

# Bangladesh

January-March 2017

## Quarterly

**Independent Bangladesh  
A Life Long Dream of Bangabandhu**

---

**From Language Movement to  
International Mother Language Day  
The Pragmatism of Women**

---

**Bangladesh Racing Ahead at an Irresistible Pace**

---

**Begum Sufia Kamal  
The Most Unforgettable Poet I Ever Met**



# Bangladesh

## QUARTERLY

Vol. 37, No. 3, January-March 2017, Magh-Chaitra 1423



*Central Shaheed Minar, Monument in memory of  
Language Martyrs of 1952*



Department of Films and Publications  
Ministry of Information  
Bangladesh

---

**Chief Editor**

Md. Nasir Uddin Ahmed

**Senior Editor**

M. Quamruzzaman

**Editor**

Faisal Hassan

**Senior Sub-Editor**

Tahmina Begum

**Sub-Editor**

Hriday Kumar Barman

Md. Mazharul Hoque

**Editorial Associate**

Md. Mamun Hossain

**Cover Design**

Sanjib Kumar Sarkar

**Illustration**

Subarna Seal

Nahrin Sultana

**Cover**

Historic 7th March speech of  
Bangabandhu in 1971

---

**Published by****Department of Films and Publications**

112, Circuit House Road, Dhaka- 1000

Telephone : 88-02-9333120,

88-02-9331005, 88-02-9357490

Fax : 88-02-58310020

E-mail : bangladeshquarterly@yahoo.com

bdqtrly@gmail.com

Website: www.dfp.gov.bd

**Price : Tk. 30**

Computer Compose and Printed at  
S. R. Printing Press Ltd. 85/1 Nayapaltan,  
Dhaka-1000.



## Editorial

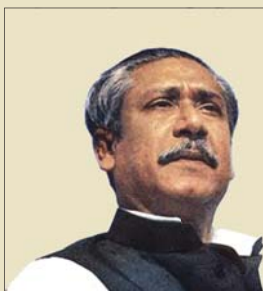
**B**angladesh witnessed many historic days in the first quarter of the English calendar year. Among those days, 10th January, the Home Coming Day of Bangabandhu, 21st February, the Shaheed Day and International Mother Language Day, 17th March, Birth Anniversary of Bangabandhu and National Children's Day and 26th March, the Independence and National Day of Bangladesh are the most significant. The nation observed all the historic days with due solemnity and fervour. The daily newspapers published supplements and special programmes were broadcast in Bangladesh Betar and TV channels throughout the country to mark those days.

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman played the pivotal role in achieving the independence of Bangladesh. The six-point movement in 1966, uprising in 1969, landslide victory in general election of 1970 and the epoch making historic speech of 7th March in 1971 paved the way for independence of Bangladesh. Although Bangabandhu was imprisoned in Pakistan jail during the liberation war, it was under his name and his leadership that freedom fighters fought the nine-month long war.

Bangabandhu, for his whole life, dreamt for 'Sonar Bangla (Bengal of Gold)'. In the line the present government is working to make Bangladesh rich and developed country under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The people of Bangladesh are optimistic and confident about the future prospects of the country. Bangladesh has huge potentials. It is possible to make the country a rich and developed one by 2041 as dreamt for.

Readers will find articles on the above subjects along with some other write-ups on poet Begum Sufia Kamal and also food, agriculture and extensive transport plan of greater Dhaka accommodated in this issue.

# Contents



Independent Bangladesh  
A Life Long Dream of  
Bangabandhu  
*Anisul Hoque*  
Page- 4



Significance of Muktijuddha and  
the Recognition of Bangladesh  
Genocide  
*Mofidul Hoque*  
Page- 10



Bangladesh Racing Ahead at an  
Irresistible Pace  
*Dr. Atiur Rahman*  
Page- 21

From Language Movement to  
International Mother Language Day  
The Pragmatism of Women  
*Selina Hossain* 15

## POEM

Mother Language  
*Kamal Chowdhury* 20

Cherished Goals of Sustainable Development  
and Our Ladder of Dreams  
*Md. Abul Kalam Azad* 30

An Extensive Plan on Transport and  
Communication for Greater Dhaka  
*Md. Abu Naser* 35

Begum Sufia Kamal : The Most  
Unforgettable Poet I Ever Met  
*M. Mizanur Rahman* 42

Issues in Food- based Dietary : Bangladesh  
Perspective  
*Md. Azgar Ali* 48

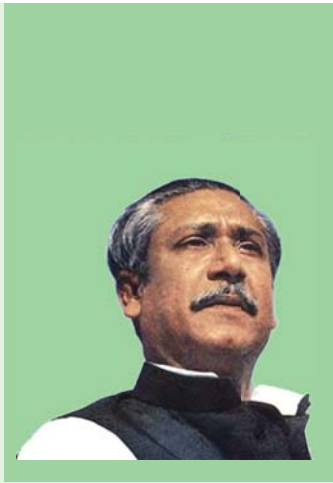
Prospect of Eco and Health Tourism in  
Bangladesh  
*Md. Ziaul Haque Howlader* 54

Prospect of Zinc-rich BRRI Dhan-62  
*Dr. Md. Shafayet Hossain* 59

## SHORT STORY

Beside The Chimney  
*Satya Paul* 61

Development Chronology 64



# Independent Bangladesh

---

## A Life Long Dream

---

## of Bangabandhu

---

**Anisul Hoque**

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. And that is why; he is called the Father of the Nation.

I have composed a rhyme on this concept:  
Do you know whose brainchild Facebook is?  
Answer promptly, if you know.  
Everybody knows, answer comes from two to four lac,  
Facebook has been innovated by Zuckerberg.  
Tell me who the inventor of airplane is  
Instant answer makes the thing clear,  
Wright Brothers, Wright Brothers, the two brothers  
Is there anybody who doesn't know the answer?  
Who has founded Bangladesh, please tell me  
The answer is the same and all agree  
The answer is in the sun and stars shining  
The answer is in everybody's blood always flowing  
The name that's as good as Independence is  
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

**E**veryone has to have a big dream. You must think of how to make space in others mind. But why they should do that must be identified. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has created Bangladesh. He is in the mind of everybody. Thus, along with having a dream, everybody has to work to materialize it.' This was stated by the Former Indian President and Famous Scientist A P J Abdul Kalam at one of his addresses in Dhaka.

Everything has been made by someone. Who has made this table? Who has made this chair? It can be answered. Similarly, if someone questions, who has made Bangladesh? The answer is,



*Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman with his family members*

Today we are living in an independent country as only Bangabandhu was born, we have had a green flag, an independent state and also a national anthem to sing whole heartedly. There was no state in thousand years old history of the Bangali. For the first time the Bangali achieved a state. And this has been possible for Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. That is why, he is our Father of the Nation, greatest Bangali of all time. Not merely we just have achieved a national flag and a national anthem, after 46 years of independence we know, this is the time for us to keep head high. This is the time to march forward. There are initiatives all over for advancement in education, working hard and to build up the country. Today Bangladesh is a miracle, a model of development to the world. We are progressing in so many fields. All these have been possible for independence. And the architect of this independence is Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

How did he make Bangladesh independent?

First of all, a dream. Moreover, he had a profound patriotism, firm determination, indomitable courage and self sacrificing mentality. He had the quality of leadership.

The English left the sub-continent in 1947. The two countries, India and Pakistan were created. We were in the part of Pakistan, named the East Pakistan. Sheikh Mujib, the son of Tungipara of Gopalganj, went to Kolkata for study. There he got involved in politics. After the English left in 1947, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman came to Dhaka from Kolkata. Before even leaving Kolkata, he informed his friends and colleagues that new movement would be launched after returning to the East Bengal.

He did not recognize Pakistan even for a day. Even he was not pronouncing the word 'Pakistan'. He had always been referring the country as the 'Bangla' or the Purbo (East) Bangla. He used to say, they want to erase the word 'Bangla'. The word that has a history, a heritage.

Just after arriving in Dhaka, he launched movement demanding Bangla as the state language. In that very year in 1948, he was jailed for waging the movement.

He earned popularity from that time. The people gathered in public meetings only to listen to his address. That is why, the senior leaders would say, Mujib will address last of all. Even the chairperson of the meeting would finish his/her address earlier. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had been the last speaker. It was done as the audience would start leaving the meeting after his deliberation.

Why had he been so popular? As he used to speak of the emancipation of the Bangali, protested the injustice and misrule of the Pakistani rulers. He had never been afraid of anybody.

That is why, he was facing arrests repeatedly. He had not at all been worried to go to the jail. Even love for his wife or children had not let him away from rendering service to the country. His wife Begum Fazilatunnesa had always been a source of courage and inspiration. She had to go through severe hardship with the minor kids.

He would always stay in jail. His daughter Hasina was a minor kid, son Kamal was younger. At that time, one day he went home on being released from prison. What happened at that time, as he wrote 'one morning I and Renu were gossiping in bed. Hasu and Kamal were playing below. Hasu occasionally came to me calling 'father, father'. Kamal stayed looking on. At one stage, Kamal was found saying to Hasina, 'Hasu Apa, May I a bit address your father 'father'? (The Unfinished Memoirs – Sheikh Mujibur Rahman).

In the prison, the officials of the intelligence of the Government would say to him to get released from the confinement on signing a bond or undertaking. Sheikh Mujib would say, I will lay down my life. Even then I do not want release signing a bond of slavery. I will make the people of Bengal free. It is obvious. The Zionists must fall.

The officials of the government intelligence while submitting report at that time would write, the mental strength of the prisoner is very high. He cannot be convinced.

Those reports have been recovered from the government offices. If you read the book 'Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman : Life & Politics' published by the Bangla Academy, then you would be able to read the intelligence reports.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of the country since then.

Of course, you will read another book 'The Unfinished Memoirs' (Published by UPL). The language of the book written by Bangabandhu himself is very soft,

description very smooth. If he could stick only to writing, he could have been one of our best writers.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was born on 17 March, 1920. His father was Sheikh Lutfur Rahman.

In the book 'The Unfinished Memoirs' there is a vivid sketch on his football play. When he was 20, there was a football match between his school's team and Officers' Club Team of his father. The team of the son lost to the father's team by one goal in the final match.

However, just after returning to Dhaka from Kolkata, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman launched the Language Movement in that 1948.

The Awami Muslim League was formed. Bangabandhu has written in his 'The Unfinished Memoirs', 'The draft party manifesto published during the formation of Awami League by us demanded full autonomy (of the East Pakistan). Seeing it, Liaquat Ali Khan became more angry.' That means Awami League raised the issue of full autonomy in writing in that very 1949. Why the issue was raised, Bangabandhu also detailed that point in his autobiography. Because the Pakistanis have exploited the East Bengal in the name of governance, though the East Bengal was the majority of Pakistan, the Bangalis had been made deprived in all the fields. Karachi was made the capital. All industrial establishments, mills and factories were developed in the West Pakistan.

In fact, the dream of the independent Bangladesh was set in the thinking of Bangabandhu from the past.

He even expressed these views in an interview with the Indian Litterateur Annada Shankar Roy after the Independence. Annada Shankar has written in his memoirs, 'We ask Sheikh Shaheb,' When did you conceive the idea of Bangladesh first?' 'Would you listen to?' Saying this he (Bangabandhu) just giggled and continued, 'it was 1947. I was in the party of Suhrawardy. He and Sarat Chandra Bose wanted the United Bengal (Jukta Bangla). I also want a single country for all the Bangalis. What not the Bangalis could do if they have been united. They could win the world.'

He was getting excited while saying this. Then he said out of despair, 'Suhrawardy and Sarat Chandra Bose came back from Delhi in empty hands. Neither Congress nor Muslim League agreed with their proposal. They have yielded. I also found that there was no alternative. I came to Dhaka and started anew. I conceded with the Pakistan Concept for the time being. But how my formula will be fulfilled was my worry. There was no possibility of it to be fulfilled. How communal the people are! Had we say we want Bangladesh, they would become skeptical. All on a sudden, one day a voice was raised, 'we want Bangla Language'. I also converged in the Language Movement.

We turned the movement based on language, step by step, to the movement for a state. Afterwards, at a stage when I asked my party members, what would be the name of our country? Some proposed Pak-Bangla, some for Purbo Bangla. I

said-no, it would be Bangladesh. Then I raised slogan, 'Joy Bangla'. In fact, they could not understand me. By joy Bangla, I wanted to mean the victory of the Bangla language, Bangladesh and the Bangali Nation. Which have been beyond communalism.

That means, everything was clear to Sheikh Mujib from that of 1947. It was known to him that his target was liberty. That is why, one step after another had to overcome. He was crossing through developments. The people of the Bengal shed their blood for language in 1952. They made the Jukta Front (United Front) victorious in 1954. Ayub Khan proclaimed the Martial Law in 1958. Sheikh Mujib visited all through the Bengal for organizing Awami League. He announced the Six Point. The Pakistani Junta became nervous. Sheikh Mujib was arrested in the Agartala Conspiracy Case. His trial began. There was a plot to kill him even during that imprisonment. The people of Bengal freed Bangabandhu from the prison through the Mass Upsurge of 1969. They adorned him the title 'Bangabandhu' out of love.

Bangabandhu contested in the election. Because he was confirm, if Awami League took part in the election, it would emerge as the majority winning party of Pakistan. Even before the election he asserted, on winning the election once, my target would be to establish Bangladesh.

The events progressed accordingly. In the election of 1970, on being spelt bound with the dream of liberation, the people of Bengal under the leadership of Bangabandhu voted for the 'Boat'. The Awami League of Bangabandhu appeared as the majority party in the whole Pakistan. But the Pakistanis disagreed to hand over power to the Bangalis. And Bangabandhu also announced, I do not want the Premiership. I want emancipation of the people of Bengal. In his historic address of 7 March, 1971, Bangabandhu categorically declared, struggle this time is the struggle for liberation, struggle this time is the struggle of our independence.

On the fateful night of 25 March of 1971, the Pakistan Army as per their pre-planned design launched attack with cannons and tanks on the unarmed Bangalis. Then Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared the Independence of Bangladesh. He was taken away arrested and sent to the jail in Pakistan.

The people of Bangladesh, following his direction, converted every house into a fort and started confronting the enemy with whatever they had. They started defeating the Pakistani Army in every sector.

On the other hand, arrangements were made to hang Bangabandhu in the jail in Pakistan. A grave was excavated for him beside his cell. He said, I would not bow my head down. He said, even when walking gallows, I would say I am a Bangali, Bangla is my Language, Bangla is my country, Joy Bangla, Independent Bangla.

In the War of Liberation of 1971, 3 million people faced martyrdom. Two hundred thousand mothers and sisters were violated. Conceding their defeat, the Pakistani soldiers surrendered on 16 December, 1971.

Bangabandhu returned to the Independent Bangladesh on 10 January, 1972. He said, my dream has been fulfilled today, my Bangladesh is independent. Saying

this he started crying. He said, the World Poet, you have said, 'you mesmerized mother, you have groomed up your 7 crore children as Bangali, not human'. The World Poet Rabindranath Tagore, you just come and see, we have redressed your regret. Turning down your perception, seven crore Bangalis today have made the country independent through waging war and laying down their lives.

The independence of Bangladesh, in true sense, has been a lifelong dream of Bangabandhu. He has attained that. The Bangalis have achieved that sacrificing their lives.

Hatching conspiracy, however, did not stop. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman alongwith his family members were assassinated on 15 August, 1975. His two sons-- Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and two daughter-in-laws, his beloved wife Sheikh Fazilatunnesa, even his minor son Russel were also brutally killed by bullets. His two daughters Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana fortunately escaped, as they were abroad at that time.

Bangabandhu has given us an independent country. In his address on 10 January, 1972, Bangabandhu said, I firmly make it clear; Bangladesh would be an ideal state. And its foundation would not be on the basis of any specific religion. The founding pillars of the state will be democracy, socialism and secularism .The farmers, the labourers, the Hindus, the Muslims of this country will live happily, in peace.

Bangabandhu laid his life to establish that ideal.

It will be our duty to build up Sonar Bangla as dreamt by him.

We can do it by discharging our respective duties in a perfect way. Such a view is expressed in the dialogues between Plato and Socrates- what is the most devoted patriotism? Performing own job most sincerely.

We have to learn from Bangabandhu , how we would love the country.

And if we can do our respective jobs properly with the spirit of patriotism, then the country will develop.

As the poet says, 'Mom if we do not wake up, how the dawn will come, the night will be over after your son is awake.'

If we wake up, the country will wake up, the dawn will come. If we enlighten ourselves, the country will be enlightened. Bangabandhu said, 'To build up Golden Bangla, we need the golden people.' You are those golden people of the dream of Bangabandhu. You are building up the Golden Bangla.

We will be able to build the country by building up ourselves competent in all the fields including education, science, culture and sports. If we can make ourselves as solid gold, then the golden country - the Golden Bangla dreamt by Bangabandhu will be built up.

**Translation: Md Saifullah**

***Courtesy: Press Information Department***



## Significance of *Muktijuddha* and the Recognition of Bangladesh Genocide

Mofidul Hoque

Mujibur Rahman. The emergence of independent Bangladesh had great national, regional and global significance which has not yet been properly understood or recognized. State of Pakistan was established on the basis of two nation theory that made the religious identity supreme, eradicating all other identities of a person or a nation. People of diverse language, culture and history come together under the great canopy of religion. Diversity is the essence of life and pluralism sustains and promotes that. There cannot be and should not be any conflict between one's religious and national identities. But Pakistan, a theocratic state based on communalism created distortion which found reflection in the denial of language rights of Bangali people. The rulers of the Islamic State of Pakistan tried to justify their domination using the name of Islam and ventured to create an 'Imagined Nation' based solely on religious identity. Right from the beginning Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman could understand the pitfalls of compromising on national rights and identity. He firmly upheld the

The emergence of independent state of Bangladesh is a story of pain and glory, a great victory achieved through great sacrifices. While depicting the brutal birth of Bangladesh, historians sometime refer to the famous lines of Charles Dickens, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness." Such is the fate of the nation that its day of celebration is always preceded by the day of sorrow. Victory Day of 16 December is preceded by the day of brutal killing of the intellectuals. The bright day of independence arrives after the dark night of 25 March, when amidst the killing, burning and shooting all around the call of independence by Bangabandhu reverberated in the air.

The nation crossed a sea of blood to arrive at the shore of independent state of the Bangali people, under the unique leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh



*Mass killing at midnight on 25 March 1971 in Dhaka*

linguistic-ethnic identity of Bangali people and its right to self-determination. He exposed the inherent contradiction of Pakistani state and colonial nature of domination of the West over Eastern province. Although Pakistan emerged as a single state it was not a united country in terms of geographical entity. The two wings were separated by more than thousand

miles and the separation of language, culture and history was far more apart.

In this backdrop, Sheikh Mujib placed the 6-point charter of demand with an aim to achieve self-rule of the Bangalis in the Eastern province. In spite of imprisonment, torture and oppression he stood firm in his demand. In 1970 when democratic election was held for the first time in the history of Pakistan, Bangabandhu got the mandate of the people with unprecedented majority. The election result endorsed the right of the Bangali nation for self-determination and

provided that a constitutional and legal foundation. Bangabandhu led the struggle to such a level that it could not be termed as a secessionist movement. He depended on the power of the people, on the other hand the Pakistani rulers were determined to destroy the people's power with military might. They with full force struck treacherously on the night of 25 March, 1971. In face of the genocidal attack upon the Bangali nation Bangabandhu declared the independence of Bangladesh. Overnight the democratic struggle for national rights turned into the war of national



*The Six-Point movement spread across the country*

liberation, a concept which in the 1960's earned UN recognition as part of the anti-colonial movement of the nations for self-determination. At one side was the genocidal attack and on the other side the war of national liberation, two opposing components of the struggle for Bangladesh.

