of Understandings signing ceremony on March 22.

Agriculture Ministry's Senior Secretary Mesbaul Islam and Secretary of Industry, Commerce and Supplies Ministry of Nepal Dinesh Bhattarai. MoU on Cultural Exchange Programme for the year of 2022-2025 signed by Bangladesh's Cultural Affairs Secretary Badrul Arefin and Nepalese Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Secretary Yadav Prasad Koirala. And Bangladesh's Commerce Ministry Secretary Jafar Uddin and Nepal's Industry, commerce and Supplies Ministry Secretary Dinesh Bhattarai signed the MoU on Letter of Exchange on Rohanpur-Sighbad Railway Route amendment to Nepal Bangladesh Transit Agreement on behalf, of their respective countries. *Source: The Financial Express*

23 March, 2021

Bhutanese PM Pays homage to Bangabandhu

Bhutanese Prime Minister Dr Lotay Tshering on March 23 paid homage to the Liberation War martyrs and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Upon arrival, he visited the National Martyrs' Memorial at Savar where he paid homage to the Liberation War martyrs by placing a wreath. The Bhutanese Prime Minister is the fourth among the world leaders after that of the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal to attend the Celebrations of the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Golden Jubilee of the country's independence. After the talks, a couple of MoUs are likely to be signed between Bangladesh and Bhutan to enhance the cooperation between the two countries. Lotay Tshering will join the celebration at National Parade Square as the guest of honor and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will receive him there. This has been Prime Minister Dr Tshering's second visit to Dhaka after assuming the office in November 2018, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Source: The Financial Express*

24 March, 2021

Bangladesh, Bhutan can explore new areas of coop: President

Bangladesh and Bhutan can explore new areas of cooperation including, information and communication technology, agriculture, horticulture, tourism and fisheries to enhance trade and investment between the two friendly countries. President Md. Abdul Hamid on March 24 said this when the visiting Bhutanese Prime Minister Dr. Lotay Tshering paid a courtesy call on him at Bangabhaban in the city. Recalling the support of Bhutan during the Liberation War in 1971, President expressed his gratitude to the Bhutanese government and its people.

“Bhutan is a very faithful friend of Bangladesh,” the head of the state mentioned, adding that Bangladesh has an excellent bilateral relations with Bhutan and the existing relation is strengthening day by day.

The Bhutanese premier lauded Bangladesh’s tremendous progress in different sectors, especially in socio-economic sector and women empowerment in Bangladesh, under the charismatic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister of Bhutan Dr. Lotay Tshering calls on President Md. Abdul Hamid at Bangabhaban on March 24

PM urges leaders to work together for S Asia

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 24 urged the political leaders and policymakers of South Asia to work in unison, saying fate of the people of this region can easily be possible to improve utilizing the endowed resources through mutual cooperation. ‘We can easily improve the of the people of South Asia by utilizing the resources we have been endowed through exhibiting mutual cooperation,’ she said.

While addressing the auspicious moment of celebrating the birth centenary of

Father of the Nation and Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh’s Independence, Sheikh Hasina said ‘I called upon the political leaders and policymakers of South Asia to work hand in hand to build a peaceful and prosperous South Asia.’ Pointing out that the people of this region possess unbelievable spirit, innovation, and the ability to survive against natural disasters, She said” If we work together for the betterment of our people, South Asia. *Source: The Financial Express*



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi hands over the ‘Gandhi Peace Prize- 2020’ conferred on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to his youngest daughter Sheikh Rehana. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was present there on March 26

26 March, 2021

Sheikh Hasina, Sheikh Rehana receive ‘Gandhi Peace Prize’ for Bangabandhu

Bangabandhu’s daughters Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana have received the

'Mahatma Gandhi Peace Prize-2020' awarded to Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by the Indian government. On a two day visit to Bangladesh, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi Presented Hasina and Rehana with the prize at the National Parade Ground on March 26 the last day of the 10 day programmes organized to celebrate the birth centenary of the Father of the Nation and the golden jubilee of the country's independence. The Ministry of Culture of India announced the names of Bangabandhu and Oman's late Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said for the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Prize 2020 and 2019 respectively. *Source: The Financial Express*

Independence Day celebrated

The nation on March 26 celebrated the 51st Independence Day with a call for building "Sonar Bangla" as envisioned by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. This year's Festivals coincided with the 10 day grand celebrations of the birth centenary of Bangabandhu and the Golden Jubilee of Independence.



President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina observe silence after paying tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar on March 26, marking the 51st Independence and National Day.

The day's programmes began with a 50 gun salute early in the morning. The national flag was hoisted atop all government, semi-government, autonomous and private buildings while many streets and important city intersections were decorated with national

and multi-coloured miniature flags and festoons.

In the morning President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid rich tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar. They stood in silence for some time as a mark of profound respect to the memories of martyrs. *Source: Daily Star*

27 March, 2021

Hasina, Modi inaugurate five projects

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi jointly inaugurated five projects on March 27. They inaugurated the projects virtually after bilateral talks between Bangladesh and India that took place at the Prime Minister's Office.

The projects are Infrastructure Development for Power Evacuation Facilities of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, introduction of a new passenger train service, 'Mitali Express', between Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri And extended development work at Rabindra Bhaban Kuthibari in Shilaidaha, Kushtia.

The other projects are construction of a monument at Ashuganj in memory of martyred members of Indian Allied Forces in Ashuganj and three new Border haats along the India Bangladesh border. Besides, the two Prime Minister also witnessed a video on the concept of Swadhinata Sarak from Mujibnagar of Meherpur to connect Kolkata via Nadia.

Sheikh Hasina and Narendra Modi also unveiled commemorative stamps of their respective countries. *Source: The Financial Express*

Dhaka, Delhi Sign five MoUs

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and visiting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 27 reiterated their commitment to strengthen bilateral trade and business ties between the two neighbouring countries. The commitment came at a summit-level meeting, which was followed

by signing of five memorandums of understanding (MoUs). One of the MoUs was relating to trade cooperation. The MoUs are: cooperation in disaster management, cooperation in removing trade barriers, cooperation in cadet core, cooperation in information technology, and sports facility for Rajshahi College. The talks between the two leaders covered a whole range of issues of common interests including trade, connectivity, water, power, energy, defence and cooperation in areas of civil nuclear and tackling of Covid-19. *Source: The Financial Express*

29 March, 2021

PM seeks global leadership

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 29 stressed the need for concerted global actions and robust leadership to quick recovery of the liquidity crisis and sovereign debt burdens during and the post Covid-19 era.



The Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaking in a virtual meeting titled 'Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond Initiative' of the heads of state and government organized by UN on March 29



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi witnessed the signing ceremony of five MoUs at Prime Minister's Office on March 27

"We need ambitious and concerted global action plans to address the liquidity crisis and sovereign debt burdens now and in the post Covid-19 era," she said. The premier made this remark in a video message delivered in a virtual meeting styled "Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond Initiative" of the heads of state and government on the International Debt Architecture and Liquidity.

With the world struggling to overcome the human and economic devastation from COVID-19, Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Jamaica Andrew Holness ON, MP, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres convened the meeting of world leaders to take additional and urgent action to ensure a robust recovery. *Source: The Financial Express*

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



Swadhinata Stambha (Independence Monument) at Suhrawardy Udyan, Dhaka



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