

GLOBAL BUSINESS

September 2019 BDT 100 \$ 5

NEW YORK STATE SENATE PASSED A RESOLUTION DECLARING
25 SEPTEMBER **BANGLADESHI IMMIGRANT DAY**



On 25 September 1974,
for the first time in the
history of the United
Nations, the Father of
the Nation of Bangladesh,
Bangabandhu Sheikh
Mujibur Rahman,
delivered a speech
in Bangla in the
General Assembly
of the UN

Bangladesh Trade Fair
27-29 September 2019



www.nrbworldwide.com

Wishing

Bangladeshi Immigrant Day & Bangladesh Trade Fair 2019

an outstanding Success!



ANOWAR HOSSAIN
REAL ESTATE INVESTOR



Father of the Nation of Bangladesh
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

GLOBAL BUSINESS

September 2019 BDT 100 \$ 5

Editor	Bishawjit Saha
Advisory Editor	Hasan Ferdous
Associate Editor	Anupam Saha
Managing Editor	Azam Sheikh
Head Of Business	Ritesh Saha
Corporate Manager	Shuvo Roy
Overseas Manager	Sheikh Sazzad
Cover Design	Sabyasachi Hazra
Creative & Graphics Design	Anwar Hossain
Creative Art Editor	K.C. Maung
Photo Editor	Yusuf Saad
Sales & Distribution	Abdur Rahim
New York Office	37-69, 74 St, 2nd Floor Jackson Heights, NY11372 Off: 718-565-7258 Cell: 347-656-5106 E-mail: nrbglobalconvention@gmail.com www.nrbworldwide.com
Dhaka Office	44 Aramabagh, 2nd Floor Motijheel, Dhaka 1000 E-mail: nrbglobalconvention@gmail.com www.nrbworldwide.com 01780808177, 01876667511

International Business Magazine
A Muktaadhara New York Publication

Published By
Bishawjit Saha
on Behalf of NRB Worldwide Inc.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
BANGABHABAN, DHAKA

12 Ashwin 1426
27 September 2019

MESSAGE

I am delighted to learn that Muktaadhara Foundation and the NRB Worldwide Inc in New York are going to publish a commemorative book on the occasion of the 'Bangladeshi Immigrant Day' and 'Bangladesh Trade Fair 2019'.

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a visionary leader and architect of our independence. He led the nation at every struggle and democratic movement including the historic Language Movement in 1952. Bangabandhu had given all out efforts in acquiring the due recognition of Bangla language both at national and international level. In 1972, Bangla was included in the constitution as state language.

On September 25, 1974 Bangabandhu delivered his maiden speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in Bangla. It was a historical event for Banglali nation. With his speech Bangabandhu established the dignity of 'Bangla' at international arena. This year, on 27th February the New York State Senate adopted a resolution declaring 25th September as 'Bangladeshi Immigrant Day'. Celebrating 'Bangladeshi Immigrant Day' on every 25th September will be a great way to respect and honor the memories of the Father of the Nation's first speech in UNGA.

I thank the New York State Senate and Muktaadhara Foundation for their noble endeavour to recognize Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's first Bangla speech at the United Nations General Assembly. I urge the countrymen from home and abroad to follow the path shown by the Father of the Nation and transform Bangladesh into a prosperous and developed country.

I wish the endeavor of Muktaadhara Foundation & NRB Worldwide a grand success.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever

Md. Abdul Hamid



Father of the Nation of Bangladesh
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
(1920-1975)



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

3 Ashwin 1426
18 September 2019

MESSAGE

I am happy to know that 'Bangladeshi Immigrant Day' is going to be celebrated on 27-29 September 2019 in New York, USA.

The New York State Senate has declared 25 September as Bangladeshi Immigrant Day to recognize the greatest Bangalee of all times, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's first Bangla speech delivered at the United Nations on the day in 1974. In this regard, I recall with deep gratitude Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the first Bangalee, who made history by internationalizing Bangla language.

I recollect the historic moment when the Father of the Nation in his maiden speech at the UNGA reaffirmed, in Bangla, the Bangalee Nation's unwavering commitment to the principles and purposes of the UN. Guided by Bangabandhu's foreign policy principle- 'Friendship to all, malice to none'- Bangladesh has consistently been promoting peace, tolerance, non-violence and human development at the UN and beyond.

The non-resident Bangladeshis have been making important contributions for the overall development of Bangladesh. I believe that 'Bangladesh Immigrant Day' will help strengthen bonding among the people of two friendly countries.

I wish 'Bangladeshi Immigrant Day' a grand success.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Sheikh Hasina



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



পররাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রী
Foreign Minister
Government of the
People's republic of Bangladesh
Dhaka

MESSAGE

It is a great pleasure to learn that NRB Worldwide Inc. is organizing 'Bangladeshi Immigrant Day in New York on 27-29 September, 2019.

I deeply appreciate the commendable role of the organizers to hold the great event in observance of the declaration of Bangladeshi Immigrant Day by the New York Senate. I also thank New York State Senate as well as Muktaadhara Foundation for their initiative to recognize the first speech of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered in Bangla at the United Nations in September 1974. In this regard, we, with utmost admiration remember our Father of the Nation, the first Bengalee who made a history by internationalizing Bangla Language.

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman dedicated his whole-life for the service of his people. Throughout his life he struggled for establishing a "Sonar Bangla"-a golden Bengal of peace and stability. Following his footprint, his able daughter Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been successfully steering the country on the "Pathway to Prosperity." Her Vision 2021 and the Vision 2041 towards transforming the country into a Middle-income and a Developed country by 2021 and 2041 respectively have registered successful outcomes. Today Bangladesh is globally acclaimed as a role model for Development. Our annual GDP growth rate has increased from 4.5 percent in 2006 to 8.13%. Below poverty level decreased almost half with a reduction from 42 percent in 2006 to 21.3 in 2018. We have elevated ourselves from the status of an LDC to that of a lower middle income country.

On this spectacular journey, the Non-Resident Bangladeshis are making important contributions towards the overall development of Bangladesh. I hope that their effort will further be extended for the development process of our Motherland.

I wish the event all the success.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu.

(Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP)



Tipu Munshi, MP
Commerce Minister
Government of the
People's republic of Bangladesh

Date: 15 September 2019

MESSAGE

It is a great pleasure to learn that 'Bangladeshi Immigrant Day and Bangladesh Trade Fair is going to be organized by NRB Worldwide Inc. in New York on September, 2019.

I deeply appreciate the commendable role of the organizers to hold the significant event in observance of the declaration of Bangladesh Immigrant Day by the New York Senate. I also thank New York Senate & Muktaadhara Foundation for their kind initiative to recognize our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's first Bangla speech delivered at the United Nations in September 1974. In this regard we, with utmost admiration remember our Father of the Nation, the first Bangalee who made history by internationalizing Bangla Language.

I am happy to learn that Bangladesh Immigrant Day & Bangladesh Trade Fair 2019 is going to be held in 27-29 September 2019 in New York, USA. I heartily congratulate the organizer of this event, NRB Worldwide Inc, A member of Grater New York Chamber of Commerce associated Muktaadhara New York Inc. for their diligent effort to introduce the contribution and status of Bangladeshi business, Bengali language and culture as well.

I believe that the convention will create an ample scope for the participants for reciprocal communication and developing the business relation in the context of competitive global trade. It is very encouraging that the festival this year will showcase the glorious tradition and remarkable achievements of Bangladesh. E-trade fair will also create the opportunity of showcasing our own products and build pro table new business relationships among the participants. e overseas Bangladeshis will have an opportunity to get acquaintance with the recent innovations and products of Bangladesh.

I firmly believe that the Bangladesh Trade Fair will make a bridge between all the Bengali immigrants around the world. I wish the Bangladesh Immigrant Day and Bangladesh Trade Fair-2019' a great success.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabondhu.

Tipu Munshi, MP



Ambassador

EMBASSY OF THE
People's Republic of Bangladesh
3510 International Drive, NW
Washington, D.C. 20008
Phone: (202) 244-2745
Fax: (202) 244-2771

E-mail : mission.washington@mofa.gov.bd

MESSAGE

It is indeed a great honor and a matter of prestige that the U.S. Senate has recently passed a Resolution (No. 322) proclaiming September 25, 2019, as Bangladeshi Immigrant Day in the State of New York commemorating the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's historical maiden speech in Bengali language in the General Assembly of the United Nations on 25 September 1974. The observance of the Day, as enunciated in the Resolution, would truly be a recognition to the accomplishments of the Bangalee people around the globe as well as to their supreme sacrifice in the War of Liberation in 1971. The proclamation will also enhance the profile of cultural diversity and strengthen the fabric of the communities living side by side in New York State.

I am pleased that the Muktaadhara Foundation is celebrating the Bangladeshi Immigrant Day, and organizing the Bangladesh Trade Fair during 27-29 September 2019 in Jackson Heights, New York. I appreciate the efforts of the Muktaadhara Foundation for hosting multicultural events in New York through trade and book fairs and cultural events. Such ventures in a place far away from the motherland help build bridges among peoples and cultures and reduce the divergences among generations.

New York is a magical place, that shines as a beacon of freedom and opportunity to many who have come together from different parts of the world. People from diverse societal and cultural backgrounds have created a cosmopolitan society where different cultures exist side by side creating a beautiful tapestry of cultural vibrance. The Bangladesh diaspora has also blended in this intrinsic artistry.

It is fortunate for me to be a part of this event through this message. I wish all success to the Bangladeshi Immigrant Day as well as to the Bangladesh Trade Fair.

(Mohammad Ziauddin)



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
SCOTT M. STRINGER



September 27, 2019

Muktadhara Foundation
37-69th Street, #2
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure to extend best wishes to all attending the Muktadhara Foundation's Bangladeshi Immigrant Day Parade 2019.

For years, the Muktadhara Foundation has been devoted to promoting and preserving Bangla culture in our City and across the country. The Muktadhara Foundation is committed to highlighting Bangladesh's rich history and traditions by hosting fairs, events and celebrations. Today's Bangladeshi Immigrant Day Parade honors the accomplishments of the hardworking Bangladeshi immigrants that add to the diverse fabric of New York City. This parade is an outstanding representation of the heritage and contributions of Bangladeshi New Yorkers.

Thank you to Muktadhara Foundation for bringing us together today to celebrate community and service. Please accept my best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

Scott M. Stringer
New York City Comptroller



Mahbubur Rahman

President
International Chamber of Commerce
Bangladesh

MESSAGE

I am very much pleased to know that an spectacular Event by name “NRB Global Convention & Bangladesh Trade Fair-2019” coinciding with an Investment Seminar is going to be held in New York City on 27-29 September 2019.

This is taking place once again at a time when Bangladesh is eagerly waiting for celebration of the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman- the greatest son of the soil. The March 17 deadline next year is not very far and ahead of that great occasion “NRB Global Convention” once again will bring an opportunity to highlight Bengali heritage & culture and showcase the resounding achievements of Bangladesh in many areas. Bangladesh registered the fastest growth in the Asia-Pacific economies comprised of 45 countries, according to Asian Development Bank (ADB). In FY2018-19, Bangladesh attained 7.9% growth which was fastest since 1974. I am convinced that this Event will open a new window of opportunity for introducing Bangladesh to the newest and fastest growing Bangladeshi immigrant community who currently number, I was told, more than three million. Bangladeshis are now serving as leaders in their newly-adopted communities - they rank among the best doctors, engineers, pharmacists, educators and business entrepreneurs. I am happy to note that Bangladeshi immigrants from almost all States are expected to join this Convention and major American chain stores are also expected to participate in the Event. This will provide an opportunity to showcase their products to our community. I hope, this Event will particularly project the invaluable contribution that the expatriate Bangladeshis have made to the development of the country they live in. I congratulate Muktaadhara New York Inc. for their unwavering support extended to the North American Bangalee diaspora as well as promote Bangladesh business, heritage and culture to the mainstream Americans.

I wish the “NRB Global Convention & Bangladesh Trade Fair 2019” a grand success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Rahman', written in a cursive style.

(Mahbubur Rahman)

President
International Chamber of Commerce
Bangladesh



Sheikh F Fahim

President
FBCCI

11 September 2019

MESSAGE

I am happy to learn that Muktaadhara Foundation Inc. New York is going to organize Bangladeshi Immigrant Day & Bangladesh Trade Fair-2019 which will be held in September 2019 at New York, USA. I heartily congratulate the organizer of this event, for their diligent effort to introduce the contribution and status of Bangladeshi business, Bengali Language and Culture as well.

I believe that the event will create ample scope for the participants for reciprocal communication and developing the business relations in the context of competitive global trade. It is very encouraging that the festival this year will highlight different national issues like Bangabandhu's Vision, Bangladeshi Immigration, Impact of Proposed US Tariff on China and opportunities for Bangladesh RMG sector for expansion, Legal Remittance Flow and Safe Investment in Bangladesh etc. Bangladesh Trade fair will open up the opportunity of showcasing own products and build profitable new business relationships among the participants. The Overseas Bangladeshis will have the great opportunity to get acquaintance of the recent innovations and products of Bangladesh. This event also contributes for better inter-cultural understanding among various communities in the USA. I firmly believe that the Immigrant Day and the Fair will make a bridge between all the Bengali Immigrants around the world.

On behalf of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), the apex trade body of Bangladesh, I hope the Convention and the Fair a Resounding Success.

(Sheikh F Fahim)

President
FBCCI



ঢাকা চেম্বার অব কমার্স এ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি
Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry

MESSAGE

It is a moment of pride for us to reminisce that the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, for the first time in its history, delivered a speech in Bangla at the General Assembly of the United Nations on 25th September 1974. In reorganization of this historic moment and commemorating of contribution of Non Resident Bangladeshis(NRBs) in the United States of America (USA) to boost US economic growth, the Senate of New York proclaimed that 'Bangladeshi Immigrant Day' will be celebrated in New York on 25th September every year, which adds supremacy to Bangladesh as a nation.

I am delighted to know that Muktaadhara Foundation Inc. based in New York, USA and sister organization of NRB Worldwide Inc., is planning to organize a groundbreaking event titled "NRB Global Convention & Bangladesh Trade Fair 2019" in New York to celebrate the auspicious occasion of Bangladeshi Immigrant Day (NRB Day).

New York is the home of the largest Bangladeshi Diaspora in the USA. I would like to extend my thanks to the Muktaadhara Foundation Inc. for undertaking this commendable initiative. This event will play a positive role in further deepening economic, social and cultural integration between Bangladeshi diaspora and diverse and cosmopolitan communities in USA.

The Bangladeshis community in the USA contributes to the development of Bangladesh in many ways, especially by remitting Millions of Dollar in every year, exchanging technical knowledge. Today, Bangladesh is at the stage of graduating into a developing economy. Bangladesh stepped into higher growth trajectory, marking 8.13% economic growth. Based on consistent economic growth in recent years, Bangladesh emerges as the new economic frontier in Asia and development miracle to the world.

More engagement of Bangladeshi diaspora living in the USA is important to maintain the momentum of the accelerated economic growth of Bangladesh. Bangladesh offers stronger ecosystem for engaging Bangladeshi diaspora in reaping trade, business and investment opportunities in diverse socioeconomic fronts. I hope this event will be an effective platform to disseminate and share the economic success story of Bangladesh to the different communities in USA and will open up more opportunities to connect Bangladeshi diaspora in the economic development journey of Bangladesh.

My heartiest congratulation goes to Bangladeshi diaspora living in the USA.

I wish a grand success of this event.

(Osama Taseer)

President

Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI)

From Editor's Desk

Bangabandhu, a beacon of hope for mankind

Bangladesh became a member of the United Nations on 17 September, 1974. A week later, on 25 September, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered a speech at the 30th session of the UN General Assembly. In this meeting of nations, Bangabandhu spoke in Bangla. This was the first time someone addressed the UN General Assembly in Bangla.

For Bangladeshis this was a proud moment for their country and the language they so dearly love. With that speech a greater dream was born. Bangla is the sixth most widely spoken language in the world. Combining Bangladesh and India, over 250 million people speak in this language. Twenty-five years later, UNESCO, a specialized agency of the United Nations, declared 21 February as International Mother Language Day in clear recognition of the language movement in Bangladesh in 1952. In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly recognized the day. This recognition accorded by the world body was deeply appreciated by Bangladesh and its people. After all, as the Father of the Nation himself had said, the United Nations is a meeting place for the entire world. Now demands are being made to make Bangla one of the official languages of the United Nations.

The flag of Bangladesh that Bangabandhu raised at the United Nations has now been raised at Capitol Hill, Washington DC and New York as well. The state of New York has been celebrating International Mother Language day since 2001. They celebrate Bangladesh's Independence Day as well. In 2018, the day Bangabandhu gave his speech at the United Nations, 25 September, was proclaimed as Bangladeshi Immigrant Day by New York State Senate signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

We thank Muktaadhara Foundation and New York State for this wonderful recognition.

Forty-five years ago, a great leader man came to the United Nations and firmly placed Bangladesh and the Bangla language on the world map. It is only natural that that day has now become an official celebration in New York State. The declaration of Bangladeshi Immigrant Day is actually a commemoration of the indelible mark that Bangabandhu had left behind. It is only fitting that the observance of the first Bangladeshi Immigrant Day coincides with the 100th anniversary of Bangabandhu's birth.