It cannot be said that such reality of Bangladesh struggle was well understood by the international community. Bangladesh was not Biafra rather it gave rise to a nation-state breaking the shackle of colonial state structure of Pakistan. There were not many people who could evaluate the struggle from the perspective of anti-colonial movement and one such exceptional academic was Herbert Feith, the convenor of the Victorian Committee to Support Bangladesh. In September 1971 during the turmoil with no end in sight he delivered a lecture at the Flinders University of South Australia and observed :

“Bangladesh movement is much more like an anti-colonial movement than any of the other would-be breakaway causes of the third world. It is an anti-colonial movement in every major sense except in not being directed against a European power. We have traditionally come to see anti-colonialism as a matter of brown people rising up against their domination and exploitation by white people. But Korean nationalism, which was directed against the Japanese, was anti-colonial nationalism too. So why should we not see the Bangladesh cause in this framework?”

Professor Herbert Feith had the insight to look at the Bangladesh struggle in broader dimension. He depicted the historic March 7 speech of Bangabandhu and the subsequent non-violent non-cooperation movement as the ‘Prague Spring of Bengal’. He said,

“It marked the beginning of what has been sometimes called the Prague spring of East Bengal, the period of high elation, big commitment and high sense of unity, when Bangladesh as a state of mind was born.”

The genocidal atrocities that began on the night of 25 March, 1971 continued for nine long months. Even in the early days the signs of genocidal intent and targeted killing was inherent in the plan and pattern of atrocities. Here we recall the role played by Archer Blood, the U. S. Consul in Dhaka. As early as on 28 March in the secret telegram sent from his office to the State Department he put the caption ‘Selective Genocide’. Later on he wrote, “On March 28 I sent a telegram captioned ‘Selective Genocide’. As far as I know, it was the first time that term has been used, but it was not to be the last.”

But the Western powers, specially the US administration headed by Nixon-Kissinger axis, in their effort to appease President Yahya Khan negated the truth of genocide. They downplayed the atrocities and accused India for their interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan. But the brutal way in which Pakistan Army attacked the Bangali nationalists and Hindu population had exposed the harsh reality of Genocide and Crimes against Humanity. These found ample reflection in the human sufferings reported in both the electronic and print media world-wide. The genocide in Bangladesh was not a hidden one, rather a widely publicized tragedy of humanity.

But media has its own limitation and is very much tied to the event as it unfolds. They rarely focus beyond contemporary settings. Post-independent Bangladesh went out of focus of the global media. The efforts of the war-devastated country to

rebuild itself or the right of the victims of genocide for justice found little mention in the media. No international initiative was taken to try the Pakistani war criminals or their local collaborators. On the other hand Bangladesh was pressurised to send back home the 195 Pakistani POWs accused of international crimes. Many countries and international organizations were vocal about the release of prisoners after cessation of hostility as per Geneva Convention, but no one raised voice for justice for the victims of genocide as per Genocide Convention. In the backdrop of failure of the international community Bangladesh moved forward all alone and in July, 1973 adopted in its Parliament the seminal law entitled 'International Crimes (Tribunal) Act'. But due to international pressure to release the Pakistani war criminals Bangladesh could not make much progress in their trial. The scenario changed drastically with the tragic killing of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu and a reversal of policy began. There followed a long period of denial of justice as well as distortion of history.

In spite of this great reversal the people, specially the near and dear ones of the victims of genocide, the freedom fighters and adherents of the core values of Muktiyuddha, never allowed their right to justice to be forfeited. They tried to keep the flame of memory alive. One glaring example of memorialisation was Jahanara Imam and her book of memoirs 'Ekattorer Dinguli' (Days of '71) which inspired the youths as well as larger population. It was under her leadership that People's Tribunal was formed to try the leading local collaborators. The long endeavour to end impunity for the perpetrators of genocide achieved success in the 2008 national election when the coalition led by Sheikh Hasina was over-whelmingly voted into power with mandate to try the war criminals. Accordingly Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took initiative to establish the Tribunal and in 2010, almost 40 years after the genocide, International Crimes Tribunal of Bangladesh was established. This landmark event in the history of justice for genocide had great national and international significance. The Tribunal was set-up on the basis of the 1973 Act and following due process of law verdicts now are being delivered one after another. Justice for genocidal crime is a complicated process and it took global community

almost 60 years to establish the International Criminal Court in 2002. The shift in the international arena as well as in Bangladesh has drawn new attention to the events of 1971. In recent years significant books based on new and extensive research on the emergence Bangladesh has been published in



*Female Freedom Fighters receiving training in 1971*

the West. Prominent among those is the book by Gary J. Bass titled "The Blood Telegram : Nixon, Kissinger and a Forgotten Genocide." When a book backed by documentation and solid research is being published on a forgotten genocide it no longer remains forgotten. Other significant books "1971 : A Global History of Creation of Bangladesh" by Srinath Raghavan, "The Bangladesh War and Its Unique Legacy" by Salil Tripathi and "The Spectral Wound" by Nayanika Mookherjee, a sensitive account of sexual violence and its aftermath.

In the post-conflict scenario Bangladesh took significant steps to support the victims of sexual violence. Bangabandhu had embraced the victims as 'Beerangona' or War-Heroine which Nayanika Mookherjee termed as 'unprecedented in history'. She observed that after a long gap it was only in Bosnia in 1994 similar call was made by the Imam of Muslim Society to treat the victims of sexual violence as fighters or soldiers. She noted that the efforts of Bosnia as well as Bangladesh remained outside the purview of international community. It may be mentioned here that another significant act of Bangladesh also remain unrecognised which is the legal recognition of 'rape' as a Crime against Humanity. 1973 Act of Bangladesh categorized the crime of rape whereas in the Genocide Convention of 1948 there was no mention of such brutal crime.

In the changed international scenario the contribution of Bangladesh is getting more and more recognition. This has been reflected in the observation made by genocide scholar Professor Adam Jones. In March, 2014 in a lecture delivered at the Liberation War Museum he noted : "The establishment of the International Crimes Tribunal in 1973 was one of the earliest systematic attempts to seek justice for genocide – the first major one since the Nuremberg Trials following World War Two, and the first in which vocabulary of 'Genocide' was front and centre."

On the other hand we have witnessed massive international campaign launched by the religious fundamentalist forces, the perpetrators accused for their complicity, abetment and participation in the brutal acts of genocide, to tarnish the image of the Bangladesh tribunal. They could confuse some people for some time but failed in thwarting the justice process. It is also imperative that Bangladesh promotes its own domestic process of justice for international crimes more vigorously in the global arena.

In the long struggle of Bangladesh to establish truth and justice another significant step has been taken by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on 11 March 2017 when the Parliament declared 25 March as the 'National Genocide Day'. This will create new possibility to commemorate the victims of genocide and work for its prevention. It is important not only to understand what happened, but also to study why it happened. That will assist all to learn lessons from the past atrocities and chart future course for humanity to live in harmony. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his struggle to establish the nation-state of Bangladesh has shown the way to create harmony in diversity. This is the civilizational challenge we all are facing now.

The struggle for Bangladesh is also the struggle for emancipation of Mankind. Joy Bangla.

**Translation : The writer himself**

***Courtesy: Press Information Department***



## From Language Movement to International Mother Language Day The Pragmatism of Women

**Selina Hossain**

**T**he Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had written in his book 'Unfinished Memoir' on the language movement when he was in jail: 'We were kept at a place inside the jail. The ward in which we were accommodated was called 'number four ward'. It was a three-storey building. Outside the wall stood the Muslim Girls' School. During the five days we were in jail, the school-girls used to start shouting slogans after climbing on the roof-top at ten in the morning, which ended at four in the afternoon. The small girls did not tire the slightest. There were different types of slogans – 'We want Bangla as the state language', 'We seek release of our jailed brothers', 'Police tortures should stop'. At this juncture, I told Mr. Shamsul Haque, "Mr. Haque, look at them, our sisters have come out.

They cannot now say 'no' to Bangla as the state language." Mr. Haque told me, "You have spoken correctly, Mujib."

Based on his political wisdom, Bangabandhu had evaluated the contributions of women in the language movement – in a clear voice and within the larger perspective, from the standpoint of equality between men and women in achieving goals. But today, it is an inevitable reality that the contributions of women are not recognised properly by the mainstream history. In most cases, the historians side-track the contributions of women; even when they are acknowledged, the recognition is not accompanied by an extensive analysis. As a consequence of this token coverage, history displays a pattern of linearity due to patriarchal outlook. In the same vein, the womenfolk has also not been accorded due honour by the history of language movement. But the role of women in this movement ranged from that of housewives to member of constituent assembly. The womenfolk had discharged active roles in all relevant spheres.

Access of women everywhere was not an easy matter under a conservative state apparatus in the new land of Pakistan, which came into being in 1947 on the basis of religion. Even then, the women did not sit idle on the pretext of mere religion during the language movement that was launched in December 1947.

After the formation of the state language council, the female students of Dhaka University were given the responsibility of collecting funds for running the movement. Alongside discharging this responsibility, they carried out another important task purely out of alertness. While reminiscing, language movement veteran Rawshan Ara Bachchu said, "We went from house to house at that time.



*Mourning Procession of the female students of Dhaka University on 21 February in 1953*

Most of the women were not job-holders. They gave us their ornaments, and those who had ability gave money. We used to convince them about the honour of mother language. We used to explain why making Bangla a state language was urgent for preserving our self-esteem. In this way, we built up awareness in favour of the slogan “We want state language Bangla”. It was the principal reason why the masses had joined that

movement spontaneously. She also said, “The girls often came to the processions by wearing Burqa because of resistance from their families. Once, a mother cut off the hair of a female student of Bangla Bazaar School in order to prevent her from joining a procession. But the girl came by covering her head with a scarf. In this way, the girls cooperated in accordance with their ability.”

Two major features emerge from the reminiscences of Rawshan Ara Bachchu. One was the giving away of ornaments by women. The other was the participation in processions by ignoring the obstacles at home. In the first instance, the women were behind-the-scene workers. In the second instance, they participated directly. The boys faced lesser hindrances within the family. Going outside home was not a big hurdle for them. Even then, the stance taken by girls in the perspective of history was very important— from both social and political contexts. That was because girls had to advance by breaking their shackles. They did this out of a consideration for cultural values; from an intense urge to get relief from a crisis of existence. History moves forward in this fashion. Historic glories are achieved in this way through collective endeavours of men and women. No big achievement in history could materialise by keeping the womenfolk outside. Rather, the women had to bear the major brunt of sufferings while realizing big achievements.

I was recounting the participation of women in the language movement. By that time, four and a half years had elapsed since the partition of the subcontinent. The student community could sustain their movement for language at different junctures. The ruling coterie had retorted that only Urdu would be state language. The students then burst out in protests and resistance. The ‘All-Party State Language Action Council’ was constituted on 31 January 1952 at the library hall of Dhaka. The council announced meetings, strike, protest processions etc. all over East Pakistan on 21 February. The session of the constituent assembly was scheduled to be held at 3 pm in the afternoon of 21 February. There was also a programme to march towards the constituent assembly for submitting memorandum on making Bangla the state language. The government was troubled by such a programme of the student community. At that time, Nurul Amin was the chief minister of East Pakistan. His government tried to suppress the movement by clamping section 144 for one month with effect from 20 February.

The students started to assemble at Amtala of the university from the morning of 21 February. That was because they had taken a decision to break section 144. Reminiscing about the episode, one of the participants – Dr. Sufia Ahmad – narrated that she was given the responsibility of bringing girls from Anandamoyi and Banglabazaar Schools. She had performed her task. A decision was then taken that ten boys and four girls would advance after crossing the police barricade at a time. She also recalled, when the first two groups of boys went out, the police hauled them up on a truck after arresting them. The girls went out as the third group. When they advanced a distance, baton-charge by the police commenced. Tear gas was also thrown. She was slightly injured. Even then, they tried to move towards the constituent assembly. On one side there was the police assault, and on the other side the students were also throwing pieces of bricks at the police. She said that it appeared as if they were on a battle-ground. The next moment, the police fired bullets to bring the situation under control. Many participants in the peaceful procession including Salam, Rafiq, Barkat, Jabbar embraced martyrdom. They stayed in the university area up to evening. Then they returned home after the situation had calmed down at night.

It is clear from the reminiscences of Dr. Sufia Ahmad that they were not afraid as women to face the situation. They were steadfast in making the movement a success despite tear gases, baton-charges and bullets. The women were at the forefront of history with this resolute dedication.

Dr. Halima Khatun was one of the participants in the language movement. In her reminiscences, she recalled that they were greatly excited about breaking section 144. She was assigned the task of bringing girls to Amtala of the university from Muslim Girls' School and Banglabazaar Girls' School. In accordance with the decision to break section 144, her group was the first among the girls. When the police obstructed them, they moved forward while shouting slogans by pushing back the rifles. The police then baton-charged and threw tear gas shells. Without losing their heart the slightest, the girls returned to the roads after taking first-aid from the emergency ward of Dhaka Medical. They then proceeded towards the constituent assembly. But they could not advance very far. The police then started firing. Rafiq's skull was blown away by a bullet. On that night, a block was made carrying Rafiq's picture, which was kept at Salimullah Hall in the room of their friend former finance minister Late Shah Kibria. When the police launched a search operation, they all moved away from that place. The hall went under the control of the police. In this situation, she was sent to the hall to bring back the picture block of Rafiq. She recalled that she could recover the block at a great risk to her life. The picture that is now seen of Rafiq was made from that block.

This was another aspect of the participation of women in the language movement. There was no deficit in the efforts of womenfolk to add a different dimension to the movement. They took risks without caring for their lives. The picture of Shaheed Rafiq is today a historic document. It was a lady who held on to that important piece of history.

While reminiscing about that day, Rawshan Ara Bachchu recollects that she saw two groups of boys advancing by jumping over the police barricade. Immediately after that, she stood in the front row along with others. Finding her before them, the police baton-charged on her body. She was hurt by this indiscriminate hitting. When the firing started, she hid inside an old rickshaw garage beside the road. She stayed there for a long time and then returned to the girls' hostel in the evening.

It is noticeable from these reminiscences by three women that they were present in the scene on that battle-ground of the road. The police did not view them differently on the basis of gender. They also did not behave with them courteously, and it is a cruel fact that one of them could have become a martyr on that day. That they did not was pure luck. But they were at the forefront of the risks the situation posed.

The courageous lady Nadera Begum was then a university student. She led the students' front of the communist party. She inspired the girls to participate in the language movement, and was active in processions and meetings.

During the firing episode on the procession, a session of the constituent assembly was in progress. The news of firing reached the house during that session. Moulana Abdur Rashid Tarkabagish first placed the demand by saying, first there should be an enquiry on the firing, the session could continue only after that. Member of the constituent assembly Anwara Khatun spoke out in a strong language. After intense arguments and debates with the Speaker Abdul Karim, 35 members of the assembly including Anwara Khatun stormed out of the hall. The womenfolk did not give rise to any ignominy by lagging behind even in the constituent assembly on that day.

Rafiquddin was the first martyr of 21 February. His skull was blown away. Picture of that historic scene was taken by Amanul Haque and Kazi Idris immediately after that incident with the help of medical student Halima Khatun. On that day, the nurses of the hospital also burst out in rage while taking care of the injured at the medical college hospital. The place of resistance was thereby illuminated by their cooperation and support.

Strikes, processions and protests were observed throughout the land including Dhaka on 22 February 1952. The women who could not participate in the processions sprinkled flower petals on those from the rooftops. There is no reason why that should be rated as a small initiative. It was the womenfolk who took the decision to shower flowers on the processions to inspire the masses. People recall while reminiscing the episode that many girls including Nurunnahar Kabir drew and wrote posters throughout the night. Their names have been shelved by history. The badges were made by cutting the black sari of a woman. Nobody remembers her as well. The women did not crave for fame. They sought success of the movement. They wanted honour for their mother language.

Sayeda Khatun (mother of Professor Anisuzzaman) put her gold-chain on the altar of the first martyr's memorial built on Dhaka Medical College campus. It can be claimed without any doubt that it was a symbolic expression of reverence towards the language movement. On the one hand, it was a symbol for recalling the immortal martyrs, and on the other hand it was a symbol of providing financial support to continue the movement. This farsightedness of women always remains alive. This has been repeatedly proved in all big events of history. Even then, the male narratives of history have not evaluated the contributions of women properly. Nobody needs to articulate in unambiguous terms that history suffers from deficits because women's position is not evaluated on the basis of equality. But this unfortunate phenomenon continues to repeat itself against women.

I would like to mention two other subjects here. One is about the language movement of Assam. The Assam Language Act was passed in 1960. This law accorded recognition to Ahomia language as the state language of Assam. The

Bangalis of Barak Valley became vocal in protest. On 19 May 1961, eleven persons embraced martyrdom due to police firing at Shilchar railway station. The police threw a dead-body into the pond for hiding it. The language movement workers ultimately recovered that body. Following this movement, the Assam government amended the language law and Bangla was reinstated as a state language for the Barak Valley. The language martyrs' day is observed in Barak Valley on 19 May. Among the 11 martyrs, one was a woman. Her name was Kamala Bhattacharya.

The next subject is 'International Mother Language Day'. Two expatriate Bangladeshis in Canada – Rafiqul Islam and Abdus Salam took the initiative to declare the immortal 21 February as 'International Mother Language Day'. The organization they formed with 10 individuals speaking diverse languages was called 'International Mother Language Lovers of the World'. Among these 10 people, 6 were females.

21 February was declared as the 'International Mother Language Day' on 17 November 1999 by UNESCO. A lady was working as the program specialist of UNESCO's language division at that time. Her name was Anna Maria Mailof. She took up the issue with utmost sincerity and dedication. She maintained constant communications with Rafiqul Islam and continued to respond to his telephonic calls and letters. Her patience, tolerance, considerate nature and sincerity acted in favour of the International Mother Language Day. Anna Maria even did not forget to inform Rafiqul Islam about the support extended by the Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO to the proposal.

Anna also informed Rafiqul Islam that the proposal should come from that country whose citizens were proposing such a measure. In accordance with that, Rafiqul Islam contacted the National Commission for UNESCO in Bangladesh. At that time, Sheikh Hasina was the country's Prime Minister. She gave directives for implementing the matter by taking swift decision. The National Commission for UNESCO in Bangladesh submitted the proposal to the UNESCO Headquarters in due course after taking approval from the education minister and the Prime Minister. The proposal was placed at the meeting of UNESCO board. Twenty-eight member-states supported the proposal made by Bangladesh.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina could appreciate the importance of the subject due to her considerate alertness, and gave swift decision for adding an international dimension to the language martyrs' day. The Language Movement had happened during her childhood. Bangabandhu wrote in his 'Unfinished Memoir': "Holding my neck, Hasu uttered at the very outset, 'Abba, we want state language Bangla, we seek the freedom of political prisoners'. They were in Dhaka on 21 February, she only repeated what she had heard." It was through the initiative of that 5-year old child at a mature age, who had articulated those slogans, that the language day received international acclaim.

I want to say that the abodes-roads-constituent assembly were realities of triumph for the womenfolk. On the other hand, Vancouver, Paris and the office of the head of government in Bangladesh were also triumphant realities for them. Womenfolk planted their steps resolutely at all places.

**Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed**

***Courtesy: Press Information Department***

# Mother Language

Kamal Chowdhury

**T**he alphabets of my ancestors had emanated from my earliest cry  
The alphabets emerged like a mother's breast-milk from my first cry  
The echoes of vowels and consonants materialized from my first cry  
O my Bangla language – you came out from my opening cry.

In your hands have I put the eager mass of water for bathing  
In the waters, currents and confluences of rivers am I your tumult  
In the colours of my flag, the dusty and rainy day tales  
In the murmur of utterances about this amazing greenery  
In your songs of praise  
In the beaks of birds, the times of dawn fly to me every day.

Loving you have I flown aloft the blood-drenched costume  
Soaring from the martyrs' monument that blood speaks in man's mother-tongue  
The world speaks in the language of Barkat  
The world articulates in Salam's dialect  
The world talks in Rafiq's language  
The world speaks in Jabbar's tongue.

The whole world is now a martyrs' monument  
The whole world mingles with the morning procession.  
O My mother language, you are deathless.

10/02/2017

**Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed**

***Courtesy: Press Information Department***



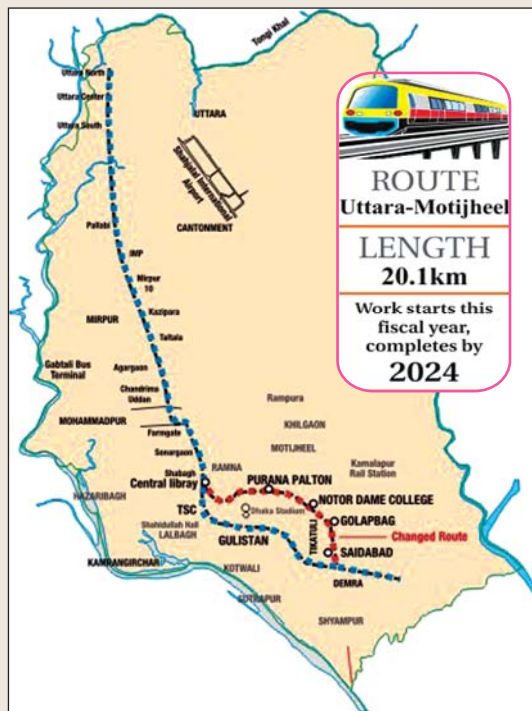
## Bangladesh Racing Ahead at an Irresistible Pace

**Dr. Atiur Rahman**

Prior to the independence of Bangladesh, the economy of this country gradually became weaker due to the exploitations and misrule of West Pakistan. The incomes from East Pakistan were mainly spent at that time for development works in West Pakistan. As a result, the then East Pakistan was facing a difficult situation despite rapid progress in West Pakistan. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman put forward the historic 6-points demand for getting rid of that situation. As a follow-up to that, he called for a liberation war in March 1971. The students and masses of this country responded overwhelmingly in support of that call and ensured our victory on 16 December 1971. After that, Bangabandhu provided leadership to the struggle for our economic emancipation following his return to the homeland. Despite innumerable obstacles, the fighting people of

Bangladesh participated in this struggle for economic freedom on a massive scale. Our devastated economy started to turn around under the leadership of the Father of the Nation within a few years due to hard work. But the enemies of the country were also not sitting idle. Through a sudden strike, they were able to take away our beloved leader physically on 15 August 1975. After that, a grave darkness descended on us. His daughter Sheikh Hasina rescued our homeland from that darkness and has now brought us to an illumined path.

After crossing many storms, the daughter of Bangabandhu took over the responsibility of running the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the first time in 1996. By removing the huge mismanagement and wastes left behind by the anti-liberation elements, she started to take Bangladesh forward with the spirit of the liberation war. But the conspirators were also not sitting idle. Bangabandhu's daughter was not allowed to return to power for a second time in 2001 through a controversial election. The country again started a backward journey by riding on the 'back of a strange camel'. There was another struggle; another round of blood-spilling movement; jails and punishments. Finally, Sheikh Hasina returned to power at the beginning of 2009 by receiving a massive mandate of the people. She started a people-friendly, inclusive and strenuous development campaign. By assuming office once again in 2014, she was given a comparatively long time for running the country. A long tenure is especially required for



Map of Metro Rail Project

infrastructure development. She is getting it this time. That is why she is not hesitating to take up massive development projects. Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina has been successful in crossing unprecedented milestones in these eight years – five years of the previous tenure and three years of the present. She is a successful statesman in the eyes of the global community, and Bangladesh under her leadership has now become a role model for all.

During the difficult and fragile socio-economic situation after independence, the western economists viewed Bangladesh as a distressed entity, a 'bottomless basket' or a 'test-case for development'. Those who spread pessimism at that time are now all praise about Bangladesh. Some people say, this country will become a middle-income country

within a few years. Some say, the future of Bangladesh economy is very bright. Many consider Bangladesh as a promising developing country. During his recent visit to Bangladesh, the World Bank president Jim Young Kim remarked, no other country could make such headway as Bangladesh did within such a short time. The chief economist of World Bank Paul Romer said, Bangladesh had devised such unique development strategies that, on the one hand, growth was occurring at a fast pace, and on the other hand inequality was not increasing.

The economy of Bangladesh is constantly growing; this trend will continue in the future as well. World famous survey and research organizations as well as periodicals like Goldman Sachs, Standard & Poor's, Moody's, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Fitch Ratings, Pew Research Centre, J P Morgan, Wall Street Journal, The Guardian and The Economist have highlighted the unbelievable stories of Bangladesh's transformation.

The Chinese President visited Bangladesh only recently. A number of agreements were signed between China and Bangladesh during his visit. China committed to provide 24 billion dollars as loan. Japan has also signed many agreements with us. They have been our development partners for a long time. The World Bank has pledged assistance worth 3 billion dollar. Of this, 1 billion dollar would be provided for ensuring nutrition of children, and the rest 2 billion dollar would be given for combating the challenges of climate change. The relations with the United States are also improving. That is, the importance of Bangladesh among the international community is rising gradually. It seems from the manner in which Bangladesh is advancing forward on the development highway that the country will swiftly traverse a long distance on this growth-path. The peasants,

workers and entrepreneurs of this country are gradually transforming it into a land of affluence from that of a 'bottomless basket' by shedding their sweat from head to feet. They are faithfully filling up this basket with the dreams of a beautiful future.

During the past four decades, the transformation of Bangladesh's macro-economy has been, in one word, 'miraculous'. The curtain of this transformation is gradually being unveiled. The most amazing aspect is that the three main sectors (industry, services, agriculture) are growing simultaneously at the same pace. That does not happen often. If one rises, then the other comes to a standstill, or grows very slowly. But Bangladesh is an exception. Here, all the sectors are expanding simultaneously. Another surprising fact is that, Bangladesh has set a rare example of a low-cost take-off in industrialisation within a democratic setting. And this take-off is happening at a time when the rate of economic growth all over the world is very weak. The foreign investors are looking at it as a hidden treasure. Especially during the past eight years, Bangladesh has filled up its golden boat with golden crops under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina.

Not only compared to Pakistan, Bangladesh is now doing better than many developing countries in many respects. Bangladesh is ahead of India and Pakistan in the World Peace Index. The world leaders are praising Bangladesh for social security and development. The status of Bangladesh is better than India, Pakistan and Nepal of South Asia in terms of social development. Bangladesh can challenge any country of South Asia today in the areas of education, health and food. The progress of Bangladesh has been enviable in women's development. The World Bank is saying that 34 percent of women in the working age group here are now employed, whereas this rate is 82 percent for men. If this 34 percent could be brought near the level of male counterparts, then Bangladesh would make huge strides.

Bangladesh has advanced in all economic indices. The country is making gradual



*Construction works of Padma bridge*

progress in all areas including exports, remittances and agro-processing. Alongside budgetary initiatives of the government, the central bank is motivating all banks to engage in inclusive financing. As a result, substantial financing is taking place in agriculture and small enterprises. As a consequence, local demand and markets have expanded on the one hand, and supply has risen on the other. Due to the combined impact of these two factors, inflation rate has stabilised and come down. This financial stability has played a supportive role in attracting local and foreign investments.

The Bangladeshi entrepreneurs are hard-working. The people of this land have a power of tolerance, a capacity to turn around, and a fighting spirit. Although political disturbances sometimes erupt, the country's citizens cover that up through their work output and economic growth rate of 6.14 percent over the past 12 years proves that. And despite recession in the global economy, the consistency of growth in this country has been the best in the region. In contrast, the GDP growth rates of India or Sri Lanka fluctuates considerably. The average growth rate during the past eight years in Bangladesh has been even better at 6.3 percent. Whereas the growth rate was 5 percent during 2008-09 fiscal year, it reached 7.11 percent during the last fiscal year. This is certainly good news for us. Bangladesh now expects to maintain a growth rate of 7 to 8 percent. The profits earned by local and foreign investors after making adjustments for risks are much higher here than the neighbouring countries. Consequently they are coming to invest in Bangladesh even by taking risks. And if the courageous initiative undertaken by the present government to establish large numbers of special economic zones is crowned with success, then there would be a long queue of foreign investors to invest here.

Our economic growth has always remained inclusive. Everybody is getting a share of this growth. The rapid pace of poverty alleviation proves the quality of growth in Bangladesh. Agriculture, garments and remittance sectors are acting as driving forces behind this. During these 45 years, poverty has declined by 50 percent, and the average life expectancy has risen by 30 years. This kind of success has not been achieved in even a hundred years in many countries. And the pace of this accomplishment has been accelerated over the past eight years.

The rate of hardcore poverty has now come down to almost 12 percent. Large segments of our population are aged, disabled or widows, who are not involved in any productive work. The government is extending allowances to them under the social safety net programs. Allowances are reaching their hands through the application of digital technology. If this trend continues, the percentage of hardcore poor would come down to a single digit. The Seventh Five Year Plan has set a target of bringing this rate down to 7 percent, while the target for 2030 is zero percent. Per capita income has to be increased for achieving this. The domestic economy has to be bolstered.

Excessive inflation is a big enemy of ordinary people, but success has already been achieved in this area. The rate of inflation has consistently declined since 2011. Average annual inflation has come down to 5.58 percent at the end of November 2016, and is still showing a declining trend. Whereas import payments were 22.5 billion dollars during 2008-09 financial year, the figure stood at 42.9 billion dollars during the previous fiscal year. That is, imports have increased by 91 percent during the past eight years. The exports have risen by 119 percent to 34.2 billion dollar. Remittances have risen by 54 percent to reach 14.9 billion



*Rooppur Power Plant*

dollar. The foreign exchange reserve has quadrupled and has now crossed 31 billion dollar mark. It is possible to make import payments for nine months with this amount. Compared to other countries of South Asia, the value of taka has remained stable and strong. The average exchange rate for taka against dollar is now Taka 78.72. This figure has remained almost static during the past few years. Compared to rupee of the neighbouring country, it is much stronger. Per capita income in Bangladesh has now touched 1466 dollar, which was 1316 dollar during the previous year. The population growth rate has stabilised, which means that the growth rate of per capita income will increase in the coming years. And the age of over half of our population is now below 25 years. An economic revolution will take place if education, skill and employment can be provided to this age-group.

These advances in the economy have been possible because of parallel expansion of agriculture, remittances and readymade garments industry sectors, which have become the drivers of our growth. All these are employment generating sectors. Our economic inequality has therefore remained at a tolerable level. We are highly interconnected despite being a land of 160 millions. The linkages between urban and rural areas are very robust. Therefore, the impact of enhanced incomes of the rural people is also influencing the lives of urban citizenry. This has boosted the domestic demands and is helping speed up industrialization. The investors of the country are adapting well with the technological developments and world-class management practices. New areas for businesses are being created. The female entrepreneurs are also participating on an equal footing.

We have already attained the status of a 'lower middle income country' by shedding the blight of being a 'low income country'. The hope of becoming a full-fledged middle-income country now beckons us. We are moving in that direction with a firm resolve. The pace of Bangladesh's forward march cannot be stopped if we can maintain a democratic environment within a terrorism-free setting for the sake of rapid urbanisation, industrialisation, and concerted

deployment of the youths. That will facilitate the country's becoming a middle-income one by 2030. The dream of the Bangladeshi leadership to become a developed country by 2041 is also not unrealistic.

Bangladesh now stands at a historic crossroad of development. The name of Bangladesh now stands for a fast-growing economy undergoing export-oriented industrialisation led by the private sector. Export income is the major growth-inducing sector in the country, 81 percent of which comes from the labour-intensive garments industry. The garments sector is expanding at a very fast rate. The sector has turned around after the Rana Plaza disaster and the Tazrin tragedy. The factory environment of our textiles entrepreneurs is improving on a massive scale. More than 36 factories are being transformed into green ones. Bangladesh Bank has established a 200 million dollar green transformation fund by utilising its foreign exchange reserve. The healthcare sector has also shown enormous improvement. Many pharmaceutical industries and hospitals have been set up in the private sector. The country's medicines are being exported to 170 countries of the world including the USA. It is expected that this number will rise further. The exports from the leather sector has surpassed 1 billion dollar. Our industrial production will have to be increased even more. For this, new sectors will have to be explored and new technologies will have to be adopted. Bolstering this trend of industrialization is undoubtedly needed in order to generate employment for 2 million new workers each year. Side by side, the services sector should be developed further. The agriculture sector of Bangladesh is also playing a major role in the macro-economy due to adoption of new technologies as well as additional productivity. Even now, over 50 percent employment generation takes place in this sector.

The Vision-2021 of the present government in Bangladesh has been prepared centring on the basic needs of the masses. This long-term strategy has been framed based on dominance of the private sector, liberalisation and investment-friendly policy reforms, initiative for building large infrastructures, expansion of digital technology throughout the country and market linkages at a faster rate. The present government is pledge-bound to implement proven strategies like economic stability and financial inclusion. The economic innovations are simultaneously serving the poor, marginalised population, expatriates and others. For this, the government has formulated policies and set different targets for expediting economic growth, generating employment and alleviating poverty. In keeping with these inclusive socio-economic policies of the government, Bangladesh Bank has continued its policies and programs for increased financing of agriculture, small, medium, women entrepreneurs, and environment-friendly sectors, as well as for inclusion of the low-income people in the financial services network. We are seeking the status of a middle income country at a new level of growth. We therefore have to move forward by keeping in mind the lessons of the past.

Construction of infrastructure has increased during the tenure of the present government. The demand for construction materials has also risen. As a result, many rod and cement factories have been established locally. The import of capital machinery is showing a rising trend. That means, the growth rate of industrialisation will be faster. Primary education has been ensured for all. The government is now working on improving the quality of education as well as expansion of technical education. It is active in attracting local and foreign

investments by capitalising on the existing socio-economic stability. The government does not want to depend on Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Chittagong alone as industrially-intensive regions. Therefore, initiative has been taken to set up 100 special economic zones under public-private partnerships (PPP). The success of this initiative is gradually becoming visible. The promising Khulna-Jessore region has been chosen as an economic corridor. The pace of implementation of Padma Bridge is eye-catching. The face of Bangladesh will change forever after the launching of this bridge. There will also be a Bangabandhu Airport. Combining all these, both the size and vibrancy of investments in this region will flourish.

Many projects have been taken up for carrying goods to Chittagong Port from North Bengal, Dhaka and the neighbouring districts swiftly. Recently, a project has been undertaken for constructing the Payra Seaport. This will become a place of new potentials. Its management will have to be made most modern by learning from commodity handling at Chittagong Port.

Our progress in the power sector is gradually becoming clear. At present 15 thousand megawatt of electricity is being produced. Side by side with power production, new gas fields will have to be discovered, existing gas-fields have to be developed and the transmission lines have to be modernised. The government is constructing LNG gas terminal for solving the gas crisis. But LNG Policies will also have to be framed. This gas will have to be added to the national grid by installing additional transmission lines. The government should also gear up and expand the opportunities for regional cooperation in the power sector.

Necessary reforms are also being implemented in the investment-related agency – the ‘Bangladesh Investment Development Authority’ (BIDA). Many investment-friendly institutional initiatives have also been undertaken including digitisation of revenue collection. The government has tackled the recent incidents of militancy with a firm hand. The society is also not sitting idle. As a result, trade and commerce have not been hindered by these. Rather it became easier to erect a much-needed security ring around business sector due to consolidation of social activism as well as anti-militancy sentiment all over the country.

Bangladesh has created sensation in the global arena by challenging the World Bank and commencing the construction of Padma Bridge with own funding. The Land Boundary Agreement with India and the resolution of maritime boundary have been two big achievements of Bangladesh since independence. The role of Bangladesh in tackling climate change has also been acclaimed globally. Sheikh Hasina is today an uncompromising leader on the question of terrorism, militancy and regional security. Bangladesh has also received importance in the global arena by holding the trial of war criminals after overcoming the conspiracies and obstacles at home and abroad. The present government is carrying forward Bangladesh at an irresistible pace.

The people of Bangladesh are now more optimistic due to proper synchronization of economic and social indices. The masses are now confident about the development prospects of tomorrow. Not only among the Bangalis, the huge story of Bangladesh economy has today become a matter of interest for the global community. They want to know, what happened in Bangladesh that we are continuing to achieve above 6 percent GDP growth rate over the past decade despite a global recession! Based on GDP, the position of Bangladesh is now 45th,



*Payra Sea Port*

and based on purchasing power the ranking is 33rd. According to the international survey organization 'Gallup', Bangladesh is today the most optimistic nation in the world, and our position is second in terms of economic potentials. The world wants to know, what has

happened in Bangladesh in the area of social development which has raised people's life expectancy to 71 years! Based on this criterion, we have left behind India and Pakistan by 4 to 5 years. Bangladesh has already been awarded prize by the United Nations in recognition of her success in incredibly reducing the child mortality rate. Bangladesh is now ranked 130th in the Maternal Index of Save the Children Fund. India and Pakistan lags much behind us in this area as well. We should remember that this invigoration of our society and economy has not happened without any reason. We could arrive at this stage due to the people-friendly policies and strategies of the present government, diplomatic efforts and active endeavour of the entrepreneurial classes.

This incredible transformation in Bangladesh's macro and micro-economy has occurred due to timely liberalisation of her trade and industrial policies, and making our financial sector modern and inclusive. The youthful human resources of Bangladesh are also playing a positive role in this change. Especially, the contributions of young entrepreneurs and female workers are extraordinary in the successes of the readymade garments industry. Various inclusive initiatives in the banking sector, especially through opening branches in the rural areas, easing the rules for account opening, and the massive explosion of mobile financial services have infused dynamism into the banking sector and made it inclusive. As a result, economic stability has increased to a great extent. Partnership and acceptance among the stakeholders have also blossomed.

Our financial inclusivity has three aspects: deposits, savings, and insurance transactions. The participation of more and more people in all these areas is called financial inclusion. At present, Bangladesh has become a 'role model' in sustainable inclusive development. The Bangladesh Government has also made financial inclusion a part of its sustainable development agenda. The campaign for financial inclusion is progressing successfully, especially because the present prime minister and her information technology adviser are attaching much importance to the expansion of digital technology. Therefore, the issue of digital 'financial inclusion' will find more prominence in the coming days. The base of social services has expanded due to this inclusivity in the financial sector. Social tensions have therefore declined considerably and social cohesion has been enhanced.

Our journey had started with a basically agro-based, small and constrained economy through the liberation war of 1971. Within a mere 45 years, the population in our towns have increased ten-fold; at present the age of half the total 160 million population, that is, 80 million are below 25 years. Around 80 percent of the country's population now have mobile phones in their hands. Among the democratic countries, the biggest take-off with the least manufacturing cost has taken place in Bangladesh. There are both advantages and disadvantages in this youthful, connected, and democratic take-off. The way urbanization is expanding, there is bound to be much tension. That is happening as well. These tensions can be tackled only in a democratic environment. Financial inclusion is playing a substantial role in dealing with this tension. The mass media, social media, and social organizations are playing a big part in grooming a genuinely democratic and pluralistic society. All these are acting as supportive forces in the growth of financial inclusivity.

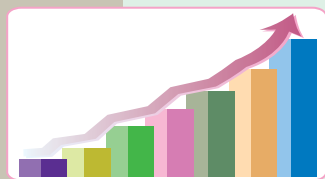
Each year, 2 million new workers are entering the labour market of Bangladesh. Generating employment for them is not an easy task. But we have created opportunities for their employment in industries, agriculture and services sectors. Especially, the picture of female labour force is very bright. The number of small economic units in the rural economy has increased hugely during the past one and a half decades. Agriculture, SME loans and remittances have played supportive roles in this regard. Alongside agricultural development, the flourishing of our small and cottage industries has also been eye-catching. And the unbelievable entry of female workers in the garments industry has further strengthened our campaign for financial inclusion.

Despite global recession and various hindrances at the national level, Bangladesh has maintained a trend of successes in the social and economic arenas during the past eight years. The economic indices point to the continuous economic accomplishments of Bangladesh. If this trend can be sustained, the economy of Bangladesh will become firmer and more stable; and the country will move ahead on a new path of growth and prosperity in the coming days. I hope that by observing the direction and nature of this advancement by their homeland, our youths will also get involved in various development initiatives.