It feels strange that in the 1970s, it was just a few Bangladeshis who lived in the US. Now there are nearly 300,000 Bengalis in New York alone. One can overhear people conversing in Bangla while riding buses and subways. Jackson Heights has become the heart of the Bengali community. Here the flag of Bangladesh flies high. How proud Bangabandhu would have been if he was around to see the progress Bangladeshis have made in just four decades.

The diplomatic journey that was launched on 25 September 1974 by Bangabandhu has earned great plaudits for Bangladesh in countries worldwide. Once free from the confines of Pakistani prisons, he went to Britain where he declared that Bangladesh had irrevocably separated itself from Pakistan. Three years later, he appeared at the United Nations, taking Bangladesh's rightful place in the world organization. This was the culmination of a dream and a vision of the Father of the Nation.

Less than a year later, on 15 August 1975, Bangabandhu was gunned down by a group of traitors. They even passed a law codifying that the crime of murder could not be prosecuted.

Even though he left us so early, his vision lives on, inspiring Bangladesh to gain global recognition for its progressive policies at home and abroad. The foreign policy that he advocated – friendship to all and malice to none – is now the centrepiece of Bangladesh's diplomatic triumphs at the United Nations and beyond.

Of course, it all started with the speech that Bangabandhu delivered on 25 September 1974. It is no coincidence that another speech, delivered on 7 March 1971, had launched Bangladesh's war of independence. It is fitting that UNESCO has recognized Bangabandhu's speech on 7 March 1971 as a common treasure of the world community. It would be equally fitting if the speech made on 25 September 1974 is accorded similar recognition by the world body.

Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu



(Bishawjit Saha)
Editor

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Page 15	১৯৭৪ এর ২৫ সেপ্টেম্বর জাতিসংঘে বঙ্গবন্ধুর বাংলা ভাষণ
Page 19	Address by Hon'ble Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the 29th regular session of the UN General Assembly
Page 22	State of New York Legislative Resolution
Page 23	নিউইয়র্ক স্টেট আইন পরিষদ কর্তৃক গৃহীত সিদ্ধান্ত
Page 24	The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman
Page 26	Bangabandhu's Roadmap Remains valid even today Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen
Page 28	Bangabandhu's UN speech in Bangla and other memories Mohiuddin Ahmed
Page 31	Bangladesh, United Nations and the 'I' word Hasan Ferdous
Page 33	The way UN embraced Bangladesh Md. Faruk Hossain
Page 39	Mujib in America: Talks with Ford, Kissinger B. Z. Khasru
Page 43	Bangabandhu in Washington 1974 Iqbal Bahar Choudhury
Page 45	Foreign policy in Bangabandhu's times Syed Badrul Ahsan
Page 48	Bangabandhu's Foreign Policy and the World A. K. M. Atiqur Rahman
Page 51	The political philosophy of Bangabandhu Dr Rounaq Jahan
Page 55	How to show proper respect to Bangabandhu Nazrul Islam
Page 59	History of Bengali Immigrants in America Adnan Syed
Page 62	NRB Physicians can help make a difference back at home Dr. Choudhury Hasan
Page 64	The Big Picture: Digital Transformation Tanveer Rabbani
Page 65	-----



১৯৭৪ এর ২৫ সেপ্টেম্বর জাতিসংঘে বঙ্গবন্ধুর বাংলা ভাষণ

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান
জাতিসংঘের সাধারণ পরিষদে ১৯৭৪
সনের ২৫ সেপ্টেম্বর এই ঐতিহাসিক
ভাষণ প্রদান করেন। জাতিসংঘ সাধারণ
পরিষদে বাংলা ভাষায় প্রদত্ত ভাষণের
সম্পূর্ণ বক্তব্য এই লেখায় তুলে ধরা
হল।

আজ এই মহান পরিষদে আপনাদের
সামনে দুটো কথা বলার সুযোগ পেয়ে
নিজেকে ভাগ্যবান মনে করছি।
মানবজাতির এই মহান পার্লামেন্টে
বাংলাদেশের সাড়ে সাত কোটি মানুষ
প্রতিনিধিত্ব লাভ করায় আপনাদের মধ্যে
যে সন্তোষের ভাব লক্ষ্য করেছি, আমিও
তার অংশীদার। বাঙ্গালী জাতির জন্য
এটা ঐতিহাসিক মুহূর্ত। কারণ তার
আত্মনিয়ন্ত্রণের অধিকার অর্জনের সংগ্রাম
আজ বিরাট সাফল্যে চিহ্নিত।

একটি স্বাধীন দেশের স্বাধীন নাগরিক
হিসাবে মুক্ত ও সম্মানজনক জীবন
যাপনের অধিকারের জন্য বাঙ্গালী জাতি

বহু শতাব্দী ধরে সংগ্রাম চালিয়ে
এসেছে। তারা চেয়েছে বিশ্বের সকল
জাতির সাথে শান্তি ও সৌহার্দ্যের মধ্যে
বসবাস করতে।

জাতিসংঘ সনদে যে মহান আদর্শের
কথা বলা হয়েছে তা আমাদের জনগণের
আদর্শ এবং এ আদর্শের জন্য তারা চরম
ত্যাগ স্বীকার করেছে। এমন এক
বিশ্ব-ব্যবস্থা গঠনে বাঙ্গালী জাতি
উৎসর্গীকৃত, যে ব্যবস্থায় মানুষের শান্তি
ও ন্যায়বিচার লাভের আকাঙ্ক্ষা
প্রতিফলিত হবে এবং আমি জানি
আমাদের এ প্রতিজ্ঞা গ্রহণের মধ্যে
আমাদের লাখো লাখো শহীদের বিদেহী
আত্মার স্মৃতি নিহিত রয়েছে। আমাদের
জন্য বিশেষ সৌভাগ্যের কথা, বাংলাদেশ
এমন এক সময়ে জাতিসংঘে প্রবেশ
করেছে, যখন এই পরিষদের প্রেসিডেন্ট
পদ অলংকৃত করেছেন এমন এক মহান
ব্যক্তি যিনি ছিলেন একজন সক্রিয় মুক্তি
সংগ্রামী।

শান্তি ও ন্যায়নীতির সংগ্রাম

মাননীয় প্রেসিডেন্ট, গত বছর
আলজেরিয়াসে অনুষ্ঠিত জোট নিরপেক্ষ
শীর্ষ সম্মেলন সফল করে তোলার কাজে
আপনার মূল্যবান অবদানের কথা স্মরণ
করছি। যাঁদের মহান আত্মত্যাগে
বাংলাদেশ আজ জাতিসংঘে স্থান লাভে
সক্ষম হয়েছে, এই সুযোগে আমি তাঁদের
অভিনন্দন জানাই। বাংলাদেশের মুক্তি
সংগ্রামে যেসব দেশ ও জাতি সমর্থন
জানিয়েছেন আমি তাঁদের প্রতিও জানাই
আমাদের অন্তরের গভীর কৃতজ্ঞতা।
নবলব্ধ স্বাধীনতা সংহত করার কাজে
যুদ্ধবিধ্বস্ত দেশ পুনর্গঠনে এবং
জনগণের জন্য অধিকতর কল্যাণকর
কাজে, চ্যালেঞ্জ গ্রহণ করার কাজে যেসব
দেশ ও জাতি বাংলাদেশকে সাহায্য
করেছেন আমি তাঁদেরও বাংলাদেশের
জনসাধারণের আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ পৌঁছে
দিচ্ছি। বাংলাদেশের সংগ্রাম ন্যায় ও
শান্তির জন্য সার্বজনীন সংগ্রামের

প্রতীকস্বরূপ। সুতরাং বাংলাদেশ শুরু থেকে বিশ্বের নিপীড়িত জনগণের পাশে দাঁড়াতে এটাই স্বাভাবিক।

জাতিসংঘের জন্মের পর তার এক চতুর্থাংশ শতাব্দীর অভিজ্ঞতায় দেখা যায় যে, তার আদর্শ বাস্তবায়নে বিরাট বাধার মুখে অবিরাম সংগ্রাম চালাতে হয়েছে। জাতিসংঘের সনদে যে আত্মনিয়ন্ত্রণ অধিকারের প্রতিশ্রুতি দেওয়া হয়েছিল, তা অর্জনের জন্য এশিয়া, আফ্রিকা ও ল্যাটিন আমেরিকার লাখে লাখে মুক্তি সেনানীকে আত্মাহুতি দিতে হয়েছে। এই সংগ্রাম এখনো চলছে। গায়ের জোরে বে-আইনিভাবে এলাকা দখল, জনগণের ন্যায়সঙ্গত অধিকারকে নস্যাত্য করার কাজে শক্তির ব্যবহার ও বর্ণবৈষম্যের বিরুদ্ধে চলেছে এই যুদ্ধ। এ যুদ্ধ ব্যর্থ হয়নি। আলজেরিয়া, ভিয়েতনাম, বাংলাদেশ ও গিনি বিসাঁউ-এ বিরাট জয় অর্জিত হয়েছে। এ জয় দ্বারা প্রমাণিত হয়েছে যে ইতিহাস জনগণের পক্ষে ও ন্যায়ের চূড়ান্ত বিজয় অবধারিত।

ভবিষ্যতের পথ

পৃথিবীর বহু স্থানে অন্যায়-অবিচার এখনো চলছে। আমাদের আরব ভাইয়েরা এখনো লড়ছেন তাঁদের ভূমি থেকে জবর দখলকারীদের সম্পূর্ণ উচ্ছেদের জন্য। প্যালেস্টাইনি জনগণের ন্যায়সঙ্গত জাতীয় অধিকার এখনো অর্জিত হয় নাই। উপনিবেশবাদ উচ্ছেদের প্রক্রিয়া ত্বরান্বিত হলেও চূড়ান্ত লক্ষ্যে এখনো পৌঁছেনি। এ কথা আফ্রিকার জন্য আরো দৃঢ়ভাবে সত্য। সেখানে জিম্বোবি ও নামিবিয়ার জনগণ জাতীয় স্বাধীনতা ও চরম মুক্তির জন্য চূড়ান্ত সংগ্রামে এখনো ব্যাপ্ত। বর্ণবৈষম্য এই পরিষদে চরম অপরাধ বলে চিহ্নিত হওয়া সত্ত্বেও মানুষের বিবেককে তা এখনো ধ্বংস করছে। একদিকে অন্যায় অবিচারের ধারাকে উৎখাতের সংগ্রাম, অন্যদিকে বিরাট চ্যালেঞ্জ আমাদের সামনে। আজ বিশ্বের সকল জাতি পথ বেছে নেয়ার কঠিন সংগ্রামের সম্মুখীন। এই পথ বাছাই

করার প্রজ্ঞার উপর নির্ভর করছে আমাদের ভবিষ্যৎ। অনাহার, দারিদ্র, বেকারত্ব ও বুভুক্ষার তাড়নায় জর্জরিত, পারমাণবিক যুদ্ধের দ্বারা সম্পূর্ণ ধ্বংস হওয়ার শঙ্কায় শিহরিত বিভীষিকাময় জগতের দিকে আমরা এগুবো না, আমরা তাকাবো এমন এক পৃথিবীর দিকে, যেখানে বিজ্ঞান ও কারিগরি জ্ঞানের বিস্ময়কর অগ্রগতির যুগে মানুষের সৃষ্টি ক্ষমতা ও বিরাট সাফল্য আমাদের জন্য এক শঙ্কামুক্ত উন্নত ভবিষ্যৎ গঠনে সক্ষম। এই ভবিষ্যৎ হবে পারমাণবিক যুদ্ধের আশঙ্কা থেকে মুক্ত। বিশ্বের সকল সম্পদ ও কারিগরি জ্ঞানের সূষ্ঠ বণ্টনের দ্বারা এমন কল্যাণের দ্বার খুলে দেওয়া যাবে যেখানে প্রত্যেক মানুষ সুখী ও সম্মানজনক জীবনের ন্যূনতম নিশ্চয়তা লাভ করবে।

বাংলাদেশের বর্তমান অর্থনৈতিক অবস্থা

সাম্প্রতিক কালে গোটা বিশ্বে যে অর্থনৈতিক বিপর্যয় দেখা দিয়েছে তার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে একটি ন্যায়সঙ্গত আন্তর্জাতিক অর্থনৈতিক ব্যবস্থা গড়ে তোলার কাজে আমাদের আরো ত্বরিত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা উচিত। এ বছরের গোড়ার দিকে অনুষ্ঠিত এই পরিষদের বিশেষ অধিবেশনে বিশ্বের বর্তমান গুরুতর অর্থনৈতিক অবস্থা সম্পর্কে আলোচনা হয়েছে। আমি এমন একটি দেশের পক্ষ থেকে কথা বলছি, যে দেশটি বর্তমানে অর্থনৈতিক দুর্যোগে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত দেশগুলির তালিকার শীর্ষস্থানে রয়েছে। এ ক্ষতি কতটা গুরুতর— আমি সে সম্পর্কে কিছুটা আলোকপাত করতে চাই।

যুদ্ধের ধ্বংসস্তূপের উপরই বাংলাদেশের জন্ম হয়েছিল। তারপর থেকে আমরা একের পর এক প্রাকৃতিক বিপর্যয়ের সম্মুখীন হয়েছি। সর্বশেষ এবারের নজীরবিহীন বন্যা। সাম্প্রতিক বন্যা বিপর্যয় কাটিয়ে উঠার উদ্দেশ্যে বাংলাদেশের প্রতি সাহায্যের হাত বাড়িয়ে দেওয়ার ব্যাপারে সক্রিয় ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করার জন্য আমরা জাতিসংঘ,

সংশ্লিষ্ট সংস্থাসমূহ ও সেক্রেটারি জেনারেলের কাছে কৃতজ্ঞ। আলজেরিয়ার প্রেসিডেন্ট বুমেদিন ও পররাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী বুতেফ্লিকা বাংলাদেশের সাহায্যের জন্য জোট নিরপেক্ষ দেশসমূহের প্রতি আবেদন জানিয়েছেন।

বন্ধুদেশসমূহ ও মানবকল্যাণ সংস্থাগুলোর কাছ থেকেও ভালোই সাড়া পাওয়া যাচ্ছে। প্রাকৃতিক বিপর্যয় বাংলাদেশের অগ্রগতি শুধু প্রতিহত করেনি, দেশে প্রায় দুর্ভিক্ষ অবস্থার সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। একই সঙ্গে বিশ্বব্যাপী মুদ্রাস্ফীতির দরুণ আমাদের মতো একটি দেশের জন্য দায় পরিশোধের ক্ষেত্রে কোটি কোটি টাকার ঘাটতির সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। জনসাধারণের জীবনধারণের মান নিছক বেঁচে থাকার পর্যায় থেকেও নীচে নেমে গেছে। মাথাপিছু যাদের বার্ষিক আয় ১০০ ডলারেরও কম তাদের অবস্থা আরো শোচনীয়। বিশ্বস্বাস্থ্য সংস্থার হিসাব অনুযায়ী বেঁচে থাকার জন্য যে ন্যূনতম খাদ্য প্রয়োজন তার থেকে কম খাদ্য খেয়ে যারা বেঁচে ছিল তারা সম্পূর্ণ অনাহারে দিন কাটাচ্ছে। দরিদ্র অভাবী দেশগুলোর ভবিষ্যৎ সম্পর্কে যে আভাস দেওয়া হয়েছে তা আরো হতাশাজনক।

আন্তর্জাতিক অর্থনৈতিক পরিস্থিতি

ক্রমাগত মূল্যবৃদ্ধির ফলে খাদ্যের দাম গরিব দেশগুলোর ক্রয়ক্ষমতার বাইরে চলে গেছে। অন্যদিকে ধনী ও উন্নত দেশগুলি হচ্ছে খাদ্যের মূল রফতানিকারক। কৃষি যন্ত্রপাতি ও উপকরণের অসম্ভব দাম বাড়ার ফলে গরিব দেশগুলোর খাদ্য সংগ্রহের চেষ্টাও তেমন সফল হতে পারছে না। বিশ্বব্যাপী মুদ্রাস্ফীতির ফলে উন্নয়নশীল দেশগুলোর উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনার ব্যয় বহুগুণ বেড়ে গেছে। তাদের নিজেদের সম্পদ কাজে লাগানোর শক্তিও হ্রাস পেয়েছে। ইতোমধ্যেই যেসব দেশ ব্যাপক বেকার সমস্যায় ভুগছে তারা তাদের অতি নগণ্য উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনাগুলোও কেটে ছেঁটে কলেবর ছোট করতে বাধ্য হয়েছে। এই