Bangladesh is a land of enormous potentials. The whole world is watching this resurgence of ours. We shall have to utilize these opportunities. We have taken up the challenge of curbing corruption for this purpose. We have completed many institutional reforms for creating an investment-friendly climate. We have undertaken various investment programs in the public sector by expediting the pace of revenue collection. Additional revenues are required for building large infrastructures including deep seaport, 4-lane highways, metro-rail etc. For this, everybody should pay taxes by maintaining transparency. Attention should be paid to the maintenance of political stability, further development of the power and energy sector, and tackling traffic situation in big cities. This is because all big cities act as 'growth centres' in an emerging economy. I firmly believe that our economy will be further consolidated in the coming days if we move together. It is bound to become steadier. Let this journey of ours be an auspicious one.

**Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed**

***Courtesy: Press Information Department***



## Cherished Goals of Sustainable Development and Our Ladder of Dreams

**Md. Abul Kalam Azad**

The member-states of the United Nations declared Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for all nations in 2015 by setting specific goals to be realized collectively by the year 2030. The SDG document (Agenda 2030) is a guideline for human development, whose foundation is erected on five Ps (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership). The main objective of 169 global targets under 17 goals is to build a habitable, peaceful and prosperous world for the people through participation of all, where progress and prosperity will be ensured in social, economic and environmental arenas and none will be kept outside the blessing of worldwide development.

### Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- 1 End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
- 3 Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all
- 5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- 6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- 7 Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- 9 Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- 10 Reduce inequality within and among countries
- 11 Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- 12 Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- 14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- 15 Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- 16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

## **Sheikh Hasina Special Initiatives: Goal 2021: Hunger & Poverty-free Middle-Income Bangladesh**

<b>One House One Farm</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skill and employment generation program for rural poverty alleviation;</li> <li>Establishing one village organization in each ward; beggar rehabilitation program; setting up 2.3 million 25 thousand home-based small farms.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Clinic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting up one clinic for each group of 6 thousand people in order to reach healthcare services to the doorsteps of rural people.</li> <li>Rendering healthcare services to poor, neglected and under-privileged people, especially mothers and children of villages through 13,136 community clinics.</li> </ul>
<b>Asrayan (Shelter)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unique project to provide shelter to the uprooted, homeless people;</li> <li>Building houses, providing water and power connections to homeless and poor tribal population;</li> <li>Program to build houses on own land for the homeless;</li> <li>Till now, 34,215 families have been provided with housing under the Asrayan-2 (2010-17) project.</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Bangladesh</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting up 5,275 digital centres;</li> <li>Bringing 18,130 government offices of 58 ministries, 227 departments, 64 districts and 487 upazilas under the same network;</li> <li>National Web Portal comprising 25 thousand websites.</li> </ul>
<b>Educational Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free book distribution, award of scholarships/ stipends etc.</li> <li>Bringing 100% school-going children to schools, distributing textbooks free of cost up to secondary level, multimedia and internet connections in classrooms.</li> </ul>
<b>Women's Empowerment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of Jatiya Mohila Sangstha, Department of Women's Affairs, Joyeeta Foundation etc.</li> <li>Providing education, health, nutrition, maternal and childcare to underprivileged women through 12,956 rural maternal centres; motivational campaign on all issues and providing interest-free loans.</li> </ul>
<b>Electricity in All Houses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint ventures in power production, ensuring private investments and public-private partnerships;</li> <li>Power supply to industries and factories; supplying power to deep tube-wells for enhancing agricultural production and rural electrification as fruits of development.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly allowances for insolvent, disabled, aged people, widows and husband's deserted destitute women; educational stipend for disabled students;</li> <li>Programs for improving the living standards of transgender, Dalit and Bede communities;</li> <li>Financial assistance program for cancer, kidney, liver cirrhosis, paralyzed through stroke and congenital heart patients.</li> </ul>
<b>Environment Conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programs undertaken for a climate-resilient and clean environment;</li> <li>Sanctioning Taka 30 billion and implementing 424 projects by setting up a Trust Fund through own funding.</li> </ul>
<b>Investment Growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertaking investment-friendly programs with the goal of increasing exports;</li> <li>Generating employment for 10 million people by setting up 100 economic zones by 2021.</li> </ul>

## Fast-track Projects of Bangladesh Government



### Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project

Being built through completely own funding; the length of this bridge: 9.15 kilometres; and projected expenditure: Taka 28,793 crore; Project duration: 2009-18; Progress: Approach road at jazira end: 84%; Approach road at Mawa end: 100%; Main bridge: 33%; River training: 28%; Overall progress: 38%.



### Rooppur Nuclear Power Station

Till date, the largest ever project of Bangladesh; Projected expenditure: Taka 118,000 crore (Bangladesh Taka 23,000 crore, Russia Taka 95,000 crore); Power generation target: 2,400 megawatt; Project duration: 2013-24; Progress: 93.82% work of first phase completed; work on second phase to start soon.



### Moitree Super Thermal Power Project

Called Indo-Bangladesh Friendship Power Station; Power generation target: 1,320 megawatt; Projected expenditure: Taka 15,918 crore; Project duration: 2009-20; Expenditure till now: Taka 276.65 crore; Progress: Will go into production in 2019.



### Matarbari Coal Power Project

Financed by the Japanese government; Generation capacity: 1200 megawatt in first phase; Project duration: 2014-24; Progress: preliminary work completed, work underway on land development.



### Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Development (Metrorail) Project

First Metro-rail; Total length: 20 kilometres (extending from Uttara to Bangladesh Bank via Rokeya Sarani; Estimated expenditure: Taka 21,985 crore (financed by Japanese and Bangladesh governments); Project duration: July 2012 to June 2024; Progress: Construction started after preliminary preparation; Uttara-Agargaon segment will be operational in 2019.



### LNG Terminal Construction Project

Floating Terminal; Financing: Public Private Partnership; Progress: Terminal Use Agreement signed on 18 July 2016; LNG will be imported from Qatar.



### Sonadia Deep Seaport

Re-feasibility study under process.



### Payra Seaport

Under-construction seaport in the mouth of Rabanabad Channel on Bay of Bengal coast; Plans undertaken for constructing power station, refinery, LNG terminal, railway, roads, airport etc. alongside the port. Work on the power station has already been started; preparations are afoot on others. Goods were first unloaded at this port on 13 August 2016. Work is in progress with the goal of launching a full-fledged port in 2023.



### Padma Railway Link Project

To be implemented under G2G method through financing of Chinese government. Details: 172 kilometres broad-gauge line on Dhaka-Mawa-Jessore route; Project duration: 2016-2021; Estimated expenditure: Taka 34,988 crore; Progress: Land acquisition underway; Mawa-Bhanga segment will be launched in 2018.



### Dohajari-Ramu-Myanmar, Ghumdum Rail-line

To be implemented under ADB financing; Total length: 129 kilometres (dual-gauge line); Estimated expenditure: Taka 18,034 crore; Project duration: July 2010 to June 2022; Activities: Recruitment of consultant in the final stage, tender evaluation underway.

Development is not a competition where one country advances at the expense of another; rather it is a forward march where everybody is taken on board. Environmental, social or economic disasters in one country ultimately become direct or indirect causes for harming the earth – the lone habitat of mankind. For this, development has been conceptualised in SDGs as a collective endeavour. If we consider it from the perspective of reality, the acceptance of this outline and the commitment for its implementation are vital for upholding human dignity, ensuring good governance and improving people's living standard all over the world by eliminating hunger, poverty, lack of health and education from the planet, ensuring proper use of natural water, balanced urbanization, employment of all with proper work-environment, developing infrastructure, expediting sustainable industrialization and tackling environmental pollution and natural disasters.

Bangladesh has been an active member in the framing and commitment of SDGs in the United Nations. The government of Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been working tirelessly for ensuring balanced development and good governance in Bangladesh in order to materialise the Golden Bangla as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu. The priorities of Honourable Prime Minister are to establish a transparent and accountable administration, that is, ensure good governance by building a Digital Bangladesh through freeing the marginalised and poor population from the curse of poverty, developing water supply management and public health, priority programs for mental and intellectual growth of children including quality education, ensuring women's development and their equal rights, healthy work-environment and labour rights, enhancing investments, conserving environment and flourishing international relations.

Ten areas have been identified as 'Sheikh Hasina Special Initiatives' for reaching the priority programs of Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to the people and for implementing those. The concerned ministries and departments are especially focusing their attention on these. The desired services are being taken to the doorsteps of the masses through successful implementation of these special initiatives. Because of the priority programs of a government that is dedicated to people's welfare, Bangladesh has now become a development role model in terms of social and economic indices. Multiple national and international recognitions have also been accorded for this.

A number of projects helpful for the country's progress have been identified as 'fast-track' ones and are being supervised under the leadership of Honourable Prime Minister. If they are completed within scheduled time by maintaining quality, then these infrastructures would make endless contributions toward fulfilling the dream of our development.

The development philosophy of Honourable Prime Minister is linked to the global goals of sustainable development and is directed towards specific objectives. For giving concrete shape to sustainable development, ministry/division-wise mapping for the goals has already been completed by synchronizing with our five-year plan. At present, the ministries/divisions are preparing their own action plans for achieving SDGs. We shall be able to achieve these sustainable development goals as a sequel to our successes in achieving MDGs in the past.

The objective of our current Vision-2021 is to transform Bangladesh into a middle-income country. Similarly, the sustainable goals for 2030 will drive us



*Padma Bridge railway link project*

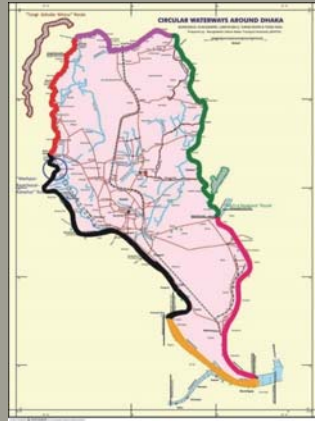
towards making Bangladesh a developed country or a development junction as outlined by Vision-2041 of the Honourable Prime Minister. Our dream-journey does not end there; 2071 will be the centenary of our independence, when the progress of Bangladesh will be something worth emulating all over the world. We seek to leave behind a happy, prosperous land and society for our next generation in a bigger setting. With that objective, the Honourable Prime Minister is currently providing guidelines on the formulation of “Delta-plan 2100”. All these visions are our dream-ladders. Development of Bangladesh has been the fruit of concerted efforts by all including all strata of our people, the freedom fighters, political workers, NGOs, professionals, businessmen, expatriates, friendly countries and international agencies, public representatives and government employees; this development is continuous and dynamic.

‘Development Fair’ affords us an opportunity to share the programs of a public welfare-seeking government with the ordinary people. The common people, the children and juveniles, who are future citizens of this country, will be inspired by looking at success stories of their own state and government. ‘Development Fair’ is an exhibition of our forward march, from which the masses will be able to learn about the governmental plans, programs undertaken to fulfil Vision-2021, and the chronological cum comparative picture of development activities in the past. They will feel assured that the country is being run in the right direction. The masses are embracing the state and the government as their very own and considering the development fair as recognition of their achievements and progress. Herein lies the justification of development fair.

**Translation: Helal Uddin Ahmed**

***The writer is Principal Coordinator (SDG), Prime Minister’s Office***

***Courtesy: Press Information Department***



## An Extensive Plan on Transport and Communication for Greater Dhaka

**Md. Abu Naser**

Transport is the lifeline of a city, and choices on public transit options are fundamental decisions which affect a city's future growth and development. Therefore, improving the public transportation system in the city has become a critical issue to ease traffic congestion. In this situation, the Government of Bangladesh formulated the Strategic Transport Plan (STP) for Greater Dhaka area which was prepared by Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority on 2005.

In recent years, the economy of Bangladesh is expanding rapidly under the dynamic leadership of the Government. Bangladesh is becoming a role model of development. The jurisdiction area under Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA) has been expanded in recently. Moreover, Narayanganj and Gazipur city area have been upgraded as City Corporation. Satellite towns and growth centers are established around the Dhaka city. As population of the city is increasing day by day, a tremendous pressure of transports increased the demand for efficient management of transport and connectivity. Rapid urbanization coupled with increased transport problems urged the need for revision and updating of STP.

During the last four decades, Dhaka has recorded phenomenal growth in population and area. Dhaka is the capital city of Bangladesh which is one of the densely populated cities in the world. Country has envisioned to be a middle income country by 2021. Currently, urban transportation in the Dhaka city relies heavily on road transport and traffic in the city is characterized by a chaotic mixture of motorized and non-motorized vehicles. On the other side, both types of vehicles are plying on the same road.

This condition has resulted in serious traffic gridlocks in the Dhaka Metropolitan Area which in turn has added to the city's growing social and economic problems. Being the largest city and capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka has a major role to play in the socio-economic development of the country. But the existing transportation system, which is predominantly road based with non-motorized transport (mainly rickshaws) is a major bottleneck to the development of the city.

On this ground and to meet the future demand, Government has planned to revise the Strategic Transport Plan. On May 2014, DTCA commenced the revised STP work with the assistance from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Final Draft of Revised STP was approved by the Cabinet on 29 August, 2016.

Revised Strategic Transport Plan (RSTP) has recommended setting up five new metro rail routes, two bus rapid transit routes, three ring roads and six expressways by 2035 as a possible solution to the capital's chronic traffic congestion problem. In addition to mass transit projects, at grade roads, and water transport, expressways, bus service improvement, railway improvement and traffic management projects are proposed. Three ring roads and eight radial roads are also proposed in RSTP.

#### **RSTP Executing Agency: Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA)**

With the vision to provide a planned modernized transportation system for greater Dhaka area, it was established on 02 September 2012. This agency under the umbrella of Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, prepare strategic Transport Plan and provide regular supervision and co-ordination for all possible planning for transportation infrastructure development works within Dhaka city and adjacent districts.

DTCA emerged in 1998 as Dhaka Transport Coordination Board. In 2001 it was renamed as Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority. DTCA jurisdiction covers 7400 Sqkm that includes districts of Dhaka, Narayanganj, Munshigonj, Manikgonj, Gazipur and Narsingdi district including Dhaka North City Corporation, Dhaka South City Corporation, Gazipur City Corporation and Narayanganj City Corporation. To manage these areas, DTCA follows its own act named as Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority Act, 2012.

#### **Reasons for Revision of STP**

- ❑ Bangladesh witnessed massive socio economic development during last several years;
- ❑ DTCA area increased;
- ❑ Area and population of Dhaka City Corporation increased;
- ❑ Dhaka City Corporation divided into two entities viz. North & South;
- ❑ Two City Corporation newly formed viz. Gazipur & Narayanganj;
- ❑ Many satellite towns have been established viz. Purbachal, Jhilmill etc.

#### **Procedure followed in preparation of RSTP**

- ❑ Vision 2021, Vision 2041, Perspective Plan 2010-2021 and SDG 2030 considered;
- ❑ A consortium of internationally reputed consulting firm of Japan engaged;
- ❑ Public opinion of respective localities obtained;
- ❑ 20 years transport related development plans of respective departments collected;
- ❑ Collected development plans examined and shared with departments concerned;
- ❑ Initial draft shared with the departments concerned in a series of formal meetings;
- ❑ Opinion invited through advertisement in the newspapers and websites;
- ❑ 2 Workshops arranged involving national & international experts and

stakeholders;

- ❑ Inter ministerial committee examined the final draft in 3 consecutive meetings
- ❑ Final draft placed in the DTCA Board Meeting for approval;
- ❑ Cabinet approved Revised STP on 29 August 2016.

#### **Nine Major Sectors in Revised STP**

- ❑ 5 Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line Construction (MRT Line 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6)
- ❑ 2 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Line Construction (BRT Line 3 & 7)
- ❑ 3 Ring Roads
- ❑ 8 Radial Roads
- ❑ 6 Expressways
- ❑ 21 Transportation Hubs
- ❑ Improvement of Circular Waterway Around Dhaka
- ❑ Improvement of Traffic Management and Traffic Safety
- ❑ Bus Sector Reforms (Route Rationalization, Bus Company Formation, Relocation of Bus Terminals)

#### **21 Major Recommendations of STP**

- ❑ Construction of three Bus Rapid Transit (BRT Line 1,2 &3)
- ❑ Construction of three Mass Rapid Transit (MRT Line 4,5 &6)
- ❑ Construction of Airport Road-Mirpur Connecting Road
- ❑ Construction of Panthapath- Rampura Connecting Road
- ❑ Construction of Tejgaon – Airport (old) Tunnel
- ❑ Improvement of Tongi- Ghorashal Highway
- ❑ Construction of Dhaka Elevated Expressway on PPP basis
- ❑ Construction of Gulistan-Jatrabari Flyover on PPP basis
- ❑ Construction of Mogbazar Flyover
- ❑ Construction of Agargaon – Mirpur-2 Road
- ❑ Construction of Bijoy Saroni – Tejgaon Link Road
- ❑ Construction of Dhaka Circular Road
- ❑ Improvement of Muhammadpur Bus Stand – Embankment (Beribadh) Road
- ❑ Improvement of Jatrabari - Kacnhpur Highway
- ❑ Construction of Berulia- Ashulia Highway & Berulia Bridge
- ❑ Construction of Muktarpur Bridge
- ❑ Construction of Basila Bridge (Shahid Buddhijibi Bridge/3rd Buriganga Bridge)
- ❑ Construction of Demra Bridge (Sultana Kamal Bridge/2nd Shitalakha Bridge)
- ❑ Improvement of Jatrabari- Demra Highway (Hatirjheel – Rampura- Banashree Ideal School and College - Amulia - Demra Highway Construction)
- ❑ Construction of Shirneertak – Gabtoli Bridge Link Road
- ❑ Construction of Progoti Sharoni – Balu River Road (Madani Avenue)

#### **15 Major Completed Projects of STP**

- ❑ President Md. Zillur Rahman Flyover (Mirpur-Airport flyover)
- ❑ Begunbari – Hatirjheel area development
- ❑ Shaheed Ahsanullah Master Flyover
- ❑ PPP based Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover
- ❑ Agargaon Road – Mirpur Grameen Bank Road Construction

- ❑ Bijoy Sarani – Tejgaon Link Road
- ❑ Muhammadpur Bus Stand – Embankment Road Improvement
- ❑ Jatrabari – Kanchhpur Highway Improvement (8 lane Polder Rd)
- ❑ Berulia – Ashulia Highway & Berulia bridge construction
- ❑ Muktarpur Bridge
- ❑ Basilia Bridge (Shahid Buddhijibi Bridge/3rd Buriganga Bridge)
- ❑ Demra Bridge (Sultana Kamal Bridge/3rd Shitalakha Bridge)
- ❑ Shirneertak – Gabtoli Bridge Link Road Construction
- ❑ Hatirjheel – Demra Highway Construction
- ❑ Gabtoli U Loop & Kachpur U Loop

#### **Five Major ongoing Projects of STP**

1. Mass Rapid Transit (MRT Line 6 construction)
2. Bus Rapid Transit [BRT Line 3 construction (Gazipur-Airport)]
3. Moghbazar-Mouchak flyover
4. Dhaka Elevated Expressway (PPP Project)
5. PPP based Dhaka Bypass Highway Improvement (Joydebpur -Debgram-Bhulta- Modonpur)



*Metrorail Route (MRT-6)*

#### **Four Major Projects under Consideration of STP**

1. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Line 3 construction (Airport-Jhilmil)
2. Dhaka Circular Route: Phase 2 construction (Teromukh – Abdullahpur – Dhour – Birulia – Gabtoli – Babu Bazar – Sadarghat – Fatullah – Chashara – Signboard – Shimrail – Demra)
3. Dhaka Circular Route: Eastern Bypass construction (Demra-Teromukh) and
4. Bus Sector Reform

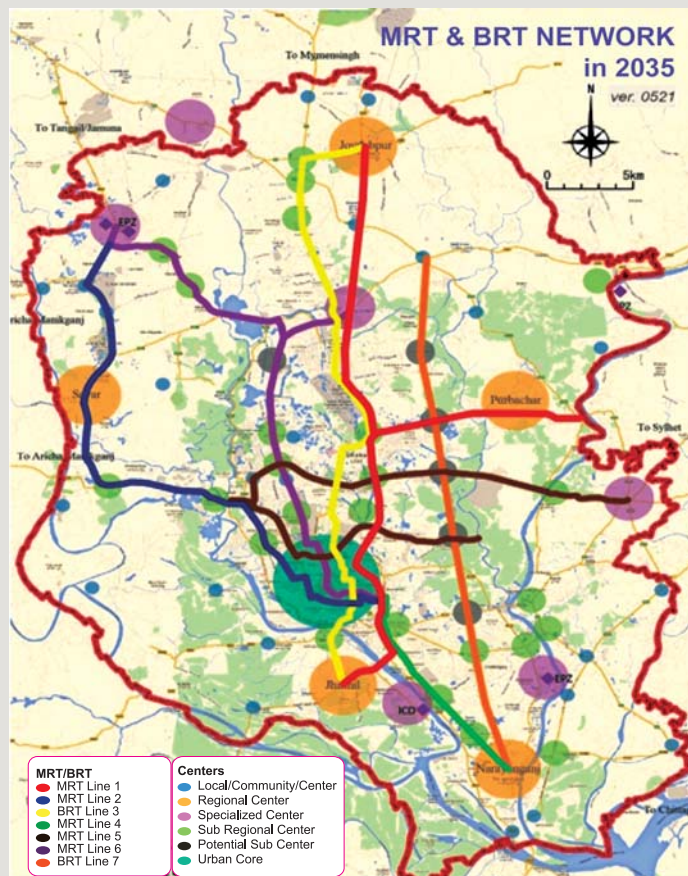
#### **MRT and BRT Route**

According to the draft of RSTP, the MRT Line-1 will connect Dhaka Airport to Kamalapur which will later be extend from the Airport to Gazipur and Kamalapur to Keraniganj's Jhilmil residential area. The first of the two-phase project from the airport to Kamalapur will be a 26.6km line (6km of it below the ground), which is expected to be completed by 2025. The second phase will be a 26km line (3.3km of it underground) from the airport to

Jhilmil. This is expected to be completed by 2035. The first phase is expected to cost \$2.83 billion and the second phase \$5.87 billion.