পরিকল্পনাগুলো বাস্তবায়িত হলে মাত্র পাঁচ থেকে ছয় শতাংশ হারে আয় বৃদ্ধির সম্ভাবনা ছিল। বিশ্বের সকল জাতি ঐক্যবদ্ধভাবে এই পরিস্থিতির মোকাবেলা করতে অগ্রসর না হলে মানুষের দুঃখ-দুর্দশা এমন বিরাট আকার ধারণ করবে, ইতিহাসে যার তুলনা পাওয়া যাবে না। অবশ্য বর্তমানে অসংখ্য মানুষের পুঞ্জীভূত দুঃখ-দুর্দশার পাশাপাশি মুষ্টিমেয় মানুষ যে অভূতপূর্ব বৈষয়িক সমৃদ্ধি ও সুখ-সুবিধা ভোগ করছে তার তুলনা ইতিহাসে বিরল।

এ অবস্থার পরিবর্তন ঘটাতে পারে আমাদের মধ্যে মানবিক ঐক্যবোধ-ভ্রাতৃত্ববোধের পুনর্জাগরণ। পারস্পরিক নির্ভরশীলতার স্বীকৃতিই কেবল বর্তমান সমস্যার যুক্তিসঙ্গত সমাধান ঘটাতে সক্ষম। বর্তমান দুর্ঘোষণা কাটাতে হলে অবিলম্বে ঐক্যবদ্ধ প্রচেষ্টা দরকার। বর্তমানের মতো এত বড়ো চ্যালেঞ্জের মোকাবেলা জাতিসংঘ অতীতে কখনো করেনি। এ চ্যালেঞ্জ হচ্ছে একটা ন্যায়সঙ্গত আন্তর্জাতিক ব্যবস্থা গড়ে তোলার জন্য যুক্তির শক্তিকে কাজে লাগানোর চেষ্টা। এ ব্যবস্থায় থাকবে নিজের প্রাকৃতিক সম্পদের উপর প্রতিটি দেশের সার্বভৌম অধিকারের নিশ্চয়তা। এ ব্যবস্থা গড়ে তুলবে আন্তর্জাতিক সহযোগিতা, বাস্তব কাঠামো, যার ভিত্তি হবে স্থিতিশীল ন্যায়সঙ্গত অর্থনৈতিক ব্যবস্থায় বিশ্বের সকল দেশের সাধারণ স্বার্থের স্বীকৃতি। এখন এমন একটি সময় যখন আমাদের দ্ব্যর্থহীন কণ্ঠে ঘোষণা করতে হবে যে, আমাদের একটা আন্তর্জাতিক দায়িত্ব রয়েছে। এ দায়িত্ব হলো বিশ্বের প্রতিটি মানুষ যাতে তার ব্যক্তিত্বের বিকাশ ও মর্যাদার উপযোগী অর্থনৈতিক, সামাজিক ও সাংস্কৃতিক অধিকার ভোগ করতে পারে তার ব্যবস্থা করা। মানবাধিকার সংক্রান্ত সার্বজনীন ঘোষণায় এ অধিকারের গ্যারান্টি দেওয়া হয়েছে। মানবাধিকার সংক্রান্ত ঘোষণা অনুযায়ী আমাদের আন্তর্জাতিক দায়িত্ব এমনভাবে পালন করতে হবে যাতে প্রতিটি মানুষ

নিজের ও পরিবারের সুখ-সমৃদ্ধির জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় জীবনধারণের মান প্রতিষ্ঠা অর্জনের নিশ্চয়তা লাভ করে।

আন্তর্জাতিক অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠা, সমঝোতা ও শান্তিপূর্ণ পরিবেশই যে অর্থনৈতিক দুরবস্থা দূর করতে সক্ষম, সে সম্পর্কে আমরা সম্পূর্ণ সচেতন। এ প্রসঙ্গে বলা প্রয়োজন, বর্তমান অস্ত্র প্রতিযোগিতা নিয়ন্ত্রণ করার জন্য জরুরি ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা দরকার। অস্ত্র প্রতিযোগিতা হ্রাস করা সম্ভব হলে অর্থনৈতিক সঙ্কট দূর করার পরিবেশই শুধু গড়ে উঠবে না, এ প্রতিযোগিতায় যে বিপুল সম্পদ অপচয় হচ্ছে, তা মানবজাতির সাধারণ কল্যাণে নিয়োগ করা সম্ভব হবে।

শান্তিপূর্ণ সহ-অবস্থান

বাংলাদেশ প্রথম থেকেই জোট নিরপেক্ষ বৈদেশিক নীতি অনুসরণ করেছে। এই নীতির মূলকথা শান্তিপূর্ণ সহ-অবস্থান এবং সকলের সঙ্গে মৈত্রী। শান্তির প্রতি যে আমাদের পূর্ণ অনুগত্য তা এই উপলব্ধি থেকে জন্মেছে যে, একমাত্র শান্তিপূর্ণ পরিবেশেই আমরা আমাদের কষ্টার্জিত জাতীয় স্বাধীনতার ফল আন্বাদন করতে পারবো এবং ক্ষুধা, দারিদ্র, রোগশোক, শিক্ষা ও বেকারত্বের বিরুদ্ধে সংগ্রাম করার জন্য আমাদের সকল সম্পদ ও শক্তি নিয়োগ করতে সক্ষম হবো। সুতরাং আমরা স্বাগত জানাই সেই সকল প্রচেষ্টাকে, যার লক্ষ্য বিশ্বে উত্তেজনা হ্রাস করা, অস্ত্র প্রতিযোগিতা সীমিত করা, এশিয়া, আফ্রিকা ও ল্যাটিন আমেরিকাসহ পৃথিবীর প্রত্যেকটি স্থানে শান্তিপূর্ণ সহ-অবস্থান নীতি জোরদার করা। এই নীতি অনুযায়ী ভারত মহাসাগরকে শান্তি এলাকা রাখার প্রস্তাবে আমরা অবিরাম সমর্থন জানিয়ে এসেছি। ভারত মহাসাগরকে শান্তি এলাকা রাখার প্রস্তাব এই পরিষদেও সক্রিয় শক্তিশালী অনুমোদন লাভ করেছে।

আমরা দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এশিয়াকে শান্তি, স্বাধীনতা ও নিরপেক্ষতার এলাকারূপে

ঘোষণার অকুণ্ঠ সমর্থন জানিয়েছি। আমাদের বিশ্বাস জোট নিরপেক্ষ সম্মেলনে বিশ্বের যে উদীয়মান জাতিসমূহ একত্রিত হয়েছিলেন, তারা শান্তির পক্ষে শক্তিশালী সমর্থন জুগিয়েছেন। তারা বিশ্বের বিপুল সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠ মানুষের অভিন্ন প্রতিজ্ঞার কথাই আবার ঘোষণা করেছেন। এই ঘোষণার লক্ষ্য জাতীয় স্বাধীনতা রক্ষা এবং শান্তি ও ন্যায়বিচার প্রতিষ্ঠা করা। মানবজাতির অস্তিত্ব রক্ষার জন্য শান্তি একান্ত দরকার। এই শান্তির মধ্যে সারা বিশ্বের সকল নর-নারীর গভীর আশা আকাঙ্ক্ষা মূর্ত হয়ে রয়েছে। ন্যায়নীতির উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত না হলে শান্তি কখনো স্থায়ী হতে পারে না।

উপমহাদেশে বিবাদ-বিসম্বাদের নিষ্পত্তি

আমরা শান্তিকামী বলে আমাদের এই উপমহাদেশে আমরা আপোশ-মীমাংসা-নীতির অনুসারী। আমাদের দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস বাংলাদেশের অভ্যুদয় উপমহাদেশে শান্তি ও স্থিতিশীলতা প্রতিষ্ঠার সহায়ক হয়েছে এবং অতীতের সংঘাত ও বিরোধের বদলে আমাদের তিনটি দেশের জনগণের মধ্যে কল্যাণকর সহযোগিতা ও বন্ধুত্বের সম্পর্ক প্রতিষ্ঠা করা সম্ভব হবে। আমরা আমাদের মহান নিকট প্রতিবেশী ভারত, বার্মা ও নেপালের সাথে বন্ধুত্বপূর্ণ সম্পর্ক প্রতিষ্ঠা করেছি। অতীত থেকে মুখ ফিরিয়ে পাকিস্তানের সাথে নতুন সম্পর্ক স্থাপনের প্রচেষ্টায়ও লিপ্ত রয়েছি।

অতীতের তিক্ততা দূর করার জন্য আমরা কোনো প্রচেষ্টা থেকেই নিবৃত্ত হই নাই। ১৯৫ জন যুদ্ধ-অপরাধীকে ক্ষমা প্রদর্শন করে এই উপমহাদেশে শান্তি ও সহযোগিতার নতুন ইতিহাস রচনার কাজে আমরা আমাদের আন্তরিকতার প্রমাণ দিয়েছি। এই ১৯৫ জন যুদ্ধ-অপরাধীর বিরুদ্ধে মানবতা-বিরোধী অপরাধে লিপ্ত থাকার অসংখ্য সাক্ষ্যপ্রমাণ ছিল, তবু সকল অপরাধ

ভুলে গিয়ে আমরা ক্ষমার এমন উদাহরণ সৃষ্টি করতে চেয়েছি, যা এই উপমহাদেশে শান্তি, সমৃদ্ধি ও সহযোগিতার এক নতুন অধ্যায়ের সূচনা করবে। উপমহাদেশের শান্তি নিশ্চিত করার কাজে আমরা কোনো পূর্বশর্ত দিই নাই কিংবা দরকষাকষি করি নাই। বরং জনগণের জন্য আমরা এক সুকুমার ভবিষ্যৎ প্রেরণা দ্বারা উদ্বুদ্ধ ও প্রভাবান্বিত হয়েছি। অন্যান্য বড় বিরোধ নিষ্পত্তির কাজেও আমরা ন্যায়বিচার ও পারস্পরিক সমঝোতার উপর গুরুত্ব আরোপ করেছি। ৬৩ হাজার পাকিস্তানি পরিবারের দুর্গতি একটি জরুরি মানবিক সমস্যা হয়ে রয়েছে। পাকিস্তানের প্রতি আনুগত্যের কথা তারা আবার প্রকাশ করেছেন এবং স্বদেশে প্রত্যাবর্তনের জন্য তাদের নাম রেডক্রসের আন্তর্জাতিক কমিটির কাছে তালিকাভুক্ত করেছেন। আন্তর্জাতিক বোঝাপড়া ও আইন অনুসারে স্বদেশে প্রত্যাবর্তন করার অধিকার তাদের রয়েছে। এই সঙ্গে মানবতার তাগিদে তাদের সমস্যার আশু সমাধান প্রয়োজন। সাবেক পাকিস্তানের সম্পদের ন্যায়সঙ্গত বাঁটোয়ারা আর একটি সমস্যা, যার আশু সমাধান দরকার। বাংলাদেশ আপোশ-মীমাংসার জন্য প্রস্তুত। আমাদের প্রত্যাশা এই উপমহাদেশের জনগণের বৃহত্তম স্বার্থে পাকিস্তান আমাদের আস্থানে সাড়া দেবে এবং ন্যায়বিচার ও পারস্পরিক বোঝাপড়ার ভিত্তিতে অমীমাংসিত সমস্যার সমাধানে এগিয়ে আসবে। তাহলে উপমহাদেশে পরিস্থিতির স্বাভাবিকীকরণের প্রচেষ্টা সফল হওয়ার পথে আর কোনো বাধা থাকবে না। বাংলাদেশ তার সকল প্রতিবেশী দেশের সঙ্গে সৎ প্রতিবেশীসুলভ সম্পর্ক প্রতিষ্ঠার প্রচেষ্টা চালিয়ে যাবে। যে সম্পর্কে ভিত্তি হবে শান্তিপূর্ণ সহ-অবস্থান, পরস্পরের সার্বভৌমত্ব ও আঞ্চলিক অঞ্চলতার প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা প্রদর্শন এবং একে অন্যের আভ্যন্তরীণ বিষয়ে হস্তক্ষেপ না করা। বিশ্বের এ এলাকায় এবং অন্যত্রও শান্তি

প্রতিষ্ঠার প্রচেষ্টায় আমাদের সমর্থন অব্যাহত থাকবে।

জাতিসংঘ ও মানুষের অগ্রগতি

এই দুঃখ দুর্দশা সংঘাতপূর্ণ বিশ্বে জাতিসংঘ মানুষের ভবিষ্যৎ আশা-আকাঙ্ক্ষার কেন্দ্রস্থল। নানান অসুবিধা ও বাধাবিপত্তি সত্ত্বেও জাতিসংঘ তার জন্মের পর সিকি শতাব্দী কালেরও বেশি সময় ধরে রাজনৈতিক, অর্থনৈতিক, সামাজিক এবং সাংস্কৃতিক ক্ষেত্রে মানবজাতির অগ্রগতিতে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অবদান রেখেছে। এমন দেশের সংখ্যা খুব কম, যারা বাংলাদেশের মতো এই প্রতিষ্ঠানের বাস্তব সাফল্য ও সম্ভাবনা অনুধাবনে সক্ষম হয়েছে। ড. কুর্ট ওয়াল্ডহাইম এবং তাঁর যোগ্য ও নিবেদিতপ্রাণ সহকর্মীবৃন্দের প্রেরণাদানকারী নেতৃত্বে এই জাতিসংঘ আমাদের দেশে ত্রাণ, পুনর্বাসন ও পুনর্গঠনের বিরাট কাজ করেছে। বাংলাদেশের বুক থেকে যুদ্ধের ক্ষত দূর করা, যুদ্ধবিধ্বস্ত অর্থনীতির উৎপাদন ক্ষমতার পুনরুজ্জীবন এবং মুক্তিযুদ্ধের সময় ভারতে আশ্রয় গ্রহণকারী কোটি খানেক উদ্ভাবস্থুর পুনর্বাসনের ব্যবস্থা করা এ কাজের লক্ষ্য। সেক্রেটারি জেনারেল, তাঁর সহকর্মীবৃন্দ এবং বিভিন্ন আন্তর্জাতিক সংস্থা এই বিরাট দায়িত্ব পালনে সমন্বয় সাধনের প্রেরণা জুগিয়েছেন ও নেতৃত্ব দিয়েছেন। বাংলাদেশের সরকার ও জনগণের পক্ষ থেকে তাঁদের প্রতি কৃতজ্ঞতা জানাই। আমাদের দৃঢ়বিশ্বাস, উপমহাদেশে অবশিষ্ট যে মানবিক সমস্যা রয়েছে, তার সমাধানেও জাতিসংঘ এই রকমের গঠনমূলক মনোভাব নিয়ে এগিয়ে আসবে। বাংলাদেশের সাম্প্রতিক সর্বনাশা বন্যায় ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত লোকদের সাহায্যের জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় ত্রাণ সামগ্রী আহরণের কাজে জাতিসংঘ যে প্রচেষ্টা চালাচ্ছে, তার জন্য আমরা কৃতজ্ঞ। প্রাকৃতিক দুর্যোগের কবলে পড়ে যেসব দেশ বার বার ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয়, বাংলাদেশ তাদের

অন্যতম। তাই প্রাকৃতিক দুর্যোগ থেকে উদ্ধৃত পরিস্থিতির মোকাবেলায় এবং বিশ্বসমাজের দ্রুত এগিয়ে আসার উপযোগী নিয়মিত প্রতিষ্ঠান গঠনে বাংলাদেশের বিশেষ স্বার্থ নিহিত রয়েছে। অবশ্য, সূচনা হিসাবে এই ধরনের একটি ব্যবস্থা ইতোমধ্যেই হয়েছে। এই ব্যবস্থা জাতিসংঘের বিপর্যয় ত্রাণ সমন্বয়কারীর অফিস স্থাপন। সংস্থাটি যাতে কার্যকরভাবে তার ভূমিকা পালন করতে পারে, সেজন্য তাকে শক্তিশালী করে গড়ে তোলা একান্ত দরকার। জাতিসংঘের সকল সদস্য দেশেরই এ ব্যাপারে বিশেষ দায়িত্ব রয়েছে।

প্রিয় প্রেসিডেন্ট,

সর্বশেষে আমি মানবের অসাধ্য সাধন ও দুরূহ বাধা অতিক্রমের অদম্য শক্তির প্রতি আমাদের পূর্ণ আস্থার কথা আবার ঘোষণা করতে চাই। আমাদের মতো দেশসমূহ, যাদের অভ্যুদয় সংগ্রাম ও ত্যাগের মধ্য দিয়ে, এই আদর্শে বিশ্বাসই তাদের বাঁচিয়ে রাখবে। আমাদের কষ্ট স্বীকার করতে হতে পারে। কিন্তু আমাদের ধ্বংস নাই। এই জীবন যুদ্ধের মোকাবেলায় জনগণের প্রতিরোধ ক্ষমতা ও দৃঢ়প্রতিজ্ঞাই শেষকথা। আত্মনির্ভরশীলতাই আমাদের লক্ষ্য। জনগণের ঐক্যবদ্ধ উদ্যোগই আমাদের নির্ধারিত কর্মধারা। এতে সন্দেহের কোনো অবকাশ নাই যে, আন্তর্জাতিক সহযোগিতা এবং সম্পদ ও প্রযুক্তিবিদ্যায় অংশীদারিত্ব আমাদের কাজকে সহজতর করতে পারে, জনগণের দুঃখ-কষ্ট লাঘব করতে পারে। কিন্তু আমাদের ন্যায় উদীয়মান দেশসমূহের অবশ্যই নিজেদের কার্যক্ষমতার প্রতি আস্থা রাখতে হবে। মনে রাখতে হবে, শুধু জনগণের ঐক্যবদ্ধ ও সম্মিলিত প্রচেষ্টার মাধ্যমেই আমরা আমাদের নির্দিষ্ট লক্ষ্যে পৌঁছতে সক্ষম হতে পারি, গড়ে তুলতে পারি উন্নততর ভবিষ্যৎ।

Address by hon'ble Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the 29th regular session of the UN General Assembly New York, September 25, 1974

Mr. President,

Today as I stand before this Assembly, I share with you the profound satisfaction that the seventy-five million people of Bangladesh are now represented in this Parliament of Man. For the Bengalee nation this is a historic moment, marking the consummation of the struggle to vindicate its right of self-determination. The Bengalee people have fought over the centuries so that they may secure for themselves the right to live in freedom and with dignity as free citizens of a free country. They have aspired to live in peace and friendship with all the nations of the world. The noble ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter are the very ideals for which millions of our people have made the supreme sacrifice. I know that the souls of our martyrs join us in pledging that the Bengalee nation fully commits itself to the building of a world order, in which the aspiration of all men for peace and justice will be realised.

It is particularly gratifying to note that Bangladesh has been admitted to this Assembly when its Presidency has been assumed by one who has been an active fighter for freedom. I recall, Mr. President, the valuable contribution made by you to the success of the Summit Conference of Non-aligned nations held in Algiers in September last year. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to salute all those whose sacrifices have earned for Bangladesh a place in the comity of nations. I express our deep sense of gratitude to all those nations and

peoples who supported Bangladesh in its struggle. We would also like to thank all those who have been rendering valuable assistance to Bangladesh in consolidating our independence, in reconstructing our war-ravaged land and in meeting the formidable challenge of building a better future for our people. To all those who have welcomed us into the United Nations I offer the most sincere



thanks of the people of Bangladesh.

The very struggle of Bangladesh symbolized the universal struggle for peace and justice. It was, therefore, only natural that Bangladesh, from its very inception, should stand firmly by the side of the oppressed people of the world. The experience of quarter of a century since the United Nations was established, has shown how a relentless struggle has had to be waged against daunting odds in pursuit of these ideals. The right of self-determination which the United Nations Charter promised could only be redeemed through the supreme

sacrifice of millions of valiant fighters for freedom in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The struggle still continues against the illegal occupation of territory by aggression, against use of force to negate the legitimate rights of people, against the practice of racial discrimination and apartheid. Great victories have been won in Algeria, in Vietnam, in Bangladesh and in Guinea-Bissau. Such victories prove that history is on the side of the people and that justice ultimately triumphs.

But injustice and oppression still persist in many parts of the world. Our Arab brethren are still fighting for the complete vacation of all illegally occupied territories and the legitimate national rights of the people of Palestine have yet to be restored. The process of decolonisation, though greatly advanced, has yet to reach its ultimate goal. This is particularly true in Africa where the heroic peoples of Zimbabwe and

Namibia are still engaged in a grim struggle for freedom and national liberation. Apartheid, which this Assembly has repeatedly declared to be a crime against humanity, continues to outrage the conscience of man.

While the legacy of injustice from the past has to be liquidated, we are faced with the challenges of the future. Today the nations of the world are faced with critical choices. The wisdom of our choice will depend on whether we will move towards a world haunted by fear of total destruction, threatened by a nuclear war, faced with the aggravation of human sufferings on a horrendous scale, marked by mass

starvation, unemployment and the wretchedness of deepening poverty or whether we can look forward to a world where human creativity and the great achievements of our age in science and technology will be able to shape a better future free from the threat of a nuclear war and based upon sharing of technology and resources on a global scale so that men everywhere can begin to enjoy the minimum conditions of a decent life.

The great economic upheavals which have recently shaken the entire world should generate a sense of urgency about building a just international economic order. The Special Session of this Assembly earlier this year took note of the grave implications of the present international economic situation. Speaking for a country which heads the list of those described as being "most severely affected" by the current economic situation, I can only underline how grievous these effects are, as Bangladesh which was born on the ruins of a devastating war have, ever since liberation, been plagued by a series of natural disasters, the latest one being the unprecedented floods we have experienced this year. We are grateful to the United Nations, its agencies, and to the Secretary General for their active interest in helping Bangladesh to meet the situation. President Boumediene and Foreign Minister Bouteflika of Algeria have appealed to the nonaligned group of countries to come forward to help Bangladesh. Friendly countries and humanitarian organisations all over the world have been responding positively. These natural calamities have not only impeded Bangladesh's march towards economic progress, but also have left the country in a near-famine condition. At the same time global inflation has meant, for a country such as ours, a balance of payments gap in the order of hundreds of millions of dollars. Translated in terms of human sufferings, this means that people with a meager annual per capita income of less than \$ 100 are now faced with the prospect of severe reduction in even

their current subsistence level of living. People who are consuming less than the minimum considered necessary for mere survival by the World Health Organization, now face starvation. The forecast for the future of the poorer countries is even more gloomy. Food grains, of which the developed industrial nations are the main exporters, are gradually going out of their reach as a result of steadily increasing prices. Their efforts to attain self-sufficiency in food production are also being severely affected because of rising cost and growing scarcity of vital agricultural inputs. Side by side, as a result of global inflation, which has not only increased manifold the cost of development projects but has also adversely reduced their ability to mobilise their own resources, countries already faced with grinding poverty and massive unemployment are threatened with the dire possibilities of cutbacks on their modest development plans envisaging growth rates of 5 to 6 per cent per annum.

Unless the nations of the world can concert their action to meet this situation, human misery will be aggravated on a scale unknown in history. Indeed there would be no recorded parallel of such human misery having to be endured by so many side by side with such unprecedented levels of affluence and prosperity enjoyed by so few. Only a regeneration of the feeling of human solidarity and brotherhood and an acknowledgement of inter-dependence can bring about a rational solution and the urgent action needed to avoid this catastrophe.

No greater challenge has been faced by the United Nations than that of marshaling the forces of reason to bring about a just international economic order. This order must not only ensure sovereignty of each state over its natural resources but should also seek to establish a framework of international cooperation based upon recognition of the over-riding common interest of the countries of the world in a stable and just economic system. This is the moment when we must reaffirm

in unequivocal terms that there is an international responsibility to ensure that every one everywhere should enjoy the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality as guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This responsibility, according to the Universal Declaration, should extend to ensuring to everyone the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of oneself and one's family.

We are fully conscious that the current economic crisis can be dealt with only in an environment of peace, international amity and understanding. In this context, urgent measures to control the present arms race assume special importance not only for the creation of such an environment but also for releasing for the common good of mankind the massive resources currently being wasted on armaments.

Bangladesh from its very inception has adopted a non-aligned foreign policy based upon the principles of peaceful co-existence and friendship towards all. Our total commitment to peace is born of the realisation that only an environment of peace would enable us to enjoy the fruits of our hard-won national independence and to mobilise and concentrate all our energies and resources in combating the scourges of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and unemployment.

We, therefore, welcome every effort aimed at advancing the process of detente, relaxation of tension, limitation of armaments and the promotion of peaceful co-existence in every part of the world, whether it is in Asia, Africa, Europe or in Latin America. In pursuance of this policy we have consistently supported the concept of a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean area which has received powerful endorsement of this Assembly. We have also supported the concept of South East Asia as a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality.

We believe that the nations of the

emerging world assembled in the Non-aligned Conference provide powerful support to the cause of peace. They have reaffirmed the common determination of the overwhelming majority of the people of the world to preserve national independence and to promote peace and justice.

Peace is an imperative for the survival of mankind. It represents the deepest aspirations of men and women throughout the world. Peace to endure must, however, be peace based upon justice.

Consistent with our own total commitment to peace, we have striven to promote the process of reconciliation on our own subcontinent. It was our firm belief that the emergence of Bangladesh would materially contribute towards creating a structure of peace and stability in our subcontinent and that the confrontation and strife of the past could be replaced by relations of friendship and cooperation for the welfare of all our peoples. We have not only developed good relations with our immediate neighbours India, Burma and Nepal, but also have striven to turn away from the past and open a new chapter of relations with Pakistan. We have spared no effort towards liquidating the legacies of the past and made our ultimate contribution by granting clemency even to those 195 prisoners of war against whom there was overwhelming evidence of having committed grave crimes, including crimes against humanity. This was our investment towards opening a new chapter and towards building a future of peace and stability in our tormented subcontinent. In doing this, we insisted on no pre-conditions nor did we seek to strike any bargain, for we were influenced by only the vision of better future for all our peoples.

We look forward to the resolution of other outstanding problems in a spirit of fair play and mutual accommodation. The plight of the 63,000 Pakistani families, who have reaffirmed their allegiance to Pakistan

and have registered themselves with the International Committee of the Red Cross for repatriation to their country, remains a pressing humanitarian problem. Not only it is their right to be repatriated to the country to which they retain allegiance, based on the strongest foundations of law and international agreement, but also the dictates of humanity call for an urgent solution to their problem.

The just division of the assets of former Pakistan is the other problem which awaits an urgent solution. Bangladesh on its part was, and remains, ready to move forward towards reconciliation. We expect that in the over-riding interest of the welfare of the peoples of the subcontinent Pakistan will reciprocate by coming forward to resolve these outstanding problems in a spirit of fair play and mutual accommodation so that the process of normalisation can be carried to a successful conclusion.

In a world that is marked by strife and human misery, the United Nations remains the focus of Man's hope for the future. Despite many difficulties and obstacles placed in its way, the United Nations, during more than a quarter century of its existence, has significantly contributed towards human progress in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. There are few countries in the world that have a better realisation than Bangladesh of the concrete achievements and the potential for good of this organisation. It was under the inspired leadership of Dr. Kurt Waldheim and his able and dedicated colleagues that the United Nations embarked on a major relief and reconstruction programme in our country to heal the wounds of war, to restore the productive capacity of our war-ravaged economy and to rehabilitate millions of returning refugees from India who had to take shelter there during our struggle for liberation. To the Secretary General, members of his staff and the various humanitarian agencies who have contributed to the success of this gigantic operation I would like to offer

the sincere expression of gratitude of the Government and of the people of Bangladesh. We are confident that the same constructive leadership will be forthcoming from the United Nations in the solution to the remaining humanitarian problem in the subcontinent.

As I mentioned earlier, we are grateful to the United Nations for the efforts in mobilising assistance in aid of the victims of the current catastrophic floods in Bangladesh. As a country which has repeatedly been exposed to the ravages of natural calamities, Bangladesh has a special stake in the creation of an institutional arrangement by which the international community can move effectively to meet and prevent such calamities. Indeed a beginning, though modest, has already been made in this respect by the establishment of the office of United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator. However, in order that it can effectively play the role assigned to it there is an imperative need to strengthen the organisation. The members of the United Nations have a special responsibility to concert their efforts for the achievement of this objective.

I should like to conclude by re-affirming my faith in the indomitable spirit of man- in the capacity of the people to achieve the impossible and to overcome insurmountable odds. This is the faith which sustains nations like us which have emerged through struggle and sacrifice. Our nations may suffer, but they can never die. In facing the challenge of survival, the resilience and determination of the peoples is an ultimate strength. Our goal is self-reliance, our chosen path is the united and collective efforts of our peoples. International cooperation and the sharing of resources and technology could no doubt make our task less onerous and reduce the human sufferings. But for us in the emerging world, ultimately we must have faith in ourselves, in our capacity through the united and concerted efforts of our peoples to fulfill our destiny and to build for ourselves a better future.

State of New York Legislative Resolution

Senate No. 322

BY: Senators Stavisky, Addabbo, Akshar, Amedore, Antonacci, Bailey, Benjamin, Biaggi, Boyle, Breslin, Brooks, Carlucci, Comrie, Felder, Flanagan, Funke, Gallivan, Gaughran, Gianaris, Gounardes, Griffo, Harckham, Helming, Hoylman, Jackson, Jacobs, Jordan, Kaminsky, Kaplan, Kavanagh, Kennedy, Krueger, Lanza, LaValle, Little, Liu, Martinez, May, Mayer, Metzger, Montgomery, Myrie, O'Mara, Ortt, Parker, Persaud, Ramos, Ranzenhofer, Ritchie, Rivera, Robach, Salazar, Sanders, Savino, Sepulveda, Serino, Serrano, Seward, Skoufis, Stewart-Cousins, Tedisco, Thomas and Young

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim September 25, 2019, as Bangladeshi Immigrant Day in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize official days that are set aside to increase awareness and enhance the profile of cultural diversity which strengthens the fabric of the communities of New York State, and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its longstanding traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim September 25, 2019, as Bangladeshi Immigrant Day in the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Bangladeshi immigrants began arriving in the United States in the late 19th Century, leaving behind the hard economic and political times of the still developing Bangladesh, which achieved independence from Pakistan in 1971, and

WHEREAS, During this time, the largest groups of Bangladeshi immigrants arrived in New York City, where many worked at the ports on various ship docks; and

WHEREAS, Hailing mostly from Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet and Noakhali regions, more than 10,000 Bangladeshis immigrate to the United States annually, and

WHEREAS, As of 2014, the total number of Bangladeshi immigrants in the United States was approximately 500,000, with more than half residing in New York, and

WHEREAS, On September 25, 1974, for the first time in its history, the father of the nation of Bangladesh gave a speech in Bengali in the general assembly of the United Nations; and

WHEREAS, For two decades, the Muktadhara Foundation, a New York based organization dedicated to the promotion of Bengali culture, has celebrated its history and literature by hosting the Bangla Festival and Book Fair, and

WHEREAS, The State of New York recognizes the accomplishments of the Bengali people around the world as well as their perseverance in their fight for independence; now, therefore, be it

WHEREAS, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim September 25, 2019, as Bangladeshi Immigrant Day in the State of New York, and to recognize the many contributions of Bangladeshi-Americans to New York, and be it further

WHEREAS, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York; and Bishawjit Saha, CEO and Founder of the Muktadhara Foundation Inc.

ADOPTED IN SENATE ON
February 27, 2019



By order of the Senate,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alejandra N. Paulino".

Alejandra N. Paulino, Secretary

নিউইয়র্ক স্টেট আইন পরিষদ কর্তৃক গৃহীত সিদ্ধান্ত

সিনেট নং-৩২২

এই মর্মে গভর্নর এন্ড্রু কুওমোকে অবগত করানো হল যে ২৫ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০১৯ নিউইয়র্ক স্টেটে 'বাংলাদেশ ইমিগ্রান্ট ডে' হিসাবে উদযাপিত হবে।

উল্লেখিত যে, নিউইয়র্ক স্টেটের আইনসভা বিশ্বাস করে যে বিভিন্ন সম্প্রদায়ের সাংস্কৃতিক বৈচিত্র্য তুলে ধরতে বিভিন্ন দিবসের ঘোষণা গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে

উল্লেখিত যে, এই আইন পরিষদ তার ঐতিহ্য অনুসারে গর্বের সাথে ২৫ সেপ্টেম্বরকে নিউইয়র্ক স্টেটে 'বাংলাদেশ ইমিগ্রান্ট ডে' হিসাবে ঘোষণার জন্য গভর্নর এন্ড্রু কুওমোকে অনুরোধ জানাচ্ছে

উল্লেখিত যে, উনিশ শতকের শেষ ভাগ থেকেই বাংলাদেশ নামক ভূখন্ড থেকে নাগরিকেরা বিভিন্ন সময়ে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে আগমন শুরু করে

উল্লেখিত যে, এই সময়ে সর্বাধিক সংখ্যক বাংলাদেশি অভিবাসী নিউইয়র্ক শহরে আগমন করে ও দেশের বিভিন্ন বন্দরে শ্রমিক হিসাবে নিয়োজিত হয়

উল্লেখিত যে, বর্তমানে প্রায় ১০,০০০ বাংলাদেশি প্রতি বছর যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে আগমন করে, যাদের অধিকাংশ ঢাকা, চট্টগ্রাম, সিলেট ও নোয়াখালি এলাকার বাসিন্দা

উল্লেখিত যে, বর্তমানে যুক্তরাষ্ট্রে প্রায় ৫০০,০০০ বাংলাদেশি বাস, যার অর্ধেক নিউইয়র্ক শহরের বাসিন্দা

উল্লেখিত যে, ২৫ সেপ্টেম্বর ১৯৭৪ সালে বাংলাদেশের জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান জাতিসংঘে প্রথমবারের মত বাংলায় ভাষণ দেন

উল্লেখিত যে, গত দুই দশক ধরে নিউইয়র্ক-ভিত্তিক মুক্তধারা ফাউন্ডেশন বাংলা ভাষা ও সংস্কৃতির উদযাপন ও প্রচারের লক্ষ্যে প্রতি বছর একটি বাংলা বইমেলা বাংলা উৎসবের আয়োজন করে আসছে

উল্লেখিত যে, নিউইয়র্ক স্টেট বাংলাদেশের স্বাধীনতায় অবদান সহ বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে বিশ্ব জুড়ে বাঙ্গালির সাফল্যের স্বীকৃতি জানাচ্ছে, তার ভিত্তিতে

সিদ্ধান্ত গৃহীত হল যে, এই আইন পরিষদ গভর্নর এন্ড্রু কুওমোকে অনুরোধ করছে যাতে ২৫ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০১৯ নিউইয়র্ক স্টেটে বাংলাদেশ ইমিগ্রান্ট ডে হিসাবে ঘোষিত হয় যার মাধ্যমে এই রাজ্যের বাংলাদেশি-আমেরিকানদের বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে অবদানের স্বীকৃতি প্রদান সম্ভব হবে

সিদ্ধান্ত গৃহীত হল যে, যথাযথ শিলমোহর যুক্ত হওয়ার পরে এই সিদ্ধান্তের কপি গভর্নর এন্ড্রু কুওমো ও মুক্তধারা ফাউন্ডেশনের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা ও প্রধান নির্বাহী বিশ্বজিত সাহার কাছে প্রদান করা হবে।

সিনেট কর্তৃক

২৭ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০১৯ তারিখে



সিনেট কর্তৃক আদিষ্ট হয়ে

Alexandra M. Paulino

আলেহান্দ্রো পাওলিনো
সচিব



The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

(1920-1975) is the architect of independent Bangladesh

Bangabandhu was born on 17 March 1920 in the village Tungipara under the gopalganj Sub-division (currently district) in the district of Faridpur.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's father, Sheikh Lutfar Rahman, was a serestadar in the civil court of Gopalganj. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman passed his matriculation from Gopalganj Missionary School in 1942, IA (Twelfth Grade) from Islamia College, Calcutta in 1944 and BA from the same College in 1947. In 1946, he was elected general secretary of the Islamia College Students Union. He was an activist of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League and a member of the All-India Muslim League Council from 1943 onwards.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was a founding member of the East

Pakistan Muslim Students League (est. 1948), one of the founding joint secretaries of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League (est. 1949), general secretary of the Awami League (1953-1966), president of the Awami League (1966-1974), president of Bangladesh (in absentia from 26 March 1971 to 11 January 1972), prime minister of Bangladesh (1972-24 January 1975), president of Bangladesh (25 January 1975-15 August 1975).