MRT Line-2 will connect Ashulia to Kamalapur via Savar-Gabtolli- Dhaka University and Dhaka South City Corporation. Its total length will be 40 km, while the cost will be around \$3.74 billion. The draft MRT Line-4 will connect Kamalapur and Narayanganj, with an approximate cost of \$1.7 billion. The proposed MRT Line-5 will start from Bhulta on Dhaka-Sylhet highway and stretch to Hatirjheel link road via Bhatara, Natun

Bazar, Madani Road, Kamal Ataturk Avenue, Mirpur 10, Gabtoli bus terminal, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi and Bashundhara City. Its total length will be 35km (9.1km of it underground) and the cost will be about \$4.28 billion. MRT Line-6 will connect Uttara and Motijheel via Pallabi and Farmgate. Its total length is 21.8km, with proposed extensions from Uttara to Ashulia and from Motijheel to Jatrabari, and the cost will be \$2 billion.



#### Proposed 8 radial roads:

1. Dhaka-Joydebpur-Mymensingh
2. Dhaka-Tongi-Ghorashal
3. Dhaka-Purbachal-Bhulta
4. Dhaka-Kachpur-Meghna Bridge
5. Dhaka-Signboard-Narayanganj
6. Dhaka-Jhilmil-Ekuria
7. Dhaka-Amin Bazar-Savar
8. Dhaka-Ashulia-DEPZ

#### Expressway

The first PPP based expressway under RSTP is Dhaka Elevated Expressway. This expressway starts at the Dhaka Shahjalal International Airport and will continue

Route	Proposed	Length System	(km)	Progress
Line 1	Gazipur – Airport – Kamalapur – Jhimill Pulbachal– Khilkhet	MRT	52	
Line 2	Ashulia – Savar – Gabtali – Dhaka Univ. – DSCC – Kamalapur	MRT	40	
Line 3	Gazipur – International Airport – Jhimill	BRT	42	On-going
Line 4	Kamalapur – Narayanganj	MRT	16	
Line 5	Bulta – Badda – Mirpur Road – Mirpur 10 – Gabtoli Bus Terminal – Dhanmondi – Bashundhara City – HatirJheel Link Road	MRT	35	
Line 6	Ashulia – Uttara Phase 3 – Pallabi – Tejigaon –Motijheel – Kamalapur	MRT	41	On-going
Line 7	Eastern Fringe Area	BRT	36	

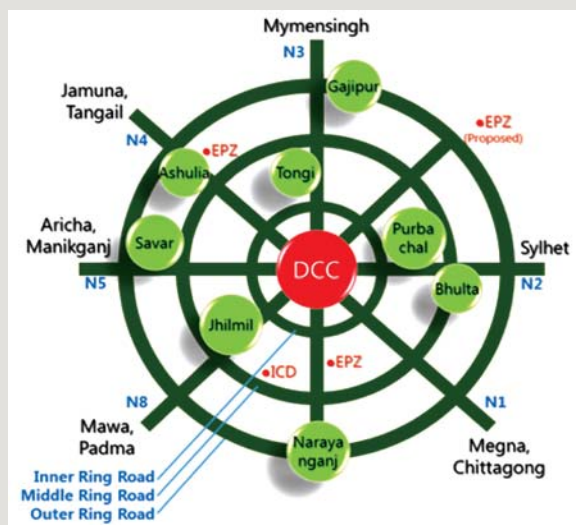
through Mohakhali, Tejgaon and Moghbazar to Kamalapur Railway station and connect to the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway through Jatrabari. The government has completed the feasibility study of second expressway which will be built between Ashulia and Dhaka airport and will connect to Dhaka elevated expressway at Dhaka airport.

The Dhaka-Mymensingh expressway proposed in the RSTP will connect to Dhaka elevated expressway while the Dhaka-Chittagong expressway would be connected at the Kutubkhali area of Dhaka elevated expressway. The RSTP also suggests connecting the Dhaka elevated expressway with the proposed Dhaka

Mawa flyover at Jatrabari along with the Dhaka-Sylhet flyover connecting at Kanchpur point.

The expected speed of traffic movement is 100 kilometres per hour once all six expressways have been completed.

1. Dhaka Elevated expressway (Airport - Kutubkhali)
2. Dhaka – Ashulia Expressway
3. Dhaka – Chittagong Expressway
4. Dhaka - Sylhet Expressway
5. Dhaka - Maowa Expressway
6. Dhaka – Mymensingh Expressway



Radial road network

### High Priority Projects

1. Construction of Southern part of Middle or Outer Ring Road before opening of the Padma Bridge. [ Baorvita (Munshiganj) to kaikertek (Narayanganj)]

2. Construction and Improvement of Road Networks in Eastern Fringe Area

(Eastern part of the Progoti Sharoni upto Shitalakha River)

### Implementation Program of Major Projects

The Revised STP, aims at making journeys comfortable and safe. The government will implement the recommended projects in three phases. Short-term projects will be implemented within 2020, mid-term within 2025 and long-term within 2035.

#### Short Term (2015-2020)

- ❑ Construction of MRT Line 6 and BRT Line 3
- ❑ Improvement of Traffic Management and Traffic Safety
- ❑ Construction of Southern part of Middle or Outer Ring Road
- ❑ Construction and Improvement of Road Networks in Eastern Fringe Area.
- ❑ Circular Waterways
- ❑ Bus Sector Reforms [Route Rationalization, Bus Company Formation, Relocation of Bus Terminals ]
- ❑ Construction and Improvement of Radial and Ring Roads and Expressways (phase-1)

#### Medium Term (2020-2025)

- ❑ Construction of MRT line 1 and MRT line 5
- ❑ Construction of Multimodal Hub at Airport
- ❑ Construction and Improvement of Radial and Ring Roads and Expressways (phase-2)

#### Long Term (2025-2035)

- ❑ Construction of BRT Line 7 and MRT Line 2 and 4 and Extension of MRT Line 6,1 and 5
- ❑ Construction and Improvement of Radial and Ring Roads and Expressways (phase-3)



**Md. Abu Naser, Senior Information Officer, Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, nasertipu007@yahoo.com**



## Begum Sufia Kamal : The Most Unforgettable Poet I Ever Met

**M. Mizanur Rahman**

we reached her residence at 11.55hrs. As soon as we reached there some attendants of the poet took us to her drawing room. It was well adorned with sitting chairs and sofa. Some of her family pictures were hanging on the surrounding wall with some praiseworthy scenic beauty posters along with its sides some showcase with full of books look befitting.

We heard about her illness but in spite of that she consented to meet us in time. As soon as she came in the room every one of us addressed her “Khala Amma (aunt)” and saluted her, “Assalamo Alaikum” while she responded, “Walaikumus Salam”. We took our seat along with her. Feroza apa introduced us to her one by one. She smiled calmly. Soon she came to know from Mrs. Feroza Khatun about me as a poet and writer, and as such she asked me about my published books. Immediately I presented her three books, namely Myriad Miracle Lalon’s Song (1987), Hareen Dupur (The Blazing Sun-2000) and The Mystic Bard (my translation in 1999) on the works of the mystic poet Sabir Ahmad Choudhury. Tittle-tattling the books, once she told me to read out the comment on the book “The Blazing Sun” given by the Bangladesh Observer...

**P**oet Sufia Kamal was one of the foremost romantic and patriotic poets of Bangladesh. She was born on 20th June, 1911 in Barisal and died on 20th November, 1999 in Dhaka.

As the clean white moonlit azure sky flooded light all over us overwhelming natural beauty surrounding the abundant green leaves and flowers of the trees likewise we once got the close company of the poet Sufia Kamal at her cottage “Sanjher Maya (The Captivated Evening).”

We had no preparation earlier to meet her but fortune smiles on us. I had the occasional affectionate but close intimacy of Mrs. Firoza Khatun, the eldest daughter of the famous poet of Bangladesh, Golem Mostafa and a good writer, noted social worker who proposed to lead the party of a teacher and some students of the Dhaka University with their brand name “Prantik Sahitya O Sanskriti Sangsad” at her residence to meet the poet (Sufia Kamal) that morning at 10 A.M. on 10th October, 1999.

Accordingly Mrs. Firoza Khatun got poet’s immediate consent and

**Immediately I read out the passage.**

“Mizanur Rahman’s Hareen Dupur (The Blazing Sun) is in fact two-in-one in the sense that the readers have been given the option to taste the flavour of his poems both in Bengali and English...But then, the texture of Mizan’s poems is neatly woven emitting relentlessly the poet’s anguish of the polluted environs enveloping the earthlings...Mizan as poet is a man of flesh and blood possessing all the



*Poet Sufia Kamal in the front line of procession protesting the conspiracy against the result of general election in 1970*

humane, serene traits of a normal human being...Mizan is terribly at odds with the pangs of living on the sun-tanned planet. All around he is fed up with mores of existence, made difficult by calamities- both natural and man-made...” She also heard the Bengali version of it from me. On hearing the passage she appreciated me very highly. Her profuse admiration of rendering Myriad Miracle Lalon’s songs and the Mystic Bard in English made me overwhelmed with joy towards further encouragement to do some more works in future. About my bilingual anthology of poems she said, “I hadn’t found such works here in Bangladesh earlier.” “This is the first of its kind in Bangladesh I produced in 1982.”- I told her. She admired my works profusely.

“Now you are doing a very good job. By this way the people of other countries would be able to know our Bangla Literature easily. I cheer you up to carry on such works at right earnest.”- Thus she encouraged me.

Begum Sufia Kamal was directly involved in Begum Club Bangladesh, women’s writers organization, Bulbul Lalitkala Academy, Wari Mahila Samitee and central women’s rehabilitation centre while she was its organizing president. Her social welfare activities were thus extended throughout Bangladesh. She was the active member of the Bangladesh Soviet Samitee. She had her motherly affectionate heart as well as the spirit of fighting the enemy by her heroic but hard and undaunted leadership.

Begum Sufia Kamal was not only a famous poet of Bangladesh; she was engaged in various social works along with the socio-cultural and arts organizations also. Out of them most notable was Bangladesh Mahila Samaj Unnaon Sangstha. This was the Bangladeshi form of former ‘All Pakistan Women’s Welfare Association’. She was the president while Mrs. Feroza Khatun was the Vice-President of the organization. Besides, Begum Sufia Kamal was the President of Chhayanut, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Rabindra Sangeet (music) Sammelon (conference), and also the principal organizer as well as the central advisor of Kachi-Kanchar

Mela (Children's fair) and founder president of the National Mentally Retarded People's Foundation. In 1988, she was elected as the president of Bangabandhu Parishad.

Though she led a life full of struggle, yet her lyrics made us moved when we listened to her. Today I remember a few lines of her following sweet lyrics written in poem 'Palli Janoni'

“...Bohu din porey money porey aji  
palli mayer koal,  
Jhaoshakhey jetha bonolota bandhi  
horoshey kheyechi dol!’...  
... after a long time I remember today  
the cradle of my country mother's lap  
ever I rocked,  
as it were,  
twining leaves of tendril creeper  
on the branch of a pine tree  
I start rocking on happily”...

*Translation : M. Mizanur Rahman*

As she had her immense love and affection of motherly heart, similarly her strong struggling leadership knew no bounds. Her sense of patriotism towards the awakening of the woman remains really a history. In 1969 when the entire country rose for the democratic movement against the misrule of the self declared president and military ruler of Pakistan Marshal Ayub Khan, she led affront the agitated procession of the women of the then East Pakistan and disowned the highest Pakistani award “Tomgha-E-Imtiaz”. Such a heroic stance and the spirit of social development that poet Sufia Kamal gave vent to that time is a remarkable historic event. Her social welfare oriented activities started when she joined the women's welfare organization “Matri-Mongol (Welfare of the mother)” in her own birth-place Barisal as the only Muslim woman. Besides she was the active member of the “British, Quit India” movement in 1940. Moreover, she advanced women's education movement following the foot-print of Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain. Many such humanistic political and social activities that she led heroically with the spirit of love and affection for the human. Here are few lines from her remarkable poem “Ovijatric” mentioned below.

### **Ovijatric (The Pioneer)**

Those who are travelling across the most  
inhospitable and impassable rough routes  
and conquered the unconquerable,  
their names will remain ever noted in eternity  
and their fame would stay culminated in all ages.  
Once willy-nilly and whimsically

they left behind the way they overcome;  
the rugged path at every step without thinking  
for loss or gain and  
they did all that at pleasure  
and won the glorious life  
smiling a pride of victory  
everywhere at last  
... ..

*Translation : M. Mizanur Rahman*

As she was already imbibed with the spirit of social, political, cultural, and humanitarian trends for which she spoke about herself... “We were born of an age of wonder of transformation of the world. First World-War, Freedom Movement, Resurgence of Muslim Renaissance, Russian Revolution, new discoveries and inventions of the Scientific World and Literary and Cultural Renaissance and the impact of all ideals of these events surged the beginning of our childhood. At that time we heard the slogans, “We want Independence, and we want equality and peace.”



*Poet Sufia Kamal with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while receiving Begum Rokeya padak in 1997*

Sufia Kamal was born in 1911 on 20th June in a respectable Muslim family at Sayestabad in Barisal town. She led her life by the ideals of Begum Rokeya

towards emancipation of the woman. She was married to her cousin Syed Nehal Hussein when she was only of 12 years old. This married life lasted for only nine years. She got married again with a young businessman Mr. Kamaluddin Ahmed of Chittagong in 1939. Meanwhile her first publication of anthology of poems “Sanjher Maya” took place in 1938 when she was only 14, years of age. At the age of 14 her first story “Sainik Bondhu (Soldier-friend)” was published in the paper “Tarun” from Barisal town. Her first poem “Basonti” was published in the monthly Saugat that made her majestic but far reaching excellence. The great poet Rabindranath Tagore blessed her profusely and the rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam sent her a long letter inspiring her to continue writing more. However she was highly encouraged by the editor Md. Nasiruddin of the monthly “Sougat” published from the then Calcutta. In this paper Sufia Kamal published her poem regularly. In such a minor age she was involved in Swadeshi Movement too. In those days boycotting foreign goods and using country made goods were in vogue mainly against the British rule in India and as such she made thread spinning the charka (a wooden wheel to spin cotton/wool to make thread) and gave it to Mr. M.K.Gandhi in an open meeting showing her solidarity with the Independence

movement of India. She joined as an active member of the Anjuman-e-Khatwatun, a Social Welfare Organization established by Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain and worked for the welfare of the downtrodden suffering people, specially, the wretched women of the slum areas of the then Calcutta (Now Kolkata). In 1946-47 in the communal-riot ravaged areas in Calcutta she served the affected people at right earnest from the Lady Barebones College help-centre. After the partition of India she came to Dhaka, East Pakistan and became the editor of the only women's pictorial weekly "The Begum." Later she worked as the joint editor in the weekly "The Sultana" in 1949 with poet Anjuman Ara Begum. In 1950 she led her social workers towards prevention of communal riot in Dhaka and engaged in the relief and rehabilitation of the riot affected people. In 1959 she led women's Gherao movement against the then government for the rise of price of consumer goods. In 1960 under the leadership of Begum Sufia Kamal, a committee was formed in commemoration of Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hussain and proposed for the first time a female students' residence of the Dhaka University which will be named as Begum Rokeya Hall. That was later granted by the government. In this year, she was elected as the chairperson of the committee for Nobel Laureate Poet Rabindranath's birth anniversary.

Thus both in social and cultural movement at that time Begum Sufia Kamal became the pioneer and as such her popularity among the womenfolk of Bangladesh was incomparably at the height. Professor Sultana Sarwaftara Zaman, the executive head of the psychology department of the Dhaka University remembering the cyclone hit ravaged area of Demra, Dhaka, during 1968-69, where under the leadership of Begum Sufia Kamal a band of women relief workers came forward to render relief work for the affected people along with our university team. I worked also under her. On 12th November, 1970 a formidable cyclone hit the southern area of Bangladesh namely Barisal, Bhola and Patuakhali. These places were ravaged tremendously. After going through the newspaper about the terrible condition of the people, I along with some women decided to render relief works for the affected people. I called a meeting at my residence to this end. Some respected leading women responded and came to our help. I was surprised and proud of seeing that Khalamma (Aunt) Begum Sufia Kamal attended our meeting. We were amazed to see the immense popularity of Khalamma that the people from far-flung areas of the island crowded us to see her at a glance. Thus we felt of her popularity here knew no bounds. She talked them politely as our never annoying smiling faced leader.

After the war of liberation in 1971, 'Dustho Punorbason Sangstha (The organization for the rehabilitation of the distressed) was formed. In order to help this organization Mr. Kamaluddin Ahmed, husband of Begum Sufia Kamal came forward. In 1973 the name of this organization was changed as "Samaj Unnoyon Sangstha". Begum Sufia Kamal led this organization until her death. In 1988 Sultana S. Zaman formed "Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation Trust", Begum Sufia Kamal led this foundation also. As she took the poor and suffering children near at her heart, similarly she consoled and encouraged their mothers too.

In an article on the birth anniversary of the poet Begum Sufia Kamal, "Sufia Kamaler Uttoradhikar" (The Successor of Sufia Kamal ) Prof. Syed Monjurul Islam rightly said, "Sufia Kamal asked man and specially woman to bring about change of outlook not only of his/her outer side but the inner side at home also.

(Prothom Alo 23rd June 2000/ 9 Asar 1406.)

Poet Sufia Kamal got a lot of accolades, ovations, prizes and awards in her life. Namely Bulbul Lalitkala Academy Puroskar (1959), Tomgha E Imtiaz (1960), Bangla Academy Sahitya Puroskar (1964), Begum Club Puroshkar (1970), Lenin Gold Padak



*Author met Poet Sufia Kamal at her residence at Dhanmondi in 1999*

(1976), Ekushey Padak and Nurunnessa Gold Padak (1977), Nasiruddin Padak (1977), Sher-e-Bangla Jatio Sahitya Puroskar (1978), Rikhsha Sramik Sammittee Padak, and Comilla Foundation Padak (1981), Dhaka Ladies Club Puroshkar (1982), Muktohdhara Sahitya Puroskar and Fulki Sishu Puroskar (1983), Kothakoli Shilpi Goshsthi Puroskar (1983), Jebunnessa Mahbubullah Trust Puroskar, (1983), Pata Sahitya Padak (1986), Fasci-birodhi (against Fascism) Chekh Puroskar(1985), Shaheed Nuton Chandra Sinha Smriti Padak (1988), Ruma Smriti Padak (1989), Jasimuddin Padak, Society of New York Padak and Club of Boston Sanad (1990), Business and professional Women's club Padak (1991), Mujib Padak, Begum Rokeya Gold Padak and Swadhinata Padak (1991).