As an activist he had been a supporter of the Suhrawardhy-Hashim faction of the Muslim League. During the 1946 general elections, the Muslim League selected him for electioneering in Faridpur district.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was one of the

principal organisers behind the formation of the East Pakistan Muslim Students League (est. 1948). After partition (1947), he got himself admitted into the University of Dhaka to study law but was unable to complete it, because, he was expelled from the University in early 1949 on charge of "inciting the fourth-class employees" in their agitation against the University's indifference towards their legitimate demands.

Sheikh Mujib's active political career began with his election to one of the posts of joint secretaries of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League (1949). As a political prisoner, he was then interned in Faridpur jail. In 1953, Sheikh Mujib was elected general secretary of the East Pakistan Awami Muslim League, a post that he held until 1966 when he became president of the party. Like his political mentor Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, Mujib also underscored the importance of party organisation and management. To organise the party, he resigned from the Cabinet of Ataur Rahman Khan (1956-58) and devoted himself to the task of taking the party to grassroots level. A charismatic organiser, Sheikh Mujib had established his firm control over the party. He had the mettle to revive the Awami League in spite of the fact that his political guru, HS Suhrawardy, was in favour of keeping political parties defunct and work under the political amalgam called National Democratic Front.

Sheikh Mujibur Rahman entered parliamentary politics first in 1954 through his election as a member of the East Bengal Legislative Assembly on the United Front ticket. He was also a member of the Pakistan Second Constituent Assembly-cum-Legislature (1955-1958).

Sheikh Mujib was a pragmatic politician. In the Pakistan state, he appeared as the undaunted advocate of the Bengali interests from the start. He was among the first language prisoners. However, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman grew in political eminence in the early 1960s. Through his organising ability Mujib was able to

salvage the Awami League from a series of defections and exit of various factions from the mainstream party. He reorganised the Awami League and put it on a firm foundation. In 1966, he announced his famous six-point programme, calling it 'Our [Bengalis] Charter of Survival', which aimed at self-rule for East Pakistan. Struck sharp at the roots of West Pakistani dominance, the six-point programme at once drew the attention of the nation. Though conservative elements of all political parties looked at it with consternation, it instantaneously stirred the younger generation, particularly the students, youth and working classes.

Disturbed by the political views of Sheikh Mujib, the Ayub regime put him behind bars. A sedition case, known as Agartala Conspiracy Case, was brought against him. It may be noted that during most of the period of the Ayub regime, he was in jail, first from 1958 to 1961 and then from 1966 to early 1969.

During the second term in jail, his charisma grew so much that a mass uprising took place in his favour in early 1969 and Ayub administration was compelled to release him on 22 February 1969 unconditionally.

On the following day of his release, the Sarbadaliya Chhatra Sangram Parishad (All Parties Students Action Committee) organised a mass reception to him at Ramna Racecourse (now, Suhrawardy Uddyan) and accorded him the title 'Bangabandhu' (Friend of the Bengalis). In him they saw a true leader who suffered jail terms for about twelve years during the 23 years of Pakistani rule. Twelve years in jail and ten years under close surveillance, Pakistan, to Sheikh Mujib, indeed proved to be more a prison than a free homeland.

The general elections of December 1970 made Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman the sole spokesman of East Pakistan. The people gave him the absolute mandate in favour of his six-point doctrine. Now it was his turn to implement it. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib was so serious about the six-point that on 3 January 1971, he held a solemn ceremony at Ramna Race

Course with all the East Pakistan representatives and took an oath never to deviate from the six-point idea when framing the constitution for Pakistan.

Bangabandhu's most uncompromising stand on the six-point programme led ZA Bhutto and Yahya's military junta to take a stringent view. Instead of allowing him to form the government, the junta resolved to undo the results of the elections. President Yahya Khan cancelled unilaterally the National Assembly meet Dhaka scheduled to be held on 3 March 1971. The announcement triggered off the death-knell of Pakistan. Bangabandhu called an all-out non-cooperation movement in East Pakistan. The whole province supported the non-cooperation movement. During the course of non-cooperation (2-25 March 1971) the entire civil authorities in East Pakistan came under the control and directives of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, himself becoming the de facto head of government of the province.

During this time, on 7 March Mujib made a historic address at a mammoth gathering at the Race Course which marked a turning point in the history of the Bengali nation. In his address Mujib made specific charges against the Martial Law authorities which failed to transfer power to the elected representatives. At the end of his speech, he made a clarion call, saying: "Build forts in each homestead. You must resist the Pakistani enemy with whatever you have in hand..Remember, we have given a lot of blood, a lot more blood we shall give if need be, but we shall liberate the people of this country, Insha Allah [ie, if God blessed]..The struggle this time is the struggle for our emancipation; the struggle this time is the struggle for independence."

Meanwhile, General Yahya Khan and other leaders from West Pakistan came to Dhaka on 15 March to start a dialogue with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib and his party. The dialogue began on the following day and continued intermittently down to 25 March morning. During the period, non-cooperation and hartals continued relentlessly. Students and leaders of

various political parties had been declaring independence from March 2 and the spree continued down to 25 March. At mid-night of 25 March 1971, the Pakistan army launched its brutal crackdown in Dhaka. Sheikh Mujib was arrested and kept confined at Dhaka Cantonment until he was lifted to West Pakistan for facing trial for sedition and inciting insurrection.

Although during the War of Liberation begun in the wake of the 25 March army crackdown Bangabandhu had been a prisoner in the hands of Pakistan, he was made, in absentia, the President of the provisional government, called the Mujibnagar Government, formed on 10 April 1971 by the people's representatives to head the Liberation War. He was also made the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Throughout the period of the War of Liberation, Sheikh Mujib's charisma worked as the source of national unity and strength. After the liberation of Bangladesh on 16 December 1971 from Pakistani occupation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was released from Pakistan jail and via London he arrived in Dhaka on 10 January 1972.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman headed the first government of the post-liberation Bangladesh for a period of three years and a half. Starting from scratch his government had to deal with the countless problems of a war ravaged country. Restoring law and order, rehabilitating the mukhtijodhas, restoring the ruptured communication system, and, most importantly, feeding the hungry millions and many other problems bedeviled his administration. Because of his charismatic leadership Bangladesh gained recognition from the international community including the United Nations.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated by a group of disgruntled army officials on August 15, 1975 along with most of his family members excepting for his two daughters who had been staying abroad at that time. Bangabandhu's eldest daughter, Sheikh Hasina, is the current Prime Minister of Bangladesh.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with President Obama and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Bangabandhu's Roadmap Remains valid even today

Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen

Bangladesh became a member of the UN on September 17, 1974 after a lengthy and frustrating debate on its membership and ever since it became a UN member, it has been playing a leadership role to uphold the UN Charter and to maintain peace and stability across nations. After Bangladesh's admission as a UN member, on September 25, 1974, its father of the nation, Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman while speaking at the UN General Assembly in Bangla language for the first time in history laid down the principles of Bangladesh's foreign policy that it still adheres to in the conduct of its foreign relations. Bangabandhu emphasized, among others, (1) friendship to all, malice to none, (2) to uphold the noble ideals of UN Charter and peaceful co-existence, (3) its commitment to the principles of justice, human rights, sovereignty of each nation on its resources, territorial integrity and vow to work in building a world order in which aspirations of all people for peace and justice will be realized, (4) its determination to stand firmly against all oppression and exploitation (whether it is in Palestine or Apartheid in South Africa),

(5) its aspiration to have a nuclear-free world and to work to end the threat of nuclear war and arms race and to establish a 'zone of peace' in Indian Ocean area, (6) its commitment to end poverty, hunger, exploitation and injustice across nations, (7) its alignment with the Non-aligned Movement (NAM), (8) its commitment to have good and strong relations with its neighbors, (9) its demand for just division of assets of former Pakistan and promised reconciliation, (10) its demand for restructuring of the international financial architecture to bring about a just-international economic order, (11) its commitment to working with the UN and its agencies and (12) its belief in the indomitable spirit of men to achieve impossible and overcome insurmountable odds.

Bangladesh achieved its independence on December 16, 1971 through a bloody war in which nearly 3 million unarmed people died, 250,000 young girls and women were dishonored or raped, nearly 10 million people had to take shelter in neighboring India as

refugees and 30 million were displaced from their homes. Within 8 months of its independence, its Foreign Minister, Abdus Samad Azad, applied for the UN membership on August 8, 1972 but owing to opposition by Pakistan and especially its then supporter, People's Republic of China's opposition, its membership was delayed by more than two years. China was successful to replace Taiwan as a Security Council member only in 1971 and it cast its First Veto against Bangladesh membership to the UN on the ground that pending reasonable settlement of issues between Pakistan and India, and Bangladesh and Pakistan, Bangladesh cannot be admitted as a UN member. However, once China realized the reality on the ground and stopped objecting, Bangladesh became a UN member.

Good news is, although China vetoed its membership but once it became a member, Sino-Bangla relationship continuously improved and solidified. Like ever changing world, in the realm of global diplomacy, there is no permanent enmity and hatred. Yesterday's enemy is today's best friend and trading partner.

For example, it is interesting to note that although Nixon-Kissinger administration of USA was deadly opposed to Bangladesh, and they violated all its national and international laws to assist Pakistani military junta as per the 'Blood Telegram,' a recently published book based on Nixon/Kissinger tapes by Professor Gary Bass of Princeton University, yet once 93,000 occupation forces of Pakistan surrendered to the Joint Forces of Bangladesh and India, and Bangladesh became a reality, it stopped opposing Bangladesh membership to the UN. In fact, it supported Bangladesh membership to the UN.

As per Bangladesh's former Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali, when a Bangladesh delegation met US Ambassador and PR George Bush (Senior) in November, 1971 much before its independence, when asked about the prospect of Bangladesh's independence, he (George Bush) opined that 'Bangladesh would be

independent much earlier than expected,' and NY Times published an editorial supporting Bangladesh independence in November. Interestingly, although Nixon-Kissinger were opposed to Bangladesh but US Ambassador George Bush met the Bangladesh delegation led by Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury of the exiled government of Bangladesh.

We may recall historical fact that Bengal's loss of independence in 1757 resulted in the Independence of United States of America. During late 1760s and early 1770s, the British Raj was engaged in two wars; one in the East in Bengal and another in the West in North America---war with American colonies and West Indies and Caribbean. When it became difficult for the British to continue two wars as its exchequer was dwindling, the issue was debated in the British Parliament. To overcome financial difficulties, the British imposed many taxes including the Townsend Tax that resulted in a movement of 'No taxation without representation' and the patriots of Massachusetts ceremoniously dump Tea chests of Bengal in Boston and Salem harbors as protest. The debates in the British Parliament unearthed that on those days the British Empire used to receive more than 100 times revenue from Bengal vis-a-vis North American colonies, West Indies and the Caribbean. Therefore, the British Prime Minister William Pitts Jr. decided to hold onto Bengal and granted Independence to American colonies in 1776. Therefore, Bengal's loss resulted in the independence of United States of America and Americans honored Prime Minister Pitts by naming Pittsburg after him.

Nearly 200 years later, when Bangladesh was fighting for its own independence, although Nixon-Kissinger administration opposed Bangladesh, many American professors, lawmakers, singers and musicians, doctors, longshoremen and common people including American diplomats supported its independence. They wanted to stop the genocide in



Bangabandhu with UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim

Bangladesh. There was tremendous goodwill for Bangladesh all across USA. According to AH Mahmood Ali, the then representative of the exiled government of Bangladesh in New York, when Bangladesh delegation came to New York in November 1971, the JFK Airport authority extended to them all the State VIP facilities to the delegation as if they represented an independent government.

Similar sentiments could be found elsewhere. For Example, Harvard University Professors Dean Edward Mason, Professor Stephen Marglin, Professor Robert Dorfman, Professor Gustav Papanek declared as early as April, 1971 that 'emergence of independent Bangladesh is inevitable' (15 Professors of Massachusetts that helped Bangladesh Liberation Movement were honored in 1996 at a reception at Tuft University chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and in the last 3 years, nearly 658 Foreign nationals have been honored by Bangladesh government for their contribution to Bangladesh Liberation in 1971) and NY Mayor George Lindsay supported Bangladesh independence as early as June, 1971 and their views were echoed by US Senator Edward M. Kennedy. French Cultural Minister Andre Malraux wanted to go to Bengal and fight alongside Bangladesh Liberation Forces.

The Security Council members that supported Bangladesh's UN membership are India, Soviet Union, Argentina, Belgium, France, Italy, Japan, Panama, U.K., USA, and Yugoslavia. In fact, the

Soviet Union (USSR) thrice cast veto from December 5 through December 7 and both India and USSR steadfastly stayed behind the cause of Bangladesh. They continuously and consistently upheld the principle of justice and adhered to the UN Charter Article 4 that laid down the conditions of UN membership. We are indeed indebted to them. Besides the said countries, Australia, New Zealand, et al supported the cause of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh believes that through dialogues and debates, through negotiations and mediation, and by inculcating a mindset of Culture of Peace, the global community can surely achieve sustainable peace, security and stability. It believes that all violence and tensions, misunderstanding and wars emanate from a mindset of intolerance, a mindset of disrespect and hatred. Therefore, if we can create a mindset of tolerance, a mindset of respect and love for others, irrespective of creed, color, ethnicity, religion, or language, we are sure to have sustainable pro-people, pro-planet, inclusive, prosperous and peaceful world for all.

Some forty years ago, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his statement made in the General Assembly, had given the world a roadmap to achieve these goals. This roadmap remains valid even today.

[Copied from Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen's write-up on observing the 40th year of Bangladesh membership to the UN in September 2014]



Bangabandhu's UN speech in Bangla and other memories

Mohiuddin Ahmed

It was a letter of only three sentences. But it was a historic letter. This letter bears testimony to the sorrows and miseries, happiness and pains, smiles and cries, expectation and sacrifices of seven and half a crore Bengalee people. It is also stained with the blood of thirty lac (3.0 million) martyrs who gloriously sacrificed their lives for the freedom of their motherland. Although I was aware of the content of this letter, during my 20 years of diplomatic service in post-independent Bangladesh, I have never seen it. I searched for it both in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as in the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN, but to no avail.

During my tenure in the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN, New York from 1991-1992, I came across this letter in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library of the UN. One day as I was browsing the UN documents on the debates that took place in the General Assembly and in the Security Council on India-Pakistan war on the eve of Bangladesh's independence, as well as other documents on the unexpected difficulties encountered for Bangladesh's UN membership, I found

this letter. Immediately it reminded me, yet one more time, of the bloody history of our independence. The letter read as follows:

"I have the honour, on behalf of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, to submit this application of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for membership of the United Nations.

I declare that the People's Republic of Bangladesh accepts the obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations and that it solemnly undertakes to fulfill that obligation.

I shall be grateful if this application is placed before the Security Council immediately, and other appropriate action is taken in this regard.

M. Abdus Samad Azad, Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh"

The then Foreign Minister of independent Bangladesh M. Abdus Samad Azad sent this letter to the then Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Kurt Waldheim on 8 August 1972. According to the Charter of the United Nations, any peace-loving

independent country, by pledging to accept the obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations, may apply for the UN membership. The UN Rules of Procedure dictates that the UN Secretary General, having received a request for a UN membership, should bring it to the attention of the President of the Security Council. If necessary, the President of the Security Council may informally consult members of the Council before convening the formal meeting to discuss the membership application. After necessary consultations, the Security Council sends the application to the Security Council Committee on the Admission of New Members to the UN which consists of all members of the Council. The Committee on Admission considers the application for membership in formal meetings and reports its recommendations to the Council. The Security Council, based on the report of the Committee on Admission, decides on the membership either for or against granting the membership. If the Security Council decides favourably, it sends its recommendation to the General Assembly which then resolves the application usually by granting the membership.

After receiving the application from Bangladesh, Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, following the standard practice, sent the application to the Secretary General for consideration. Immediately after receiving the application from Bangladesh, the Security Council convened a formal meeting on 10 August 1972 to consider the application of Bangladesh. The application of Bangladesh for membership to the UN was the only item on the Security Council's agenda for that day. Any formal UN meeting starts with adoption of the agenda. However, Mr. Huang Hua, the Chinese Representative to the UN, voted against the adoption of the draft agenda and thus started the prolonged Chinese opposition to Bangladesh's membership to the UN. It was merely a procedural matter. But China opposed

the adoption of the agenda. A vote was then held to decide whether Bangladesh's application would be sent to the Committee on Admission.

Argentina, Belgium, France, India, Italy, Japan, Panama, Soviet Union, the UK, the USA, and Yugoslavia voted in favour. Only China voted against. Three African countries- Guinea, Somalia, and Sudan did not take part in the voting.

The Security Council then sent the application of Bangladesh to the Admission Committee for scrutiny and asked it to report to the Council. Since this was a procedural matter, in spite of being a permanent member to the Security Council, Chinese negative vote could not prevent the Council from sending the application to the Admission Committee for consideration. Veto does not apply to procedural matter.

One day after the meeting of the Security Council, the Admission Committee held its meeting on 11 August. In that meeting, the Chinese representative said that until the implementation of the relevant resolutions adopted in the General Assembly and in the Security Council in 1971 and until the resolution of the pending issues between India and Pakistan and between Pakistan and Bangladesh, Bangladesh was "not qualified at all to be admitted to the United Nations and therefore, the Chinese delegation was firmly opposed to the consideration of the application by the Security Council under existing circumstances."

In absence of consensus on the issue, the Admission Committee decided to reconvene on 21 August 1972. In the meeting on 21 August, the Chinese representative reiterated his opposition to Bangladesh's membership. In the face of continuous division among the members of the Admission Committee, the President of the Committee, Belgium, decided to conduct a vote to learn the position of the committee members. Again Argentina, Belgium, France, India, Italy, Japan, Panama, Soviet Union, the UK, the USA and

Yugoslavia voted in favour. This time Guinea voted against. China, Somalia, and Sudan did not take part in the voting.

A meeting of the Security Council under Belgium's presidency took place on 24 August to consider the report submitted by the Admission Committee in relation to the application of Bangladesh for membership. Five Permanent Members of the Security Council- the US, the UK, the Soviet Union, France and the People's Republic of China and nine non-permanent members of the Council at that time—Argentina, Belgium, India, Italy, Japan, Panama, Guinea, Somalia, and Sudan—were present in that meeting. The agenda of the meeting was to consider the following draft resolution sponsored by the four members of the Security Council--the UK, India, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia:

The Security Council,
Recommends to the General Assembly that the People's Republic of Bangladesh be admitted to the Membership in the United Nations.

The report of the Administration Committee on Bangladesh's membership was also on the agenda of the Security Council's meeting on 23 August. Immediately following the opening remarks of Belgium, in its capacity as the President of the Security Council, the Chinese delegate, taking the floor as the first speaker, once again vehemently opposed Bangladesh's membership for the third time. The debate remained unfinished and the meeting ended with the decision to resume the debate the following day.

On Friday, 25 August 1972, the meeting of the Security Council scheduled for 3:00 pm in the afternoon commenced at 3:25pm. After prolonged debates on the issue for the two days, three separate votes took place on Bangladesh's membership. The first vote was taken on the draft resolution submitted by China proposing postponement of the

consideration of Bangladesh's membership pending the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the UN adopted on India-Pakistan war. China, Guinea and Sudan voted in favour. India, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia voted against. Argentina, Belgium, France, Italy, Japan, Panama, Somalia, the UK and the USA abstained from voting. The resolution was thus rejected as it failed to obtain necessary positive votes.

The second vote took place on an amendment proposal tabled by Guinea, Somalia and Sudan. The amendment was proposed to incorporate the following in the draft resolution earlier proposed by the four members of the Security Council—the UK, India, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia:

"Subject to the immediate implementation of those provisions of the Geneva conventions of 1949 relating to the release and repatriation of prisoners of war and civilian internees as mentioned in the Security Council Resolution 307 (1971)"

This amendment proposal was also rejected. Guinea, Somalia, Sudan and the US voted in favour of it. India, Soviet Union, the UK and Yugoslavia voted against while Argentina, Belgium, China, France, Italy, Japan and Panama abstained from voting.

Finally, the resolution proposed by the four members of the Security Council—the UK, India, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia was voted. The following 11 countries voted in favour of Bangladesh's membership to the UN: Argentina, Belgium, France, India, Italy, Japan, Panama, Soviet Union, the UK, the USA, and Yugoslavia. The People's Republic of China, one of the five permanent members of the Security Council, vetoed the resolution. Guinea, Somalia and Sudan abstained from voting. The resolution on Bangladesh's membership to the UN could not be adopted because of the veto of China. China, which was out of the United Nations for twenty five years, thus cast its first veto against Bangladesh on 25 August 1972.

China's veto in the Security Council on 25 August 1972 against Bangladesh's UN membership broke our hearts in London.

From our student life, we were accustomed to seeing the greatness of the People's Republic of China. We used to consider Chairman Mao Zedong as the colossus for all the oppressed people of the world. As a student of Dhaka University in 1962, I went to the Tejgaon Airport in Dhaka and stood outside the airport's railing under the scorching sun to welcome the Chinese Premier, Zhou Enlai, who momentarily paid a short visit to Dhaka. We could not see Zhou Enlai on that day but we considered ourselves very lucky as we could at least see the plane carrying him. Happy and content, we returned to the Salimullah Muslim Hall of Dhaka University with a euphoric frame of mind.

During the war of liberation in 1971, when we were based in London, we had some personal experience about the People's Republic of China. I would reflect on those on a different occasion. But the sad role that China played in the UN in 1971 and 1972 in relation to Bangladesh's Liberation War and Bangladesh's membership to the UN is now part of the historic record of the UN General Assembly and the Security Council. These are not anyone's personal opinions but are official records.

Finally, on 17 September 1974, we became the 136th member of the UN. Fortunately, China did not oppose our membership at this time.

Since then, our engagement with the UN family has increased manifold. Immediately after our UN membership in 1974, Bangabandhu was the first person to have delivered a statement at the UN on behalf of Bangladesh. Remarkably, he delivered his statement in Bangla. This was the time Bangla was first used in any meeting within the UN family.

Then, during the rule of President Ziaur Rahman, Bangladesh was elected as a member of the Security Council in the

non-permanent member category for a term of two years defeating Japan. A few years later, during the reign of President Ershad, we were, however, defeated in contest with Malaysia for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council. Nonetheless, during Ershad's regime in 1986, Mr. Humayun Rashid Choudhury, the then Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, got elected uncontested as the President of the General Assembly. We have to wait for nearly one century and a half to be elected again in this position. Before that our turn will not come.

The former Foreign Secretary (Later Finance Minister) of Bangladesh, SAMS Kibria performed the role of Executive Secretary (with the rank of Under Secretary General of the UN) of ESCAP for two terms. It is to be mentioned that in the UN hierarchy, the rank of Under Secretary General falls immediately below the position of the UN Secretary General. In the UN system, this was the highest post ever held by a Bengalee. Many of our citizens work in the UN system but none from Bangladesh ever held the office of an Under Secretary General before. After Kibria, our Permanent Representative to the UN, Mr. Anwarul Karim Chowdhury, was appointed for only one term as the High Representative of the Land Locked, Least Developing and Small Island Countries (OHRLLS) at the Under Secretary General level and in 2012, Ms. Ameerah Haq, a very successful UN professional, was appointed as the Under Secretary General of Department of Field Support (DFS), the largest department of the UN that manages nearly \$8.8 billion budget plus over 120,000 peacekeepers composing troops, police and civilian professionals. She is the first Bangladeshi woman who was appointed in such a senior position at the UN.

These make all of us proud. Needless to say, all these have been possible because of our membership to the UN.

We have benefited from the UN family

in numerous ways. We are also sincere in carrying out our responsibilities as a member of the UN family. But whenever a significant event takes place at the UN, or in the context of our enhanced engagement with the UN, I am always reminded of that three-sentence letter written by Mr. Abdus Samad Azad.

China is today one of our close friends. It helped us on different occasions in the past and in future we hope for similar gesture from China. The leadership of China who played negative roles during our war of liberation in 1971 and subsequently opposed Bangladesh's UN membership in 1972 was eventually discredited and rejected in their own country for various reasons. The People's Republic of China of 1971-72 is not the China it is now. Many phenomenal changes have taken place in that country and are taking place now.

In 1967, when we went to Lahore Foreign Service Academy for training as Pakistan Foreign Service Officer, Mr. Akram Zaki, one of the Deputy Directors of the Academy, made a famous statement in his first or second speech:

"There is no permanent friend or permanent enemy of a country. All that it has are its permanent interests."

Anyone involved in diplomacy should accept this as their first diplomatic lesson. We have done the same.

(Mohiuddin Ahmed is a former Ambassador and Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This write-up was originally published in Bangla in the Daily Sangbad on 27 September 2004. This has been translated into English by Md. Faruk Hossain, Counsellor, Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the UN, New York. An update on recent developments relating to UNGA was added by Dr. Abdul Momen, former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, New York)



Bangladesh, United Nations and the ‘I’ word

Hasan Ferdous

Shashi Tharoor, my former boss at the United Nations, was – and perhaps still is – a fiery defender of the United Nations. He was once asked by a BBC interviewer how did the UN feel about the “i” word, i for irrelevant? Mr. Tharoor, without missing a heartbeat, replied, “Oh, I think the ‘i’ word for us is actually ‘indispensable.’”

That was about 15 years ago. Today, I wonder how does he feel about the dreaded “i” word, and yes, I mean “i” for irrelevant. For a starter, I would mention just one word, Syria.

In August 2016, the United Nations envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, walked out of an international humanitarian task force meeting in Geneva within minutes after it had opened. All major parties involved in the conflict were present, including the Russians and Americans, and their proxy fighters, the Assad regime and

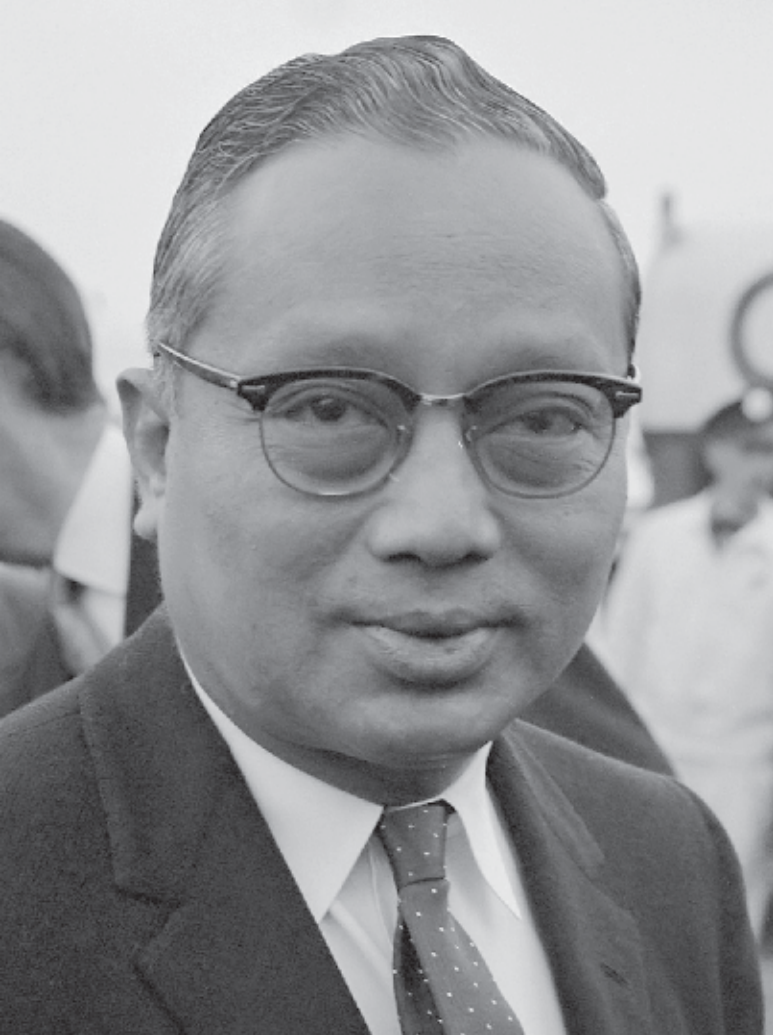
the “moderate” rebels fighting the government. After spending months and weeks talking to all sides on the need for a humanitarian pause so that urgently needed food aid could reach the people of the besieged towns of Madaya, Zabadani, Foah and Kafraya, the parties were still nowhere near an agreement. It made “no sense” to continue talking just for the sake of talking, he said, and walked out of the meeting.

The same day, August 18, an Associated Press photographer captured the image of a boy rescued from the rubbles of Aleppo. The city had suffered constant bombing from all sides, trapping nearly half a million people in death throes. The latest bombing, by all indications, was by the Russians, a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. The boy – his name we later learned is Omran Daqneesh – was placed on an orange chair, his face and hair dusty

and bloodied, his eyes dazed. He was completely silent, not even a teardrop in his eyes. Within hours, the photo went viral, making him the new poster boy of humanity’s collective failure to stand by the neediest.

As it happens, the UN has been begging the warring parties and their patrons for a 48-hour humanitarian pause, but the UN’s big honchos, the five permanent members of the Security Council, on whose shoulders the world placed the heavy burden of maintaining international peace and security, just could not agree on how to proceed. On August 22, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Stephen O’Brien, met face to face with the “gang of five” and looked straight into their eyes.

“I’m not going to pretend – I’m angry, very angry,” he said referring to the carnage in Syria for the last five years. “This callous carnage that is Syria has long since moved from the cynical to



UN Secretary-General U Thant

the sinful,” he said. Looking bleary and sounding hoarse, the UN Under-secretary-General begged, “So please: now is the moment, this instant, to put differences aside, come together as one, and stop this humanitarian shame upon us all, once and for all.”

There was pin drop silence in the Council chamber, long faces of the world’s powerful cast downward. Meanwhile, thousands of miles away in Aleppo and other cities in Syria, bombs continued to drop.

So why is it that the UN cannot do anything about the slow strangulation of an entire nation? As a former UN staff member, I am quite familiar with the stock answer. “This is the responsibility of member states. The world should hold them accountable.”

There is logic to this answer. Sure, the UN is the sum total of its member states, but how can we not recognise that their failure to carry out their solemn commitment to “peace and international security” is actually the failure of the United Nations? When the organisation’s key members fail to perform their duties year after year, the relevance of the organisation itself comes into question. There is no two-ways about it.

Time and again, the UN has found itself on the wrong side of history. Nearly 50 years ago, in 1971, Bangladesh faced a

similar annihilation at the hands of an occupying army. For nine months, the Security Council failed to meet – not even once – due to disagreements among its key members. Finally, when Bangladesh – with the help of the Indian army – was on the verge of winning its freedom, the Security Council woke up from its slumber to stop Bangladesh’s march to freedom. The big honchos spent several futile days and nights, negotiating a ceasefire. Neither Bangladesh nor India heeded to their maneuverings, and thirteen days later, on December 16, Bangladesh was finally free. Five days later, the Security Council managed to adopt a resolution calling for a durable ceasefire. By then, of course, all guns had fallen silent. The resulting laughter could be heard even in charred villages in Bangladesh, thousands of miles away.

Then Secretary-General U Thant memorably captured his own frustrations in getting the big league boys to act on a humanitarian crisis. In his memoirs, *View from the UN*, he wrote: “Throughout the struggle, the United Nations had made no move to act; my pleas and warnings to the Security Council, both privately and publicly, fell on deaf ears. The Council was immobilised, both by the refusal of the parties directly involved (India and Pakistan) and by the major powers, to face up to their obligations under the Charter to confront the issues forthrightly.”