#### **Her published books are as follows-**

1. Keyar Kanta (collection of stories) 1937. Sanjher Maya (Poetry) 1938, Maya Kajol (poem) 1951, Mon O Jibon (poetry) 1957, Proshanti O Parthona (poem) 1958, Udatya Prithibi (poetry) 1965, Itol Bitol (Juvenile) Chara for the Children 1965, Diwan (poetry) 1966, Soviet Dinguli (Travel) 1968, Oviatrik (poetry) 1969, Mirtikar Ghran (Poetry) 1970, Mor Jaduder Samadhi Pore (Poetry) 1972, Sanirbachito kobita sonkolon (poems) 1976, Noul Kishorer Darbare (Juvenile poem) 1981, Ekale Amader Kal (Atmokatha) 1988, Ekattorer diary (Memoir) 1989.

Begum Sufia Kamal had strong sense of nationalism but she preferred humanism as her motto in life and herein lays her greatness as an ideal personality. She had her secular mentality –as she always hated communalism but she preferred socialism with perfect social justice towards humanitarian aspects of life in general and overall humanism in particular. Thus she was loveable to all that came across her. We wish her departed soul rest in peace ever in eternity.

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



## Issues in Food-based Dietary: Bangladesh Perspective

**Md. Azgar Ali**

We live in an age of scientific revolution. Food and nutrition science have had a major impact on human society, and its impact is growing tremendously day by day. By drastically changing our means of food, our methods of food preparation and planning indeed, even the length and quality of life itself, science has generated changes in the moral values and basic philosophies of mankind. At present, science has changed how we live and what we believe. By making life easier, science has given man the chance to pursue societal concerns such as ethics, aesthetics, education, and justice; to create cultures; and to improve food way and food habits, human conditions and so on. In order to live a healthy and long life, disease free body is our first concern while it may seem overwhelming a few simple changes in food habits can help us live disease free. We all want what's best diet for our countrymen.

I think, the whole gamut of feeling of this little work will be walked down the food valley that will give us a good appetite.

This article is aimed to help move forward the noble objectives of food-based dietaries are :

- 1) To identify as a whole, on the contribution of different foods or food groups to an overall diet and ways to deal with them that would help to maintain good health through optimal nutrition ;
- 2) To promote healthful diets and lifestyles and encourage behavioral changes for the general people of Bangladesh; and
- 3) To find the comprehensive process of developing the guidelines through consensus building among consumers, priority setting and use of qualitative methods to prepare food and messages to ensure public understanding and motivation;

Moreover, this article is put on the scientific process of developing food-based dietary guidelines (FBDG) for the people of Bangladesh, following a stepwise approach that should ideally consist of: 1) Identification of diet-health relationships, 2) Identification of country specific diet-related health problems, 3) Identification of nutrients of public health importance 4) Identification of food consumption patterns.

The scale of the Present Nutrition: A greater understanding of the relationships among foods, nutrition and human health has and will continue to evolve over

time. Over the past century, essential nutrient deficiencies have dramatically decreased, many infectious diseases have been conquered, and the majority of population in Bangladesh can now expect a long and productive life. However, current trend in Bangladesh shows that the prevalence of communicable diseases rates like diarrhea, dysentery, typhoid and malaria have dropped, on the other hand, the rates of non-communicable diseases-specifically, chronic diet-related diseases like diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, arthritis are increasing threat, due in part to changes in lifestyle behaviors. More than 40% of all adults-15 million individuals-have one or more preventable chronic diseases, many of which are related to poor quality eating patterns and physical inactivity. In 2000, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) showed that the prevalence of arthritis, diabetes, heart disease and cancer per 1000 population was 4.7, 2.7, 1.6 and 0.4 and those in 2012 was 14.0, 7.8, 3.3 and 0.6 and in 2014 it was 17.16, 10.51, 6.59 and 0.71 respectively. In 2014, Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) data showed that the proportion of overweight women increases with age. Rural women are more likely than urban women to be undernourished (21 percent and 12 percent, respectively), whereas urban women are twice as likely to be overweight or obese compared with rural women (36 percent and 19 percent, respectively). 36 percent of children under age 5 years are considered to be short for their age or stunted and 12 percent are severely stunted (below -3 standard Deviations, SD). The prevalence of stunting increases with age, from 14 percent of children under age 6 months to 46 percent of children 18-23 months, and then decreases to 38 percent among children age 48-59 months. Severe stunting shows a similar pattern, with children age 18-23 months having the highest proportion of severe stunting (17 percent). Stunting is slightly higher among male children (37 percent) than female children (35 percent). Stunting is more prevalent among children who were born less than 24 months after a preceding birth (47 percent). BDHS survey shows that 33 percent of children under age 5 are underweight (low weight-for-age), and 8 percent are severely underweight. A history of poor eating and physical activity patterns have a cumulative effect and contributed to significant nutrition- and physical activity-related health challenges that now face the people of Bangladesh. Concurrent with these diet-related health problems persisting at high levels, trends in food intake over time show that, at the population level, the people of Bangladesh are not practicing healthy eating patterns. For example, the prevalence of low-birth weight and malnutrition has risen and remained high for the past 30 years, while Household Expenditure Survey (HIES), BBS, scores, a measure of how food choices align with the diet, have remained low. Similarly, physical activity levels have remained low over time. With the aim of improving the under nutrition in the larger segments of people, an important part of a complex and multifaceted solution to promoting health and helping to reduce the risk of chronic diseases, in the light of National Nutrition Policy 2015, food based dietary guide lines for the Bangladeshi population has been prepared by FPMU, Ministry of Food. The guidelines have also developed by BIRDEM and other stakeholders

**What goes on to state in the dietary guidelines:** The guidelines suggest the use of healthy preparation and cooking methods for the retention of nutrients and to promote better health.

1. Eat a well balanced diet with a variety of foods at each meal

2. Consume moderate amount of oils and fats
3. Limit salt intake and condiments and use only iodized salt
4. Take less sugar, sweets or sweetened drinks
5. Drink plenty of water daily
6. Consume safe and clean foods and beverages
7. Maintain desired body weight through a balanced food intake and regular physical activity
8. Practise healthy life-style with right cooking and healthy eating
9. Eat additional food during pregnancy and lactation
10. Practise exclusive breastfeeding for six months and start appropriate complementary foods in time

The 2015 Dietary Guidelines translates science into succinct, food-based guidance that can be relied upon to help the people of Bangladesh. Choose foods that provide a healthy and enjoyable diet. Its recommendations are ultimately intended to help individuals improve and maintain overall health and reduce the risk of chronic disease-its focus is disease prevention. This means diets with a rich variety of vegetables and fruits, cereals, fat-free or low-fat ,dairy foods like milk, and protein foods that contain little or no saturated fat, including fish, meat, eggs, and poultry, legumes and pulses . The Dietary Guidelines is not intended to be used to treat disease. Regardless of an individual's current health status, almost all the people of Bangladesh could benefit from shifting choices to better support healthy eating patterns. Thus, the Dietary Guidelines may be used or adapted by medical and nutrition professionals to encourage healthy eating patterns to patients.

**The crucial part of healthy eating is a balanced diet at each meal :** A balanced diet - or a good diet - means consuming from all the different food groups in the right quantities. Nutritionists say there are six main food groups - cereals, fruit and vegetables, protein, dairy and fat & sugar. Healthy eating means consuming the right quantities of foods from all food groups in order to lead a healthy life.

**Food Groups:** . Foods from all of the food groups should be eaten in nutrient-dense forms. The following sections describe the recommendations for each of the food groups, highlight nutrients for which the food group is a key contributor, and describe special considerations related to the food group.

**Cereals:** Whole grains are a source of nutrients, such as dietary fiber, iron, zinc, manganese, folate, magnesium, copper, thiamin, niacin, vitamin B6, phosphorus,



*Rice and Bread, main source of carbohydrate*



*Protein mainly comes from fish, meat and beans*

selenium, riboflavin, and vitamin A. Eat rice or wheat or a combination of cereals around 270-450 gm daily.

**Protein Foods:** Protein foods are important sources of nutrients. In addition to protein, it contains including B vitamins (e.g., niacin, vitamin B12, vitamin B6, and riboflavin),

selenium, choline, phosphorus, zinc, copper, vitamin D, and vitamin E. Nutrients provided by various types of protein foods differ. For example, meats provide the most zinc, while poultry provides the most niacin. Fish, meat, poultry, egg, legumes and pulses and seafood provide heme iron, which is more bio-available than the non-heme iron found in plant sources. Heme iron is especially important for young children and women who are capable of becoming pregnant or who are pregnant. Seafood provides the most vitamin B12 and vitamin D, in addition to almost all of the polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acids, eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA),

**Vegetables and fruits:** Vegetables and fruits are important sources of numerous nutrients, including dietary fiber, potassium, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin K, copper, magnesium, vitamin E, vitamin B6, folate, iron, manganese, thiamin, niacin, and choline. Each of the vegetable subgroups contributes different



*Vegetables, source of minerals and vitamins*



*Milk Products contribute nutrients including calcium and vitamins*

B12, protein, potassium, zinc, choline, magnesium, and selenium. Take at least 150ml milk or one cup of milk product for healthy bones and teeth.

**Oils:** Oils provide essential fatty acids and vitamin E. Take 30g visible fat daily.

**Sodium :** Multiple strategies should be implemented to reduce sodium intake to the recommended limits. Healthy eating patterns limit sodium to less than 2,300 mg/ one teaspoon per day for adults.

**Added Sugar:** Added sugars provide sweetness that can help improve the palatability of foods, help with preservation, and/or contribute to functional attributes such as viscosity, texture, body, color, and b r o w n i n g capability. Take not more than 25g of sugar per day.

**Water:** Drink Plenty of water that helps flush out to takings, giving better skin, hair and nails. Drink at least 1.5 to 3.05 liters pure drinking water daily.



*Oils provide essential fatty acids*

combinations of nutrients, making it important for individuals to consume vegetables from all the subgroups. Eat two seasonal fruits and at least 100g leafy and 200g non-leafy vegetables everyday.

**Dairy and Milk Products:** The dairy group contributes many nutrients, including calcium, phosphorus, vitamin A, vitamin D (in products fortified with vitamin D), riboflavin, vitamin

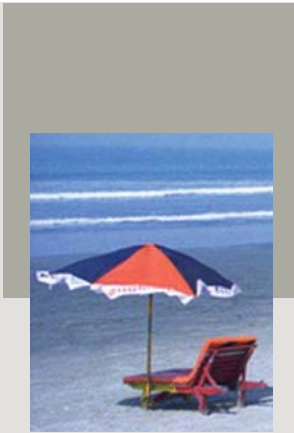
### **Healthy Cooking and Eating Patterns:**

Healthy cooking makes food tasty, palatable. It destroys germs and improve digestibility. Food should be washed before preparation, vegetables should be cut into large pieces after washing and use a lid when cook food. An eating pattern represents the totality of all foods consumed. Healthy eating pattern assesses how well various combinations and amounts of foods from all food groups would result in healthy in persons bodies which meet nutrient needs and accommodate limits. It provides a robust evidence based scientific dietary components for healthy eating that both reduce risk of diet-related chronic disease and ensure nutrient adequacy. Everyone has a distinct role in maintaining healthy eating patterns.

Last but not least, in general, Bangladeshi people are consuming too many calories, are not meeting food group and nutrient recommendations, and are not getting adequate physical activity. In practice, aligning with the *Dietary Guidelines* at the population level requires broad, multi sectoral coordination and collaboration. This collective action is needed to create a new paradigm in which healthy lifestyle choices at home, school, work, and in the community are easy, accessible, affordable, and normative. Everyone has a role in helping individuals shift their everyday food, beverage, and physical activity choices to align with the Dietary Guidelines. The Dietary Guidelines provides recommendations that professionals, especially policymakers, can translate into action to support individuals. It is hoped, all segments of society to promote healthy eating and physical activity behaviors; the development of educational resources that deliver information in a way that is compelling, inspiring, empowering, and actionable for individuals; and the need to focus on individuals where they are making food and eating choice. Teach skills like cooking, meal planning that help support healthy eating patterns. Suggest ways that individuals can model healthy eating behaviors for friends and family members. This is not an all-inclusive list; many strategies are available that can result in shifts to improve dietary intake and, ultimately, improve health. Professionals should help individuals understand that they can adapt their choices to create healthy eating patterns that encompass all foods, meet food group and nutrient needs, and stay within calorie limits. In fine, concerted efforts among professionals within communities, businesses and industries, organizations, governments, and other segments of society are needed to support individuals and families in making lifestyle choices that align with the Dietary Guidelines. Professionals have an important role in leading disease-prevention efforts within their organizations and communities to make healthy eating and regular physical activity an organizational and societal norm. Changes at multiple levels of the social practice are needed, and these changes, in combination and over time, can have a meaningful impact on the health of current and future generations.

**Md.Azgar Ali, Statistical Officer, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics**

**E-mail : md.azgarali@gmail.com**



## Prospect of Eco and Health Tourism in Bangladesh

**Md. Ziaul Haque Howlader**

### **C**oncept of Eco and health Tourism

In this present era of globalization, tourists' tastes and trends are changing constantly. At present, tourists desire to see more virgin, authentic and eco-based tourism attractions as well as improving their both mental and physical health. Now-a-days tourism is not mere a recreation, it is also utilized to heal mental and physical wounds of a traveller. The well synergy of eco and health based tourism activities are necessary to draw attention of tourists in yet-to-be-fully-developed country like Bangladesh. Eco-and-health tourism can go side by side. Eco-tourism means education, for both tourists and residents of nearby communities. Health-tourism means the wellness and good health of tourists. Eco-tourism and Health tourism are well-appreciated by the tourists specially the senior citizens.



*Sajek Valley, Rangamati*



*Bangabandhu Safari Park, Cox's Bazar*

Ecology and Health are just the opposite sides of a coin to tourists. While climate change has been a crucial issue in the question of sustainable tourism, eco-tourism has drawn much attention of world leaders. International Ecotourism Society (IES) defines eco-tourism as: “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people”. The Australian Commission on National Ecotourism Strategy (NES) calls it: “nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable”. When ecology survives, human beings survive and it helps satisfy the tourists. It ultimately helps improve the sound mind and body of tourists and host country.

Tourism causes damage. Ecotourism strives to minimize the adverse effects of hotels, trails, and other infrastructure by using either recycled materials or plentifully available local building materials, renewable sources of energy, recycling and safe disposal of waste and garbage, and environmentally and culturally sensitive architectural design. Minimization of impact also requires that the numbers and mode of behaviour of tourists be regulated to ensure limited damage to the ecosystem (Ecotourism and Sustainable Development”, Author - Martha Honey).

Health tourism is now emerging as an important segment of tourism industry. Many countries like Thailand, India, Singapore and Malaysia are focusing the health tourism activities. They are offering various medical services which include surgery, dental treatment, spa, foot and body massages, ayurvedic treatment, mental therapy and nature cure programme, etc. These health services are luring many tourists from Europe and North America. Because the costs are reasonable and these treatments are well-understood. Bangladesh is also making a well foundation in medical services along with the other Asian giants.

Ecotourism is not only “greener” but also less culturally intrusive and exploitative than conventional tourism. Whereas prostitution, black markets and drugs often

are by-products of mass tourism, eco-and-health tourism strives to be culturally respectful and have a minimal effect on both the natural environment and the human population of a host country. This is not easy, especially since ecotourism often involves travel to remote areas where small and isolate communities have had little experience interacting with foreigners.

### **Prospects of Eco-tourism in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh itself as a whole is an eco-tourism destination. There is a plenty of eco-tourism attractions lying hither and thither of this land. A desire to establish eco-tourism in Bangladesh has been demonstrated for many years. Therefore, eco-tourism has been emphasized in the tourism planning process. The government has enacted laws to ensure pollution free environment and these are being implemented by the Department of Environment. These are Environment Policy, 1992 and Bangladesh Environment Protection Law, 1995. The National Tourism Policy framed in 2010 also emphasizes the eco-tourism development as well as preservation and conservation of natural and cultural products. These reflect government's keen interest and high priority to create clean and green environment and eco-tourism development in the country.

Bangladesh sincerely believes that the eco-tourism marketing & conservation of bio-diversity are complementary to each other and together make tourism and conservation activities sustainable if a synergy through proper management can be developed. Eco-tourism can bring improved income and living standards for local people. Eco-tourism can revitalize local culture, especially traditional crafts and customs. It can stimulate the rural economy by creating demand for agricultural products and, through infrastructure development project; it can inject capital into rural area. So for vigorous eco-tourism marketing for the benefit of all stakeholders, there needs interactions among the local community groups and leaders and the local authorities. The present government is trying to do this task to flourish and health tourism.

Earlier in Bangladesh the tourism activity was centered at the beaches and some other attractive areas. But of late, this idea has been changed. Conservation of



*Boga Lake, Bandarban*

nature and culture is the most important theme of all planned tourism development. Ecotourism is understood as a key element in the current tourism development, which can play a very vital role in the promotion and development of tourism industry. Tourism businessmen and planners understand that it is such kind of tourism development, which shows respect to

heritage and culture, protects & preserves environment and provides knowledge to the visitors and welcomes them.

In Bangladesh, there is huge potential to develop and promote ecotourism. The single largest mangrove forest of the world, the Sundarbans is the gold mine for ecotourism and pride of Bangladesh. UNESCO has declared it as a



*Sheikh Russel Aviary & Eco Park, Chittagong*

World Heritage Site. Besides this, other ecotourism products include tea plantations in Greater Sylhet, hilly green areas of Hill Tract Districts, sandy beaches at Cox's Bazar and Kuakata, rivers, lakes, forest and wildlife, glorious tribal life and the simple life style of the village people. These tourism products have tremendous demand in the tourism markets of the world.

Bangladesh is engaged in a continuous endeavour to integrate her ecotourism resources through planning, management and appropriate use, based on the following principles: (i) optimum multiple use of the resources; (ii) maximum sustainable use; and (iii) conservation and development of natural resources. When we promote and sell our tourist products (for example, the Sundarbans, the Hilly Districts, Cox's Bazar) we have to make sure that the resources, such as the forests with their numerous varieties of trees, plants, herbs and their animals are not destroyed or overexploited.

### **Prospect of Health Tourism in Bangladesh**

Medical Tourism is one of the fastest growing healthcare industries. The world is in a healthcare crisis, given the ageing population, increasing costs and long waiting patients from developed as well as developing countries. Streams of people now quite often travel abroad with the objective of obtaining immediate health care. In this context, Bangladesh has a great potential to develop itself as health tourism destinations. Bangladesh has already established many international standard hospitals both in government and private sector. Here treatment cost is low compared to many developed countries. If we can develop some infrastructure related to health tourism for Spa, sanatorium, ayurvedic and traditional treatment methods, etc. it will create new employment opportunities and develop health tourism industry.

### **Marketing of Ecotourism and Health Tourism**

Clearly, promotion and advertising play a very significant role in establishing eco-product in the marketplace as well as health tourism. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation and Bangladesh Tourism Board are carrying out different promotional activities for eco-tourism. The government is also thinking for developing medical tourism in Bangladesh. The Tourism Policy framed in 2010 also stresses the potential of both the eco-tourism and medical tourism in Bangladesh. Brochures and other promotional materials are being distributed abroad through all foreign missions of Bangladesh. Participation in international tourism fairs, publication of features and advertisements in trade journals



*Kaptai Lake, Rangamati*

would also enable the country to promote its ecotourism products as well as the medical tourism.

### **Conclusion**

Both the ecotourism and medical tourism demand a more holistic approach to travel. We must strive to respect, learn about and benefit the local environment and local communities as well as health & wellness of tourists. For development of ecotourism in Bangladesh, we need well-trained people like multilingual guides with skills in natural and cultural history, environmental interpretation, ethical principles and effective communication. We need ecotourism projects to help educate members of the surrounding community, schoolchildren of the host community. For developing medical tourism we need some more infrastructures for providing both ultra modern and traditional health services to tourists.

***The Writer is Manager (PR) of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation***



## Prospect of Zinc-rich BRRI Dhan-62

**Dr. Md. Shafayet Hossain**

### **I**ntroduction

Rice is the staple food for more than half the world's population and about 135 million people of Bangladesh. In several Asian countries, it provides 50 to 80 percent of the energy intake of the poor. Rice provides nearly 48% of rural employment, about two-thirds of total calorie supply and about one-half of the total protein intakes of an average person in the country. Rice sector contributes one-half of the agricultural GDP and one-sixth of the national income in Bangladesh. Almost all of the 13 million farm families of the country grow rice on about 10.5 million hectares. About 75% of the total cropped area and over 80% of the total irrigated area is planted to rice. Thus, rice plays a vital role in the livelihood of the people of Bangladesh. Behind this Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) has a

great contribution through development of some 76 Modern Rice varieties and improved production practices which earned a very high reputation in Bangladesh as well as in the world rice community.

### **Importance of Zinc**

Zinc is an essential element that stimulates the activity of about 100 enzymes in the body. It also supports - healthy immune system - synthesizing DNA - wound healing - the healthy growth and development of the body during adolescence, childhood and pregnancy.

This mineral is present in a variety of foods that many people consume daily. Generally, when someone is suffering from a zinc deficiency, it is because the intake is inadequate, because it is being poorly absorbed into the body or their need for zinc increases. In an average human body, there is about 2 to 3 grams of zinc. Generally, most adults do not require zinc supplementation if they eat a healthy diet with vegetables, fruit and some protein sources. Males require more zinc than women, as the mineral is released when a man ejaculates. The more sexually active a male, the more zinc that is required, as semen has the highest levels of zinc in the body. In Bangladesh, over 40 percent children under five are stunted while an estimated 44 percent children of the same age group are at risk of zinc deficiency. Considering the Importance of Zinc in human health Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) scientists developed world's first zinc-rich rice variety, BRRI Dhan62 for Bangladesh perspective. It was also reported that Indian Scientists from Indira Gandhi Agriculture University, Raipur, have developed a new zinc bio-fortified rice variety 'Chhattisgarh Zinc Rice-1' named after an India state 'Chhattisgarh'.



*The world's first biologically fortified zinc-enriched rice BRRI dhan-62, developed by Bangladeshi scientists*

### **History of development of the variety**

Dr. Md Alamgir Hossain, Principal Scientific Officer at the plant breeding division of the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) developed the hi-zinc rice with support from Harvest Plus, a global bio-fortification mission launched in 2004 under the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). The newly developed BRRI Dhan62

has been the most-discussed rice variety as it is a zinc-fortified breed and developed to meet the necessary requirement of micronutrient for a human body. The variety has been developed by genetically crossing local variety jirakatari with BRRI Dhan39 following two Rapid Generation Advance (RRA) and Pedigree Selection. Later on it was approved by the National Seed Board (NSB) in the year 2013. It may be further mentioned that it is not genetically modified rice, thus farmers would be able to produce seeds of the variety as the other conventional varieties.

### **Characteristics of the Variety**

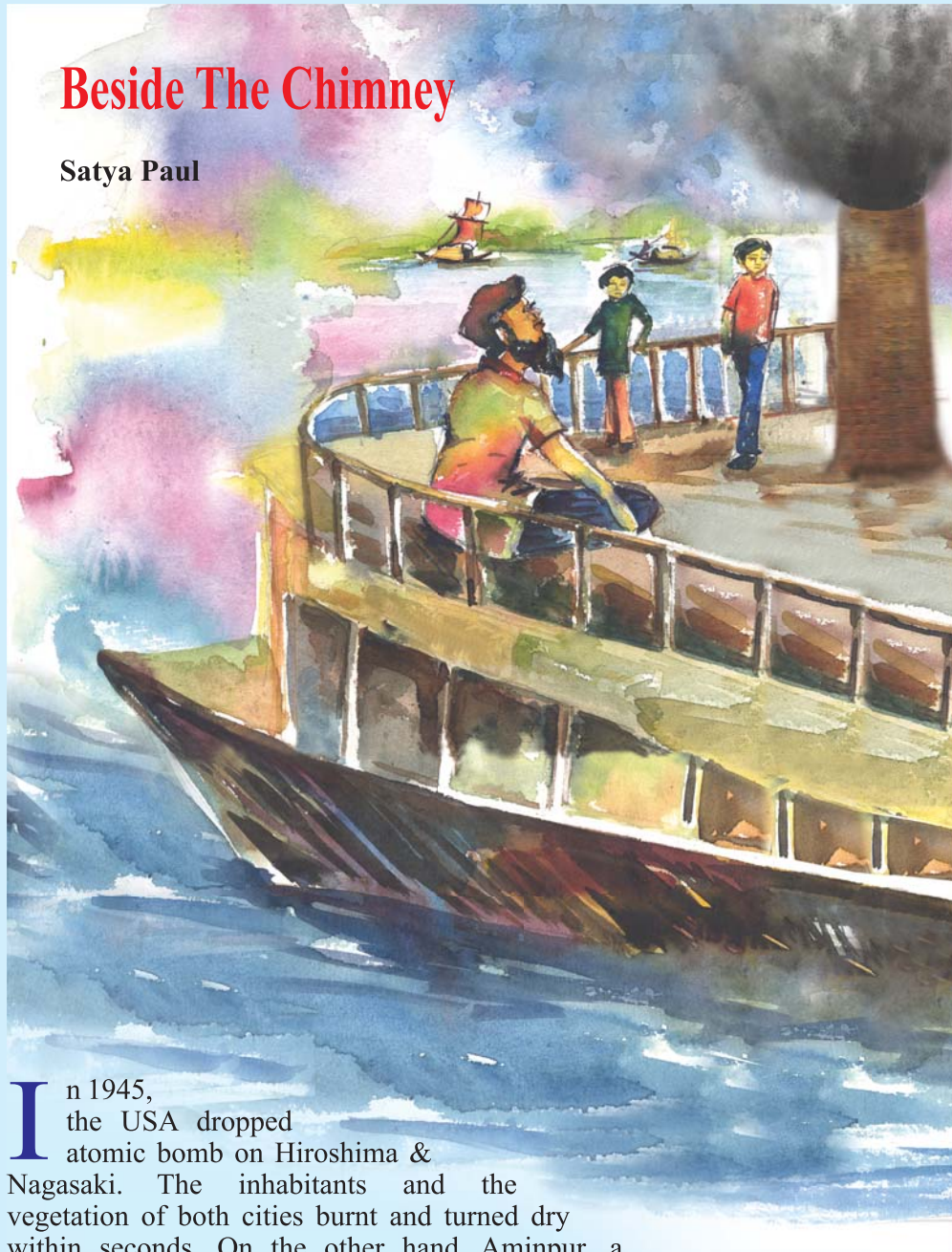
Each kilogram of rice of BRRI Dhan62 contains 19 mg of zinc and 9 percent of protein which will ensure high nutrition and will play a significant role in prevention of diseases. The most early-maturing high yielding rice variety (HYV) ever released for Aman season can be harvested within 105 days. Of the rice varieties of Aman season, BRRI Dhan-62 can be cultivated within a short period. The size of rice is medium. The zinc-enriched rice variety also outpaced two of the country's best performing Aman season early-mature varieties: BINA dhan7 and BRRI dhan33. Crop duration from seed to seed is 110-120 days for BINA Dhan7 and BRRI Dhan33 while BRRI Dhan62 can be reaped in 100 to 105 days with the yield of 3.5 to 4.5 tons per hectare if nurtured properly. By virtue of early harvesting characteristics the variety is very helpful to cultivate various Rabi crops like potato, tomato, brinjal, mustard and other vegetables for additional income before going to Boro.

**Availability of the Variety:** It is reported that the newly developed rice variety has been demonstrated in a wide range of farmer's field which performed to be better. After having Breeder Seed of the variety from BRRI, BADC started producing Foundation Seed this year in its Seed Multiplication Farm. Then the certified seeds will be produced in contract grower's field which will be provided to the farmers later on.

**Dr. Md. Shafayet Hossain, Deputy Manager (SP&P), BADC, Dhaka**

## Beside The Chimney

Satya Paul



In 1945, the USA dropped atomic bomb on Hiroshima & Nagasaki. The inhabitants and the vegetation of both cities burnt and turned dry within seconds. On the other hand, Aminpur, a village of Bangladesh was alive with natural green surrounding. Barek Miah, son of the soil, was born in a renowned family. His father Tobarak Miah was a Grammo Matubbar (village leader). People of all ages took him as the most expected person. He was accurate inwardly & outwardly. Barek Miah, the only son of the family, received informal education from his father as a tradition of their family.

Tobarak Miah married off his son to a teenage girl named Amena at his tender age. She was also of a highly renowned family. After their marriage his father gave Barek all the responsibilities of the family. Tobarak Miah, one night, told his son Barek about a dream he cherished secretly. The dream was to make an educational institution and a hospital for the well being of the village people. He also told Barek not to sell a piece of land for own benefit except realizing this purpose. Hearing everything from his father Barek vowed to implement his father's dream. After sometime his father died. In the meantime Barek became the father of two sons & one daughter. His two sons are Zafar and Jalil and his daughter, Zerin. He was happy with his family life.

It was the 26th March of 1971. Liberation war began. He joined as a freedom fighter leaving his family behind. After nine months' war, when Barek came back, he did not find his family at first. Then he looked for them to his father-in-law's house. There he came to learn that they were sent to the town with their uncle. He went to the town, fifty kilometers away from his village. Then he finally got back his children and wife. Children didn't intend to come back to village as they were admitted to school. Finding no alternative he came back to village with his wife.

Days, months and years gone by. Barek provided all the educational expenses for their children with great hope. His elder son became a doctor, second one a lecturer and his daughter became an Engineer. At the completion of their education he sent them message to come back home. But no one agreed. At last he himself went to town and tried to convince that they had many important duties to the village people, who cultivated their land and gave them educational supports. But it went in vain. Barek came back with heavy heart. Listening to this, his wife, Amina, burst into tears. Barek turned silent. Immediately he didn't find any solution of this situation.

The situation was rapidly changing after liberation. Badrul Munshi, an anti-liberation character, was dramatically selected as a chairman and became the leader of the village. All his known faces changed their colors and dress and speech. Barek Miah didn't get confidence as before. Barek with his own effort tried to start an educational institution, a hospital and a post office but failed. On the contrary his children, keeping formal relation with their father started their metallic life in town and kept themselves busy in making money.

1982. It was a black night of Bangla month Ashar (Jun-July). Amena was severely suffering from Kalzjar (tropical fever). Barek tried his best to nurse her. At one night she took her last breath saying 'Now, who will take care you, dear?' Barek was completely alone in the verandah at that very night. Even cows in the cow-shed felt his loneliness. No one was beside him then. Next day, a boy of his neighbor came up to him and said, 'Grandpa, did you have anything for lunch today'. Barek didn't answer.

After few days, he went to Badrul Munshi and proposed to sell all of his landed property. Munshi asked, 'What would you do with that money?' Taking a long breath, Barek replied, 'I want to realize my father's dream'. 'Oh! I see', said Munshi, 'how would you manage everything at this age? You had better call your

sons & daughters. Though they didn't come to village earlier but I hope this time they must come, if they know that you are selling the forefather's property.' While Munshi continued, Barek heard an echo saying, "Barek, don't call your children, and go on yourself." Barek was just confused but decided to try for the last time. He rushed to his children. To his surprise, all his children and their wives agreed to visit the village home. This sudden change of mind rather made a doubt in him about them. However, all his children and his grand children made the dull atmosphere of village home delightful. Barek forgot to doubt them further. Munshi was called to their yard. A meeting was held and the total price was fixed. At that moment, when Barek found that his sons had included dwelling house in the sale-list, he protested. Then his sons made a new trick. They convinced him that they would make a plan by some expert engineers to realize their grandfather's dream and they proposed their father to live with them in the town. Finally, the complete property was sold and Barek was compelled to go with his sons.

Time passed by rapidly. He became distressed at the changed behavior of his sons. One day he called his sons and asked them to return his money. They replied that they had engaged the money in business. They asked for forgiveness from him. Barek kept silent for a long time. At that night he left the metallic town with a different silence around him. He had a travel bag in which he had nothing but a diary, a pen, one red gamsa (napkin) and one lungi.

Ten winters passed away. It was 31 December in 1999 and I was travelling by a steamer. I found an old man sitting idly beside the chimney on the roof of the steamer. His eyes were close and he had a dirty travel bag in front of him. I stared at him with a different interest. After sometime he opened his eyes. Then he unzipped his travel bag and drew out a dirty & torn covered diary. I noticed, he started to read silently but after sometime he fell into a deep sleep. I found a great weariness that was reflected on his face. Upon my curiosity, I stepped ahead and took the diary and began to read with great interest. I found some lines, 'Father, I failed to realize your dream at last. Nagasaki & Hiroshima in spite of being burnt woke up again with their flourish. But my village is now being burnt with dirty politics and losing its lively figure of development. How stupid the village people are! City people are rude & self centered. They are growing upwards with their lifeless concrete buildings. Where is the open air of education? Where is our open air of culture? Culture of equality? Education of greatness and patience? Allah! Give me death. I don't want to see this national decay further.'

Suddenly he woke up. I was embarrassed holding his diary in my hand. He smiled and laughed with a different sound and asked 'How much educated you are! Would you like to read my notes written on the dirty pages? Would your education make you a perfect human being? Would your education make you fit to stand on the new surface of millennium to do welfare for the common people of the country?' Then he began to laugh loudly and left me in the new transformation of life. I looked at the top of the chimney. Black smoke was emitting and disappearing into the thin air.

**Satya Paul, Assistant Professor, Bangladesh Navy College, Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka**

## DEVELOPMENT CHRONOLOGY

# Major National Events

January-March



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the inaugural ceremony of 'dot bangla' domain at her official residence Ganobhaban in the city on December 31*

**31 December, 2016**

### **Dot bangla domain comes into being**

The much-awaited dot bangla (.bangla) domain was unlocked for the people on December 31 as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated it at a function.

The premier opened the dot bangla (.bangla) internet domain at a ceremony at her official Ganobhaban residence in the city. State-owned Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL), the assigned organisation to handle the domain, has completed preparations to start distribution of dot bangla domain among the users after it had been officially allotted to Bangladesh on October 4.

*Source: The Financial Express*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina began the distribution process of free text books for the students at the Ganobhaban on December 31*

**31 December, 2016**

### **Schoolchildren receive new textbooks**

Schoolchildren around Bangladesh are receiving their new text books at the start of the new academic year. Education Minister Nurul

Islam Nahid officially began the Text Book Fair by giving out books to 5,000 students from 31 schools at Azimpur Government Girls' School and College in the city.

The government is distributing the free text books to primary and middle school students at educational institutions around the country for the eighth time.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina began the distribution process on December 31 by handing out free text books to a few students at the Ganobhaban.

This year 43,353,209 students will receive 362,182,000 text books and learning materials. *Source: The Financial Express*

**1 January, 2017**

### **Seek new markets, not GSP: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 1 stressed the importance of exploring more international markets for Bangladeshi products instead of running after GSP.

The Prime Minister said this while inaugurating the month-long 22nd Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

She asked businessmen to look for those countries which need Bangladeshi items. "The people of Bangladesh need some training and the right path."

The Prime Minister announced the leather and footwear sector as the product of the year from the programme.

Later, the Prime Minister handed over export trophies to the winners for the 2013-14 fiscal year. *Source: The Financial Express*

**3 January, 2017**

### **ECNEC okays 6 projects involving Tk 2,474 cr**

Executive Committee of the National Economic Council on January 3 approved six development projects involving Tk 2,474.65 crore.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the ECNEC meeting at the Planning Ministry in the capital.

"Of the total project cost, the government will provide Tk 2,002.35 crore from the national exchequer while the remaining Tk 472.30 crore will come as project assistance," Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal said at a news briefing emerging from the meeting.

ECNEC meeting also approved the first revision of the construction of some 156 fire service and civil defence stations at important upazila headquarters with an estimated cost of Tk 1,258 crore.

The other projects are Infrastructural development of Langalband Mohastami Punnasnan Festival with Tk 120.74 crore, Protecting Ramnewaj launchghat areas under Manpura upazila and Ghosherhat launchghat areas under Charfassion upazila of Bhola from river erosion with Tk 280.69 crore, approach road widening and other necessary infrastructural development for Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park, Gazipur with Tk 70.32 crore and enriching Bangla language in ICT through research and development with Tk 159.02 crore. *Source: The NewAge*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a video conference from her official residence Ganobhaban on January 4 marking the foundation laying ceremony of the 10-storey Dr. Wazed International Research and Training Institute at Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur

**4 January, 2017**

#### **PM lays foundation of Dr. Wazed Int'l Institute**

Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone of 10-storey Dr. Wazed International Research and Training Institute at Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur through a video conference from her official residence Ganobhaban on January 4.

She also laid the foundation stone of a 1000-bed and 10-storey hall, 'Sheikh Hasina Hall', for female students of the university.

The research institute would be built at an estimated cost of Tk 268.70 million while the Sheikh Hasina Hall at Tk 513.50 million.

The research and training institute named after her husband and eminent nuclear scientist of the country late Dr. MA Wazed Miah and thus taking an effort to highlight his life and works. *Source: The Financial Express*

**9 January, 2017**

#### **PM seeks people's help to maintain dev pace**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 9 urged all to extend their cooperation to maintain the current pace of development.

The Prime Minister was inaugurating the countrywide three-day January 9-11 Development Fair-2017 through videoconferencing from her official residence Ganobhaban.

The fair is being held in all 64 districts and 490 upazilas across the country.

The time of the fair was chosen commemorating the Homecoming Day of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and it was dedicated to his memory.

The fair aims to bring people under the government's uplift activities by telling success stories to achieve the Vision 2021 and Vision 2041 as well as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *Source: The Financial Express*

**10 January, 2017**

**Bangabandhu's homecoming day observed**

The historic homecoming day of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman observed across the country.

Bangabandhu, the undisputed leader of the nation and supreme commander of the country's Liberation War, returned to the sacred soil of independent Bangladesh via London and New Delhi on January 10 in 1972, after 290 days captivity in Pakistan jail.

The day's programme start with hoisting the national and party flags at the AL central office, Bangabandhu Bhaban and the party offices across the country around 6:30am.

A delegation of senior AL leaders laid wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhaban around 7am in the morning.

The ruling AL hold a rally at Suhrawardy Udyan in the city at 2:30pm.

Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attended the discussion as the chief guest while eminent intellectuals and national leaders took part in the discussion. *Source: The Financial Express*

**12 January, 2017**

**Country now a role model for dev: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed her profound gratitude to the nation for giving her government the opportunity to serve the country for the past eight years saying during the long stretch of time she left no stone unturned for country's development and peoples welfare.

"Today's Bangladesh is completely a different country from what it was eight years ago. Today's Bangladesh is self-determined and indomitable Bangladesh," she said in an address to the nation on January 12.

The premier Sheikh Hasina delivered the address coinciding with the completion of the third year of the second consecutive tenure of her government.

"Overcoming all obstacles and barriers Bangladesh is now on the highway of development. Bangladesh is now a universal model of development. Bangladesh is one the fast growing economies and the World Bank is projecting Bangladesh's success in rapid reduction of poverty," she said.

The premier said Bangladesh has been graduated as a lower middle income country under the leadership of Awami League government and only Awami League would be able to make Bangladesh a middle income nation by 2021 and a developed and prosperous one by 2041 as envisaged by the Father of the Nation.