Throughout 1971, the UN’s principal preoccupation was to encourage Bangladeshi refugees to return home, although there was no guarantee of their security. When in June, a correspondent asked U Thant why the UN had not come to grips with the real problem of Bangladesh, and instead had dealt only with peripheral humanitarian problems, the Secretary-General stammered to acknowledge that the entire episode was “a very terrible blot on the page of human history.”

That was not the last time the UN was left watching people die. The Bangladesh genocide was followed by similar carnages in Cambodia, the Balkans and Rwanda. Unable to get its “gang of five” to agree on political action, the UN has increasingly turned its attention to humanitarian and emergency assistance. Useful work no doubt, but that only makes the UN an expanded – and more glorified – International Red Cross. Since the Red Cross does not have to deal with political prima donnas, it could be more effective, only if it could be equipped with more resources. Why, it could even replace a hobbled United Nations!

As for the question whether the UN is “irrelevant” or “indispensable”, go ask young Omran and hundreds of thousands of Syrians like him. I have no doubt what the answer would be.

Hasan Ferdous is an author based in New York

The way UN embraced Bangladesh

Md. Faruk Hossain

The membership of Bangladesh to the United Nations on 17 September 1974 was a major diplomatic breakthrough for Bangladesh and an equally major blow for those who were trying to deny Bangladesh the legitimacy that the UN membership was meant for it. Like other new nations, the newly-independent Bangladesh, soon after independence, was craving for international recognition from the powerful states as well as from the international organisations, in particular the United Nations. The task of obtaining the UN membership, which was to accord on Bangladesh a final seal of international recognition was, however, rendered particularly difficult because it was precisely this recognition that some states, in particular Pakistan and China, were desperate to deny it. As a result, Bangladesh had to wait for more than two years after applying for the membership of this world body on 8 August 1972. The delay was caused by the entrenched diplomatic maneuver against Bangladesh's membership by Pakistan supported and sustained by Pakistan's trusted international ally at that time, China. As historic documents now vindicate, it was because of Chinese opposition in the Security Council that delayed the Security Council decision on Bangladesh's application.

This section has two objectives: (a) based on relevant documents to briefly discuss the role of the UN during the liberation war of Bangladesh and (b) to highlight the events, in particular those related to Bangladesh's UN membership, that took place in the UN from 8 August 1972 when Bangladesh applied for the UN membership till 17 September 1974 when it became the 136th member of the United Nations. The objective is not to form any judgment but to objectively

present the relevant hard facts for the subsequent generation of readers interested in the history of Bangladesh-UN relations and in the politics that took place in the UN in relation to Bangladesh's UN membership.

The UN and Bangladesh's Liberation War

An objective analysis of the relevant documents available at the UN confirms that the role of the UN during Bangladesh's Liberation War was, at best, that of a concerned but helpless observer. While it assumed part of the burden of maintaining the millions of refugees pouring into India, it lacked the willingness or the ability to take positive steps to prevent the tragic events that were gradually, but surely unfolding in East Pakistan.

To his credit, the Secretary-General U Thant did take the initiative to bring the gravity of the situation to the attention of the Security Council. However, he did not pursue the matter any further. When the Council deemed it fit not to meet formally to discuss the issue, he seemed to have chosen the course of least resistance. He never insisted that a Security Council meeting be called to discuss a situation which, in his words, had by July 1971 become a potential threat to international peace and security and had the potential of adversely affecting the United Nations effectiveness "for international co-operation and action." He had clearly perceived the danger, for in his introduction to the Annual Report of the Secretary-General, issued on September 19, 1971 he said: "In a disaster of such vast proportions, the international community has a clear obligation to help the Governments and peoples concerned in every possible way. But, as I have indicated, the basic problem can

be solved only if a political solution based on reconciliation and the respect of humanitarian principles is achieved." However, he did not use the authority vested with him under Article 99 of the UN Charter to bring the matter before the Security Council for discussion, nor did he ask the General Assembly to meet in an emergency session since the Council was unwilling to meet.

As a consequence, not until full-scale war between India and Pakistan had erupted did the Security Council and the General Assembly see it fit to discuss the tragic events that had already occurred in East Pakistan. To recount briefly, the Council discussed the situation on December 4, 5, and 6, 1971. On the first day of discussion, Pakistan accused India of unprovoked "aggression," described the East Pakistan crisis prior to December 3 as internal and therefore "outside the Security Council's concern" and asserted that it was "for the Security Council to find the means to make India desist from its war of aggression. The only means devised by the Security Council, consistent with Pakistan's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and with the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of Member States, would command Pakistan's support and co-operation.

India replied that in spite of the humanitarian efforts by the UN, killings had continued in East Pakistan and warned the Council that it "would not be a party to any solution that would mean continuation of the oppression of the East Pakistan people. The representatives of the U.S, Italy, Somalia, France, Japan, China, Syrian Arab Republic, Belgium, Burundi, Argentina, the United Kingdom, and Sierra Leone, all members of the Security Council at that time, called for an immediate ceasefire, while the representatives of the Soviet Union and Poland urged the Council to seek a political settlement, taking into account the wishes of the East Pakistanis. A draft resolution introduced by the United States was vetoed by the Soviet Union.

Charges and countercharges were repeated on December 5, with Pakistan and China forcefully invoking Article 2(7) of the Charter to claim that the Council should demand an end to India's armed intervention, while the Soviet Union accused China of trying "to divert attention from the main cause of the conflict, which was the monstrous and bloody repression of East Pakistan. Another resolution calling for a ceasefire was vetoed by the Soviet Union. Similar arguments were again repeated on December 6 when the Indian representative urged the Council to "consider some realities". He said: "Refugees were a reality. Genocide and oppression were a reality. The extinction of all civil rights was a reality. Provocation and aggression of various kinds by Pakistan from March 25 onwards were a reality. Bangladesh itself was a reality, as was its recognition by India. The Council was nowhere near reality."

Since the Council was paralyzed and there were apparently no prospects for a consensus among the major powers, the Council eventually adopted a resolution on 06 December 1971 (in its 1608 meeting, Resolution No. S/RES/303) pursuant to which it decided to refer the question to the General Assembly, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 377 A(v) of November 3, 1950. The resolution was adopted by 11 votes to none, while France, the People's Republic of Poland, Soviet Union and United Kingdom abstained.

The General Assembly met twice on December 7 and adopted a resolution (in its 2023th plenary meeting, Resolution No. 2739 [XXVI]) by a vote of 104 in favour, to 11 against, with 10 abstentions, which called for an immediate ceasefire and mutual troops withdrawal by India and Pakistan. The overwhelming majority in favour of the resolution demonstrated the concern of the members for territorial integrity and Article 2(7). Pakistan explained its interpretation of the resolution to mean that "no attempt would be made to disrupt the national

unity of Pakistan, and that any attempts by the General Assembly to intervene in the situation would be in the interest and under the principle of the territorial integrity of Pakistan."

Since India did not comply with the Assembly recommendations, on 12 December, with Pakistan facing imminent defeat in East Pakistan, the United States requested that the Security Council be convened. The Council met seven times between December 12 and 21. Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto rushed to New York to make the case for a resolution on the ceasefire. The council continued deliberations for four days. On 15 December, Bhutto made a dramatic speech. But frustrated by the failure of the Council to adopt a ceasefire resolution and the inaction of the United Nations in general to stop what he described as Indian aggression on Pakistan, he dramatically ripped up his speech and left the Council. By the time the Council finalised the ceasefire proposals, Pakistan's forces in East Pakistan had already surrendered on 16th December and the war had ended, making the measures merely academic. As the eventual surrender of the Pakistani army had already materialised, the tone of the Council debates shifted from an unrelenting emphasis on an immediate ceasefire to fresh concern for a political settlement. The Soviet Union vetoed one more resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire and troops withdrawal but finally the Council adopted a resolution on December 21 (in its 1621 meeting, Resolution No. S/RES/307) by which it demanded that a durable ceasefire and cessation of all hostilities on the India-Pakistan subcontinent be strictly observed until troops withdrawals had taken place. Ironically, India had already declared a ceasefire unilaterally on December 17 after the surrender of the Pakistan armed forces in East Pakistan.

The Quest for International Recognition

As mentioned before, soon after independence, Bangladesh was desperate to gain recognition from as many countries as possible. Both India (6 December 1971) and Bhutan (7 December 1971) had already recognised Bangladesh before Bangladesh's independence on 16 December 1971. East European countries and countries of the Soviet Bloc soon followed the suit. In parallel to recognition from friendly countries, Bangladesh was keen to obtain membership of international organisations, in particular that of the United Nations. This is attested by Bangladesh's insistence on early application for the UN membership despite advice to the contrary from several close quarters.

Dr. Iftekhar A. Chowdhury (PhD Thesis, Australian National University, 1980) mentioned that on 9 August 1972 when Bangabandhu was convalescing in London, the Belgian Ambassador (Belgium was the President of the Security Council at that time) called on him to discuss the matter. The ambassador suggested deferment of application. The British Prime Minister Edward Heath tendered similar advice mentioning the possibility of a Chinese veto, and pointing out that once that occurs, it would be more difficult to get a second application through in the absence.

But it appears that Bangladesh had already taken the decision to apply for the UN Membership and had in fact submitted its application on 8 August 1972.

Following the standard practice, the then Foreign Minister of Bangladesh M. Abdus Samad Azad sent a letter to the UN Secretary General seeking the UN membership. The Secretary General, in accordance with Rule 137 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and Rule 59 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, immediately circulated the letter to the Security Council. The original letters from the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh and the Secretary General are as follows:

UNITED NATIONS



**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**



**SECURITY
COUNCIL**

Distr.
GENERAL

A/8754
S/10759
6 August 1972

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Twenty-seventh session

SECURITY COUNCIL
Twenty-seventh year

ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Application of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for
admission to membership in the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with rule 137 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and rule 59 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General has the honour to circulate herewith the application of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for admission to membership in the United Nations contained in a letter dated 8 August 1972 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Secretary-General.

LETTER DATED 8 AUGUST 1972 FROM THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour, on behalf of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, to submit this application of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for membership of the United Nations.

I declare that the People's Republic of Bangladesh accepts the obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations and that it solemnly undertakes to fulfil those obligations.

I shall be grateful if this application is placed before the Security Council immediately, and other appropriate action is taken in this regard.

(Signed) M. Abdus SAMAD AZAD
Foreign Minister of the People's
Republic of Bangladesh



Records available at the UN suggest that the first debate in the Security Council on Bangladesh's membership application was held on 10 August 1972 (1658th meeting), in which the representative of China, speaking in reference to the applicability of Article 4 of the Charter, maintained that "in view of the circumstances that prevailed in the Indian subcontinent, it would be contrary to the principles of the Charter and the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, to consider the application for admission of Bangladesh into the UN membership." He further added: before the true implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions (GA Resolution 2793 (XXVI) and SC Resolution 307 (197 I) and pending a reasonable settlement of the issues between India and Pakistan and between Pakistan and Bangladesh, "Bangladesh is not at all qualified to be admitted into the United Nations", and the Security Council's consideration of Bangladesh's application for membership in the United Nations is entirely out of the question. When one refuses to implement the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, how can one

possibly speak of "accepting the obligations contained in the present Charter" and of being "able and willing to carry out those obligations". The representative of the USSR then stated: As far as the questions raised in the Chinese representative's statement are concerned, we should like to point out the following: "To put forward as a condition for the admission of Bangladesh to the United Nations that Bangladesh should first implement United Nations resolutions is artificial and completely unjustified. As we are all aware, the United Nations Charter lays down no conditions for the admission of a State to membership in the United Nations other than those contained in Article 4 paragraph 1 which states: Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving States which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations." There can be no doubt that the People's Republic of Bangladesh fulfils all the requirements listed in Article 4 paragraph 1. It is an independent, sovereign and peace-loving State which pursues a policy of non-alignment and friendly coopera-

tion aimed at easing international tension." After further discussion, the President of the Security Council referred the application of Bangladesh to the Committee on the Admission of New Members to the UN. At its 40th meeting, held on 11 August, the Committee on Admission under the Chairmanship of Mr. Van Ussel (Belgium) considered the application of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The representatives of Argentina, Belgium, France, India, Italy, Japan, Panama, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Yugoslavia expressed their support for the application of Bangladesh which, in their view, fulfilled all the requirements for membership laid down in Article 4 of the Charter. The representative of China referred the Chinese statement made in the Council a day earlier and firmly opposed the consideration of the application by the Security Council under existing circumstances. The representatives of Guinea, Somalia and the Sudan indicated that their delegations would prefer to postpone consideration of the application in order to permit

more time for consultation and the receipt of further information. Unable to make a decision in view of the Chinese opposition, in accordance with a proposal made by the representative of Japan, the Committee decided to consider the issue on 21 August and to report to the Security Council its conclusions on the item by 21 August. At the 41st meeting of the Committee, held on 21 August, the representative of China reiterated his country's opposition to Bangladesh's membership. He mentioned that his delegation would submit a draft resolution to the Security Council (TS/107681) whereby the Council would decide to defer consideration of the question until the relevant UN resolutions had been fully implemented. The representative of India then introduced a draft resolution [S/C.2/L.I] sponsored by India, the USSR and Yugoslavia, which read as follows: "The Committee on the Admission of New Members, established under Rule 59 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, having considered the application for membership by the People's Republic of Bangladesh (S/10759) "Decides to recommend to the Security Council that the People's Republic of Bangladesh be accepted as a Member of the United Nations," The sponsors reiterated that Bangladesh met all the requirements for membership set out in Article 4 of the Charter and opposed any further delay which might require a waiver of the time-limits laid down in Rule 60. Supported by some other delegations, they stressed that the sole requirement for admission of new Members to the United Nations were contained in Article 4 of the Charter and any other considerations were contrary to the Charter. The representative of the United Kingdom indicated that they were prepared to support the three-Power draft resolution. The representative of Guinea said that they favoured postponement of the question until the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council had been implemented as proposed by the representative of China. The representatives of Sudan and Somalia pointed out that no delegation

had opposed the application per se. They favoured postponement of the question to allow more time for consultations and agreement, until it became clear that the conditions set out in Security Council Resolution 307 (1971) in so far as they concerned Bangladesh would be fulfilled. In the face of obvious division among the members, the Committee then took a vote on the attitudes of members towards the application of Bangladesh for membership in the United Nations. Eleven delegates favourable (Argentina, Belgium, France, India, Italy, Japan, Panama, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Yugoslavia), one delegate (Guinea) was not favourable, and three delegates (China, Somalia and Sudan) did not participate in the vote. In explanation of vote after the vote, the representatives of Somalia and Sudan said that they had not participated in the voting because in their view on the basis of the trend of the discussion, the question put to the vote should have been which delegates favoured the immediate admission of Bangladesh and which favoured postponement. The representative of Guinea indicated that for the reasons already explained, she had voted against the immediate admission of Bangladesh. The representative of China reiterated again the principled stand of his country and firmly opposed a vote on the draft resolution submitted by India, the USSR and Yugoslavia and was also opposed to the voting on the attitudes of the delegates. For, such practices, in her view, were in total contravention of the rules of procedure of the Security Council and were, therefore, illegal and null and void. Meanwhile, on 20 August 1972, A. Akhund, the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations sent a letter (S/10766) to the Security Council opposing the consideration by the Security Council of Bangladesh's application for the UN membership. He stated that "the Government of Pakistan believes that, until the UN resolutions of December 1971 have been fully implemented, action on the "Bangladesh"

application for membership would not be proper or opportune. It fears precipitate action may serve only to engender fruitless debate in the Security Council and give a setback to the salutary trend towards reconciliation set in motion in the subcontinent by the Simla Agreement of 3 July 1972. The Government of Pakistan expresses the hope that Members of the United Nations and, more particularly, members of the Security Council, on whom devolves a special responsibility in this respect, will bear in mind these considerations in examining the "Bangladesh" application." In response to this letter from the representative of Pakistan, the Charge d' Affaires of the Embassy of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in Washington DC Mr. AMA Muhith sent a letter on 23 August addressed to the President of the Security Council stating that the membership of the United Nations cannot be linked with the state of bilateral relations between the State seeking membership and any other State, whether it itself is a Member or not. The Charter of the United Nations offers no basis for injecting bilateral issues when the application for membership of any State is being considered. Indeed, the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of 28 May 1948 on conditions of membership in the United Nations stated that an existing Member, in deciding on the qualifications of a new applicant, should be guided exclusively by Article 4 of the Charter and not by extraneous political considerations. It is clear that Pakistan has brought up these and other irrelevant matters with the sole purpose of delaying the admission of Bangladesh to the United Nations and thus increasing the tension in the subcontinent. Such an attempt is not only legally inadmissible but is fraught with the danger of establishing an undesirable precedent for the future. The Government of Bangladesh therefore considers that it is not under any obligation to reply to these irrelevant and unfounded allegations; nor it is the intention of my Government to enter into a polemical controversy with Pakistan or to point out the many failures of Pakistan to carry out its international

obligations in respect of Bangladesh. In the wake of the inability of the Committee on Admission to make a recommendation on Bangladesh's membership, the Security Council decided to have a debate on the issue in the afternoon session on 25th August 1972 in its 1660th meeting (the session actually commenced at 3:25pm). In view of the existing division among the members, three separate votes took place on that day. First, China introduced a resolution proposing that consideration of Bangladesh's application be delayed until all prisoners of war on the subcontinent were repatriated and until all foreign soldiers were removed from Bangladesh. The resolution received only three favourable votes, from China, Sudan and Guinea. There were nine abstentions (Argentina, Belgium, France, Italy, Japan, Panama, Somalia, the UK and the USA) and three votes against it (India, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia).