During the tenure of her government, she said, Bangladesh's constant economic growth over six percent amazed the world while in 2015-2016 fiscal year the growth was 7.11 per cent and targeted to be 7.4 per cent in the coming year. *Source: The Financial Express*

**12 January, 2017**

**PM asks Coast Guard to contain militancy**

Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina asked on January 12 the Bangladesh Coast



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina goes around the ships for Bangladesh Coast Guard at the Coast Guard Berth at Patenga in Chittagong after commissioning those on January 12*

Guard to take proper steps against militancy in the areas under their jurisdiction alongside other law enforcement agencies.

She also issued a note of warning that her government will not spare those patronising militancy.

"Bangladesh is not a militant state and we've adopted a zero 'tolerance policy' to curb militancy," she said.

The PM made the remarks while speaking after commissioning two ships for Bangladesh Coast Guard named 'CGS Syed Nazrul' and 'CGS Tajuddin' at the Coast Guard Berth in Patenga.

The Prime Minister mentioned that the Coast Guard is being made stronger to protect the country's huge sea areas earned through winning the maritime boundary cases in the international courts. *Source: The Financial Express*

**18 January, 2017**

### **PM for greater transboundary freshwater collaboration**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 18, underlined the importance of greater collaboration on development and utilising trans-boundary freshwater resources for economic development.

‘Water is wealth. For us, water is about everyday sustenance - in cities, across villages - over the ages. So we need to understand the value of water,’ she said while addressing a discussion on World’s Underwater on the sidelines of World Economic Forum meeting in Davos of Switzerland.

The Prime Minister said water can no longer be a ‘free input’ and ‘infinite resource’ to production or development.

Water must be approached as a most critical 'global common' in respect of sustainable development, she said.

Pointing out the peacefully delimited our maritime boundary with Myanmar and India in the Bay of Bengal, she said adding Bangladesh industry was trying to source cost-effective solutions and technologies to transform and be responsible partner in global supply chains.

Source : The New Age

**25 January, 2017**

### **President asks police to develop people-friendly attitude**

President Md. Abdul Hamid asked the members of the police force to deliver proper service, developing further a people-friendly attitude as 'protector of law'.

'Your main responsibility is to ensure internal security of public life and property, establish rule of law, combat terrorism and militancy,' he told senior police officials at a meeting on the occasion of annual police week at Bangabhaban on January 25.

The President also thanked winners of Bangladesh Police Medal and President Police Medal for their contribution and heroic role in their respective services.

Source: The New Age

**29 January, 2017**

### **PM wants counselling to keep children away from crimes**

The premier Sheikh Hasina said, "It has recently seen children and youths are involved in criminal activities, it's better to provide them counseling and love than strict controlling to keep them away from these. They'll have to understand that this path is not right for them, this path is bad for them."

The Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was inaugurating the National Primary Education Week-2017 at Osmani Memorial Auditorium organised by Primary and Mass Education Ministry on January 29.

During the last eight years, she said, the government established 1,500 primary schools in those areas where there was no school.

She said her government nationalised 26,193 non-government primary schools in



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina took part in the plenary session on the 'Leading the Fight Against Climate Change' in Davos, Switzerland on January 18*



*The winners of sports and cultural events of Inter-primary School Competition with Prime Minister Shiekh Hasina at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital on January 29 on the occasion of National Primary Education Week-2017*

2013 after 40 years of nationalisation of primary education by Bangabandhu.

Later, the Prime Minister distributed medals among 19 personalities for their outstanding contributions to expansion of primary education. She also distributed prizes among the winning students in different sports and cultural events. *Source : The Daily Star*

**30 January, 2017**

#### **Cabinet okays draft Hajj Package 2017**

The cabinet on January 30 approved the draft Hajj Package 2017, setting the minimum cost for a pilgrim at Tk 3,19,355 up by Tk 14,452 from the previous year under the government management.

The package cost includes accommodations, meals, transportation in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and air tickets, he said, adding that the Package-I entitles a pilgrim to better accommodations and meals.

The minimum amount, excluding food and accommodation, for each of those under private agencies has been set at Tk 1,56,537.71 up from Tk 1,55,441.68, the cabinet secretary said.

Chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the cabinet also endorsed the draft National Hajj and Umrah Policy 2017, placed by the Religious Affairs Ministry.

*Source: The New Age*

**31 January, 2017**

#### **ECNEC okays eight projects involving Tk 125 billion**

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) on January 31 approved eight projects, including the 'Local Governance Support Project-3 (LGSP-3)' involving an estimated cost of Tk 55.35 billion (5,535 crore).

The total outlay of the projects is about Tk 125.50 billion (12,550.78 crore).

The ECNEC approved the projects at its weekly meeting held at the NEC conference room with ECNEC Chairperson and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair. *Source: The Financial Express*

**1 February, 2017**

### **Ekushey Book Fair opens**

Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2017 began on Bangla Academy premises and at Suhrawardy Udyan on February 1.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the fair and a four-day international literature conference which was attended by prominent litterateurs from Austria, Germany, Puerto Rico, Malaysia, Russia, China and India.

The premier also distributed prizes among the winners of 'Bangla Academy Sahitya Puroshkar 2016'.

A total of 409 publishing houses would showcase their books and publications in the fair throughout the month. *Source: New Age*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visits different stalls after inaugurating the month-long Ekushey Boimela (book fair) at Bangla Academy premises on February 1*

**5 February, 2017**

### **PM urges E-9 countries to integrate EFA initiatives with SDG-4**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 5 urged the E-9 countries to align and integrate their initiatives of 'Education for All' with the Sustainable Development Goal-4 to achieve the goal of universal education.

'We have to align and integrate our initiatives and strategies with the SDG-4 (Education-2030) taking along the lessons and achievements of MDGs and EFA,' she said, while inaugurating E-9 ministerial meeting at Radisson Blu Dhaka Water Garden Hotel.

The E-9 is a forum of nine countries – Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan – to achieve the goals of the UNESCO's 'Education for All' initiative.

Education Minister and new Chairperson of E-9 Nurul Islam Nahid, Primary and Mass Education Minister Mostafizur Rahman, among others, spoke on the occasion, while UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova was in the chair. *Source: The New Age*

**6 February, 2017**

### **\$10b fund for big projects**

'Sovereign wealth fund' to start with \$2b from foreign currency reserve; govt to use it to invest in long-term projects

The cabinet on February, 6 gave the go-ahead for the setting up of a fund with money from the foreign currency reserves, which would be used for government investment in long-term projects.

Sources said the fund, called “sovereign wealth fund”, could be set up as soon as this July and be used for investments in seven sectors, including power, energy and in large infrastructure projects.

“Primarily the fund will start with \$2 billion and it will be raised in phases to \$10 billion in five years,” Cabinet Secretary M Shafiul Alam told reporters after a cabinet meeting at his secretariat office.

From the next fiscal year, the sovereign wealth fund would start functioning and there would be allocations for the fund in the budget, said a Finance Ministry official. *Source: The Daily Star*



*President Md. Abdul Hamid, addresses at the inaugural ceremony of Asia-Pacific Business Forum 2017 at a local hotel in Dhaka on February 8*

**8 February, 2017**

### **President for joint effort to eradicate poverty in Asia-Pacific region**

#### **Opens Asia-Pacific Business Forum - 2017**

President Md. Abdul Hamid on February 8 underscored the need for giving special priority and joint efforts to eradicate poverty to build a happy and prosperous in Asia and Pacific region.

The president termed the poverty in Asia and Pacific region as the curse of human civilisation as many people are living under the poverty line in the region which must be addressed properly.

‘I believe that socio-economic cooperation and integration, including technical and information technology support, are imperative among the countries of the region,’ he said while addressing the inaugural session of the Asia-Pacific Business Forum -2017, first ever in Bangladesh. *Source : The New Age*

**9 February, 2017**

**PM seeks more armed forces' support to combat terrorism**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sought on February 9 more support from armed forces to combat terrorism.

PM Sheikh Hasina urged all, including the Armed Forces, to extend more cooperation so that no such incident could take place which could deter the country's development.

“We'll turn Bangladesh into a peaceful, developed and prosperous country with non-communal spirit.”

She said this while addressing the graduation ceremony of 'DSCSC 2016-2017' of Defence Services Command and Staff College held at Sheikh Hasina Complex at Mirpur Cantonment. *Source: The Financial Express*

**9 February, 2017**

**Help root out militancy**

**PM urges imams to prevent misinterpretation of Islam**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 9 asked the imams and Islamic scholars to help the government stamp out terrorism and militancy.

"People would listen to your advice and accept it ... you earlier responded to my call to work against militancy and terrorism and you are working to this end. We want you to gear up the campaign to maintain peace and development," she said.

The PM was addressing the National Imam Conference at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital. *Source: The Daily Star*

**14 February, 2017**

**\$100m ADB loan for skills development of young workforce**

The government on February 14 signed an agreement for a \$100 million loan with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for upskilling young workforce, especially women, to enhance job opportunities, expand economic base and boost income.

The assistance is the second tranche of the \$350 million multi-tranche financing facility approved by ADB in 2014 for the skills for employment investment programme (SEIP).

Kazi Shofiqul Azam, Secretary of the Economic Relations Division, and Kazuhiko Higuchi, country director of the Bangladesh resident mission of ADB, signed the loan agreement at a ceremony in Dhaka. *Source: The Daily Star*

**18 February, 2017**

**PM calls for concerted actions to fight climate change**

Noting that climate change has become a new element of national security, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 18 said its solution should also be global as climate change requires combined, concerted and coherent actions.

‘Non-compliance by one state could threaten the survival of all. We must, therefore, share responsibility for ensuring security,’ she said while addressing a panel discussion titled ‘Climate Security: Good Cops, Bad Cops’ during the Munich Security Conference at Hotel Bayerischer Hof in Munich. *Source: The New Age*

19 February, 2017

### **PM seeks global support to shift Myanmar refugees**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has sought support of the international community to arrange temporary accommodation for Myanmar refugees in a healthy and safe environment in Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister said this in a luncheon meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on the sidelines of the 53rd Munich Security Conference at Hotel Bayerischer Hof on February 18.

The PM Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh took up the issue of extruded Myanmar citizens from humanitarian point of view. But their stay and activities in Cox's



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in a luncheon meeting at the Bayerischer Hof Hotel in Munich on February 18*

Bazar, an important tourist town, are causing destruction of environment, sanitation system, landscape and nature, forcing them to live in an inhuman condition.

"So Bangladesh government wants to shift them to open and healthy areas by providing all the civic facilities," she said seeking support of Germany and other countries in this regard. *Source: The Financial Express*

20 February, 2017

### **17 receive Ekushey Padak**

Seventeen eminent personalities on February, 20 were given Ekushey Padak, 2017 in various categories for their outstanding contributions to their respective fields.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presented the award at a ceremony in the capital's Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

The awardees are Dr Sharifa Khatun (Language Movement), Shushama Das

(music), Julhas Uddin Ahmed (music), Ustad Ajijul Islam (music), Tanvir Mokammel (film), Syed Abdullah Khalid (sculpture), Sara Zaker (acting), Abul Momen (journalism), Syed Akram Hossain (research), Professor Emeritus Alamgir Mohammad Sirajuddin (education), Dr Jamilur Reza Choudhury (science and technology), Professor Mahmud Hasan (social welfare), late poet Omar Ali (language and literature), Sukumar Barua (language and literature), Swadesh Roy (journalism), Shamim Ara Nipa (choreography), and Rahmatullah Al Mahmud Selim (music). *Source: The Daily Star*

**21 February, 2017**

### **Nation observed the Amar Ekushey**

The nation observed the Amar Ekushey on February 21 in a befitting manner throughout the country. The day was also observed Bangladesh missions abroad and worldwide as the Unesco in 1999, declared February 21 as the International Mother Language Day.

President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placed wreaths at the Shaheed Minar at early hours. Later on, the Shaheed Minar was opened to the

**p u b l i c .**  
Thousands from all strata of society walked barefoot to pay tributes to Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar Shafiur, the valiant sons of the soil, who sacrificed their lives during language movement on this day in 1952.

The day's programme also include discussions and

cultural sessions nationwide and in Bangladesh missions abroad. *Source: The Daily Star*



*President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid homage to the language martyrs by placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city in the early hours on February 21*

**26 February, 2017**

### **PM opens first solar-powered silo in Santahar**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on February 26 inaugurated a state-of-the-art multi-storey food warehouse with a capacity to store 25,000 tonnes of food grains in Santahar of Bogra's Adamdighi.

The Department of Food has constructed the air-conditioned warehouse at a cost of over Tk 232 crore with financial and technical support from Japan. It will preserve food grains with the use of solar power throughout the year. *Source: The Daily Star*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated 9 development projects and laid foundation stones of 7 other development projects at Santahar Satidum in Adamdighi upazila of Bogra on February 26

**1 March, 2017**

### **Every house to get electricity by 2021: PM**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on March 1 the government has taken various projects for the development of the country's power sector to ensure electricity for all by 2021 at an affordable price.

The Prime Minister was opening eight power plants having 1,375 MW production capacity alongside new transmission and distribution lines from official residence Ganobhaban through videoconferencing.

She also inaugurated cent per cent electrification in 10 upazilas of the country and first-ever electricity connection to Thanchi upazila in Bandarban district.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated disbursement of primary education stipend project using mobile banking from her Ganobhaban residence on the same day.

*Source: The Financial Express*

**2 March, 2017**

### **Bangladesh to advance further in sports: PM**

Expressing her firm optimism that Bangladesh would advance in games and sports, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina assured on March 2 that her government would do everything for its development.

The Premier said this while distributing trophies and prizes among the winners of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup and Bangamata Begum Fazilatun Nesa Mujib Gold Cup Primary School Football Tournaments-2016 at Bangabandhu National Stadium in the city.

Sheikh Hasina also expressed the hope that boys and girls would be more patriotic by participating in games and sports on behalf of Bangladesh. *Source: The Financial Express*

**7 March, 2017**

### **Nation pays homage to Bangabandhu to mark March 7**

Hundreds of people from all walks of life paid rich tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to mark the 46th anniversary of his

epoch-making speech of independence on historic March 7 in 1971.

They thronged Bangabandhu Memorial Museum on Dhanmondi Road-32 at 7 am morning and paid deep homage to Bangabandhu on 7 March.

The day began as hoisted the national and party flags atop the Bangabandhu Bhaban and party offices. Later, they placed wreaths at Bangabandhu's portrait on Bangabandhu Bhaban premises here in the morning. *Source: The Financial Express*

**7 March, 2017**

### **Reduce tension, use seas to promote friendship**

#### **PM tells IORA leaders' summit in Jakarta**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on March 7 urged the leaders of IORA to reduce tension in the region, respect the freedom of navigation and use seas to promote friendship.

She stressed the importance of blue economy for future development in the region.

The Prime Minister was addressing the Leaders' Summit in commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) at Jakarta Convention Center.



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with global leaders during a session at the IORA Leaders' Summit 2017 in Jakarta, Indonesia, on March 7*

Sheikh Hasina also called on the IORA leaders to dedicate themselves to strengthening maritime cooperation for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Indian Ocean.

The PM also emphasised the need for sustainable use of marine resources as necessary for economic prosperity and food security at the summit.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina urged the Indonesian government to play a role in the repatriation of Rohingas during a bilateral meeting with Indonesian President Joko Widodo. *Source: The Financial Express*

**12 March, 2017**

### **Big boost for Navy**

#### **PM opens 2 Chinese-made submarines**

Bangladesh Navy started its journey as a "three-dimensional force" on March 12 as two submarines were commissioned in its fleet for the first time.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally commissioned the twin submarines named "Nabajatra" and "Joyjatra" at a colourful ceremony at the Chittagong Naval Berth at noon.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates newly commissioned submarine, 'Nabajatra' and 'Joyjarta', at Chittagong Naval Berth on March 12

She handed over the commissioning order to the commanding officers of the submarines bought from China and formally unveiled their name plaques.

The PM said, "We never want to be engaged in any war with anyone, but if anyone attacks us we want to give them a

befitting reply...we must have preparation all the time...we're doing whatever necessary keeping that in mind.

Bangladesh is a peaceful nation and the country's foreign policy is to maintain friendship with all. But Bangladesh never compromised with anybody when it came to its self-respect, she said. *Source: The Daily Star*

14 March, 2017

#### PM inaugurates 10 dev projects, lays foundation stones of 20 others in Laxmipur

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated 10 development projects and laid foundation stones of 20 others on 14 March in Laxmipur. The Prime Minister spoke at a mammoth gathering held at Laxmipur Stadium. She said, Awami League always wants that the country will be developed. Insha Allah we will do that, we will build Bangladesh with the spirit of the Liberation War. The Prime Minister said that the aim of the AL government is to develop the country and for that purpose it took numerous development projects for the balanced development of the country. *Source: The Financial Express*



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated 10 development projects and laid foundation stones of 20 other development projects at Laxmipur District Stadium in Laxmipur on March 14

**17 March, 2017**

### **Nation observes Bangabandhu's birth anniversary**

The 97th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is being observed on March 17 with due respect.

The day is celebrated as the National Children's Day.

On this day in 1920, the architect of the nation was born in Tungipara of Gopalganj.

Through his dynamic leadership, Bangabandhu had organised the Bangalee nation to fight against exploitation and repression by the Pakistani rulers. The movement culminated in independent Bangladesh through the nine-month Liberation War in 1971. *Source: The Daily Star*

### **PM opens book fair, photography exhibition at Tungipara**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated a book fair and a photography exhibition on the occasion of 98th birthday of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara on March 17. The Premier opened the book fair, and the photography exhibition titled "*Khoka Theke Bangabandhu*" at Bangabandhu Mausoleum Complex.

Department of Films and Publications (DFP) and nine other organisations participated in the 2-day long book fair with their respective publications. Prime Minister went round different stalls and also witnessed rare photos on Bangabandhu at the photography exhibition. *Source: BSS*



*Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visiting DFP stall at book fair at Tungipara, Gopalganj*

**25 March, 2017**

### **Genocide Day observed**

The Genocide Day was observed in the country for the first time commemorating the cowardly attack on Bangalees and mass killing in Dhaka by the Pakistani occupation forces on March 25 in 1971.

On March 11 last, parliament unanimously adopted a resolution to observe March 25 as the Genocide Day. The Cabinet Division issued a gazette notification on March 21 in this regard.

In the attack, on the black night of March 25 in 1971, dubbed as 'Operation Searchlight', the Pakistani forces mercilessly killed the Bangalee members of the East Pakistan Rifles and police, students, teachers and common people.

President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have issued separate messages on the occasion. Different political and socio-cultural

organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to mark the day. *Source: The Daily Star*

**26 March, 2017**

### **Independence Day observed**

The 47th Independence and National Day was observed with due solemnity and fervour on 26 March throughout the country.

President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina paid tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War by placing wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar in the morning. The Premier paid homage to Father of the Nation by placing wreaths at his mural in front of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi in the capital on her return from the National Memorial.

Members of the diplomatic corps, leaders of different political parties, social, cultural and professional bodies, and people from all walks of life also placed wreaths at the National Memorial at Savar.

On the occasion, different socio-political organisations across the country paid tributes to the martyrs and veterans of the 1971 Liberation War.



*President Md. Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina stand in solemn silence while paying tribute to the Liberation War martyrs at the National Memorial in Savar on the Independence Day*

A smartly turned-out contingent drawn from Bangladesh Army, Bangladesh Navy and Bangladesh Air Force presented a salute on the occasion while the last post was played on bugles. The national flag was flying atop all government and private buildings. The streets and important city intersections were decorated with national flags and festoons, while different and important public and private buildings were illuminated with colourful lights. National dailies brought out special supplements while Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television, private radio stations and television channels aired special programmes.

The Independence and National Day rally of children and juveniles was held at Bangabandhu National Stadium in the morning and special prayers were offered at all mosques, temples, churches and other places of worship across the country.

*Source: The Daily Star*

***Report Compilation: Tahmina Begum, Mazharul Hoque, Md. Mamun Hossain***

Bangladesh Quarterly Vol. 37 No. 3 January-March 2017 Price Tk. 30

---



Spring in Botanical Garden, Mirpur, Dhaka



**Department of Films & Publications**

Ministry of Information  
Bangladesh