A formal vote on the draft resolution (S/10771 23 dated August 1972) sponsored by India, the USSR, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Yugoslavia was then proposed. Before any vote was taken, a desperate effort was made by Somalia, with the support of Sudan and Guinea, to try to head off the Chinese veto and delay consideration of Bangladesh's application. Abdulrahim Abby Farah, the representative of Somalia, introduced the amendment to the membership resolution sponsored by the Soviet Union, India, Yugoslavia and Great Britain. The amendment would have put off consideration of membership for some time, but it failed to obtain necessary support with a voting record of four in favour (Guinea, Somalia, Sudan and the US), four against (India, Soviet Union, the UK and Yugoslavia) and seven abstentions (Argentina, Belgium, China, France, Italy, Japan and Panama).

When the time came for the crucial vote on immediate admission of Bangladesh, after the 11 favourable votes were registered, the president of the Council for this month, Edouard Longerstey of Belgium, called for the votes for those opposed. Mr. Huang Hua, the Chinese Permanent Representative to the UN, who during all of the debate had registered no sign of any outward

emotion, raised his hand high. The final count was 11 in favour (Argentina, Belgium, France, India, Italy, Japan, Panama, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Yugoslavia), 1 veto (China) and 3 abstentions (Guinea, Somalia and Sudan).

Thus China cast its first veto in the Security Council on 25th August 1972 to block Bangladesh's entry into the world body. Speaking after the vote, the Chinese PR said that the "Soviet socialist imperialism" was playing a "most insidious role in South Asia" and India, in concluding "an aggressive military alliance" with the Soviet Union, had "stripped off its own cloak of non-alliance."

Mr. Huang accused the Soviet Union of acting with "honey in mouth and dagger in heart" in pressing its aggression against many countries, "including those in Africa and the Middle East."

The United States had remained silent, abstained from voting on the Chinese resolution, voted for the Somalian amendment and also for the resolution that would have recommended immediate membership.

The granting of the membership In a report (S/11316) dated 7 June 1974, the President of the Security Council mentioned that the Council had received a letter from the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh requesting the Council to reconsider the application of Bangladesh for its UN membership. In the light of this request, the Security Council, at its 1775th meeting held on 7 June 1974, placed the application of Bangladesh for membership on its agenda. The President of the Council (Mauritania) stated: "From the consultations begun by my predecessor and continued by me it emerged that members of the Council would agree that in examining the request for admission of Bangladesh into the UN, the Council should follow its normal practice, that is to say, refer this request to the Committee on the Admission of New Members in accordance with Rule 59 of the provisional rules of procedure". The application of Bangladesh was then referred to the Committee by the President.

At its 44th meeting held on 7 June 1974, the Committee considered the application of Bangladesh, and decided to

recommend to the Security Council that the People's Republic of Bangladesh be admitted to membership in the United Nations. At its 1776th meeting, held on 10 June 1974, the Security Council considered the report of the Committee submitted on 7 June concerning the application of Bangladesh. The President, with the consent of the Council, invited the representatives of Pakistan, Algeria, India, Egypt and Bhutan, at their request, to participate in the discussion without the right to vote.

The draft resolution recommended by the Committee in its report was adopted by the Council without vote as resolution 351(1974). The resolution read as follows: "The Security Council, Having examined the application of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for admission to membership in the United Nations, Recommends to the General Assembly that the People's Republic of Bangladesh be admitted to membership in the United Nations."

Following the recommendation of the Security Council, a draft resolution (Resolution 3203 (XXIX)) for Bangladesh's membership, co-sponsored by 68 countries, was unanimously adopted in the General Assembly in its 2233rd plenary meeting on 17 September 1974. Foreign Minister Dr. Kamal Hossain expressed his gratitude to the General Assembly, saying:

"This marks the fulfillment of the aspiration to take our place in this organisation as a sovereign, independent state, vindicating the right of self-determination, for which millions of our people laid down their lives in a struggle for national liberation." It was thus after more than two years from 25th August 1972 when China vetoed Bangladesh membership, the journey of independent Bangladesh in the comity of nations began.

Md. Faruk Hossain is currently working in Bangladesh High Commission in Singapore as Counsellor. He previously worked in the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN in New York as First Secretary from late 2011 to early 2015. This article was written by him during his tenure in New York and was first published in the commemorative publication of Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the UN titled 'Bangladesh: Forty Years in the UN' in 2014

On 30 September 1974, Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman met U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger at the Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York. Both were attending the UN General Assembly session. Dr. Kamal Hossain and M. Hossain Ali, Bangladesh's foreign minister and ambassador to Washington, respectively, accompanied Mujib.

Kissinger started the talk by giving an account of his meeting with Pakistan's president, General Yahya Khan, at the United Nations in 1970. Yahya and Kissinger discussed Pakistan's political outlook, especially in light of the 1970 general election. Yahya told Kissinger that there were twenty political parties in East Pakistan and that none would win majority seats in parliament. He would, therefore, have an excellent opportunity to manoeuvre to control the situation.

"Then, of course, you achieved your spectacular majority, with 167 out of 169 seats in East Pakistan. Ever since then I have never believed political predictions, unless, of course, you make them," Kissinger said, referring to the Bengali leader's massive election victory.

Mujib recalled that he had told a press conference in Dhaka before the poll that his party would win 90 percent of the seats. He had taken part in so many elections that he knew better than Yahya. He had also correctly predicted during a conversation with the US consul general just before the election that the Awami League would win all but two of the 169 seats in the 300-person National Assembly.

Kissinger commented that there would have been no elections if Yahya had known how it would turn out. "The last time I saw Yahya was on the way to China—the trip which he arranged for me. He gave a dinner for me and said at the table, 'People call me a dictator.' He asked everyone: 'Am I a dictator?' Everyone said, 'No.' Then he asked me, and I said: 'I do not know, but for a



Bangabandhu with US President Ford

Mujib in America : Talks with Ford, Kissinger

B. Z. Khasru

dictator, you run a lousy election."

Mujib diverted the conversation: "Would you like something to drink?"

Kissinger: "I would like some tea."

Mujib: "I am glad. I produce tea, also." Bangladesh is a major tea exporter.

Kissinger assured Mujib of America's continued help to Bangladesh. "We are committed to the well-being of Bangladesh. Within our capacity, we will do all we can to help you. Without meddling in Bangladesh's internal affairs, I want you to know that we believe you are the best guarantee for stability in your country, and we want to do what we can to help you."

Mujib thanked Kissinger. "That is very kind of you. After I got out of jail, we faced such big problems. Then you gave us massive help and we avoided famine."

Kissinger: "We very much appreciated the trilateral agreements you have worked out with India and Pakistan. You have been very statesmanlike." He was referring to the pact that allowed the Pakistani soldiers who had been held in India since the end of the

Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971 to return home.

Mujib: "This caused me some unpopularity because of the massacres that took place among intellectuals. I could give you names that you would recognize." Militias allied with Pakistan killed many Bengali intellectuals in Dhaka days before they surrendered.

Kissinger: "The Bengalis are a rebellious lot. There were a number of Bengalis at Harvard when your foreign minister was a student of mine there."

Kamal Hossain: "Yes, there were a number of Bengalis, including Mr. Murshed." Syed M. Murshed was a chief justice of the East Pakistan High Court in the 1960s.

Kissinger: "Is he all right?"

Kamal Hossain: "Yes."

Mujib then explained how Pakistan's military had planned to kill the Bengalis: "General Forman Ali Khan wrote on his scratch pad and we found it, 'The green land of East Pakistan must be painted red.' I told Bhutto about this when he came to Dacca. I showed it to him. I said to him, 'Do

something from your side.' There are 67,000 non-Bengali families living in Bangladesh who have opted for Pakistan. They don't want them back. We don't want them. They are in camps. We can't feed them. We have no assets. I've done my duty. I'm the victim of genocide. Why can't the Pakistanis show generosity?"

Kissinger: "We strongly favor normalization of relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Our aim in the area will be to use any influence we have to promote normalization. I have the impression that it's a question of domestic politics in Pakistan. Is there anything concrete you want me to do?"

Mujib: "I have taken the liabilities. Why can't I have the assets? We received no gold, no planes, no ships. I have 75 million people. I have returned the prisoners of war to Pakistan. I could have held back 4,000 prisoners for bargaining. But I did not want to do that. I want good relations in South Asia. Bangladesh is a small country."

Kissinger: "With 75 million people Bangladesh is not a small country."

Mujib: "We are small in territory. In the first two or three months of independence, we rebuilt the roads and the bridges, we opened government institutions, we approved a constitution. Our senior civil servants were detained for two years in Pakistan. I have resources in Bangladesh—fertile land, many people, gas, coal and livestock. And, we hope to find oil."

Kissinger: "Is there coal in Bangladesh? Have you found oil?"

Mujib: "We have signed agreements with an American company for oil exploration and received bonus payments for the agreements."

Kissinger: "When you have the oil, perhaps we will borrow from you."

Mujib: "You won't need to borrow. We will repay you for all you have done for us. We need a Marshall Plan in



Bangabandhu with Dr. Henry Kissinger

Bangladesh. We need foreign investment in fertilizer plants and in petrochemicals. We have natural gas and we can sell it. Flood control is a very serious problem... You organized the Marshall Plan for Germany's recovery. Now you can start a Kissinger Plan for Bangladesh."

Kissinger: "If I can get my name on a plan, I will do just about anything."

Mujib: "You have had such good success in Vietnam and the Middle East. You can have success in Bangladesh. There are famine conditions in my country."

Kissinger: "The domestic situation in this country is much less favorable than it was at the time of the Marshall Plan. In fact, the domestic situation is unfavorable. Candidly, I must say that that sort of program is not likely. On the other hand, we are joining the Bangladesh consortium. We favor the most rapid development possible for your country. In 1971 our dispute with India was related to our China policy. We supported the independence of Bangladesh by peaceful methods. We will do the maximum that we can, but you should not have exalted expectations. We will be extremely active in the consortium..."

Kamal Hossain: "Our problem is that we need a margin of time..."

Kissinger: "It is the curse of bureaucracies that they only do enough to avoid crises but not enough

to solve the underlying problems. I personally favor taking big steps. We will have to look again at your problems. I will meet with Mr. McNamara and we will see what we can do. Will you meet with him?" Robert McNamara, former US defense secretary, was then president of the World Bank.

Mujib: "Yes, in Washington. He has been kind enough to see me."

Kamal Hossain: "We need three or four years' margin to work on the long-term development."

Kissinger: "Can you become self-sufficient?"

Kamal Hossain: "Yes, in three or four years."

Kissinger: "We are looking for another 100,000 tons in this current quarter."

Kamal Hossain: "We need vegetable oil, fertilizer and project aid for the development of all our resources to increase exports so that we can get out of the current situation. We have no political problems. We are still winning by-elections in spite of our 40 percent inflation rate."

Kissinger: "How are your relations with India?"

Mujib: "Very good. We have a foreign policy that is neutral, non-aligned and independent. We have good relations with India, USA, USSR and Burma. We are very anxious for good relations with China."

Kissinger: "We are improving our relations with India."

Mujib: "We welcome that. We have a friendship treaty with India and a commission on river control. I want to convey to you my assurances of our good relations. When I came out of jail, there was anti-US sentiment in Bangladesh. Now all my people are extremely friendly to the United States."

Kissinger: "You showed great wisdom when you came out of jail. There must have been a great temptation to demagoguery and to deal harshly with Pakistan and the US. We have always had great sympathy for the Bengalis. It is a natural friendship on our side."

Mujib: "Yes. Your longstanding interest is greatly appreciated."

Kissinger: "You have a special place in the hearts of Americans. On food, for example, we are making a special effort."

Mujib: "I am grateful for what you are doing today and for the massive food help you have provided."

Kissinger: "You went to the United Kingdom and then back to Bangladesh. Did you take over the government immediately?"

Mujib: "Yes. It was very difficult. Everyone was armed and that created a serious problem. I appealed for everyone to surrender their arms. 150,000 arms were surrendered to me. The Pakistanis had armed everyone. The Pakistan military asked permission to arm civilians. We have documents that show the Pakistan Army asked for permission to arm civilians at the end."

Kissinger: "How about the Chinese? Are they doing anything subversive in your country? Do you have relations yet?"

Mujib: "Not yet. We know each other. I went to Peking in 1958 and they came to Dacca in 1962. I want friendship with China, but we have our self-respect. I can offer friendship but the initiative has to come from them

also. We appreciate the US support for Bangladesh in the United Nations. You steadily supported us there from the first day."

Kissinger: "My impression is that China will start to move in the next year to normalize its relations with you. They are concerned about India, but they do not have anything against Bangladesh. They will move slowly. Yours is the right policy: Friendship with all the Big Powers and avoid all their quarrels. We certainly don't object to your good relations with the Soviet Union."

Mujib: "Thank you. You've done wonderful things over the last two years."

Kissinger: "It is easy to conduct relations for an established country, but your foreign minister has had to conduct relations for a new country—to start from nothing. That is much more difficult. Were you released together?"

Mujib: "Yes. After they released me, I asked them why they forgot my friend. I asked them to release him because he was my foreign affairs adviser."

Kissinger: "Were you treated badly?"

Mujib: "They kept me in solitary confinement. The conditions were bad. It was 117?"

Kamal Hossain: "I was a little cooler because I was in the North West Frontier Province."

Mujib: "The case they made against me was a farce."

Kissinger: "We exerted very great pressure."

Mujib: "Yes. I know you did. They tried to kill me on the night of the 16th. The officer-in-charge took me out and hid me for five days near the Chashma Barrage. They planned to say that there had been a revolt of the prisoners and the prisoners had killed me. They tried to kill me three times: in 1958, when martial law came, they arrested me; in 1966 they arrested me on a conspiracy charge; in 1971 they arrested me and tried to kill me. I am living on

extensions."

Kissinger: "You have six more lives to live. They say that cats have nine lives. But you have made a great achievement. You have created a new state. You will find that the president will be very sympathetic in your talks tomorrow. We have our own difficulties with Congressional limits on aid and with our own food shortages, but we will make a special effort. I look forward to seeing you again in Bangladesh at the end of the month."

Mujib: "I have this special problem with these people who do not want to remain in Bangladesh. I have to do something. Should I expel them like Idi Amin did?" Amin, president of Uganda, expelled people of Indian origin from his country in 1972.

Kissinger: "You mean the Biharis?"

Mujib: "Yes."

Kissinger: "Pakistan won't take them? We will take these questions up when we are there. You can explain this in more detail."

Mujib: "I have nothing in my hand to bargain with. I have taken risks. They killed professors, intellectuals, journalists just before the surrender. I have to explain this to my people. I never go back on my word, but this time I did. I said that they would be tried on Bangladesh soil. There has been no trial."

Kissinger: "It was a very humane and statesmanlike act to forgo trials, so that you could work for a long-term relationship. I will take this up."

Mujib Meets Ford

US diplomats in Bangladesh had been pushing Washington to extend an invitation to Mujib since he visited Moscow in 1972. They feared he might feel neglected and tilt toward the Soviet Union. After lots of pushing and shoving, just a week before Mujib was to depart for New York to attend the General Assembly session, finally came the invitation. On 16 September 1974,

the State Department told the Bangladesh ambassador in Washington that the “president will be happy to receive Bangabandhu during his presence” in the United States.

Mujib met Ford at 3 p.m. on 1 October at the White House, along with Kamal Hossain and Hossain Ali. Their forty-five minute talk started with a discussion on pipe tobacco and Betty Ford’s condition. The First Lady had just been diagnosed with breast cancer.

Ford: “It was a shock to us. We had to make the decision for the operation, then wait for them to determine malignancy, and so forth.”

Mujib: “I sincerely hope she is out of danger.”

Ford: “Yes, the prognosis cannot be certain, but only two nodes out of 30 were malignant. It is good to have you here. It is the first time an American president has met with the head of state of Bangladesh.”

Mujib: “Yes. I am happy to have the opportunity to talk with you about my people.”

Ford: “We are happy to do what we can for all countries.”

Mujib: “You know the history of my country. Its condition after the war was likened to that of Germany in 1945. I want to thank you for your help to us. Before the war we were divided by India. The capital was all in the West. Bangladesh wasn’t too bad in ‘47... Bangladesh has resources. If we could control the floods, we could be self-sufficient in five years. We produce rice, jute, wheat and tobacco. We have big gas deposits—ten trillion to twenty trillion cubic feet...”

Ford: “We have been telling the OPEC countries that if their high prices result in the problems that you and the industrial countries are having, the high prices will bring a collapse and won’t help them.”

Mujib: “We are suffering so badly from

the oil prices.”

Ford: “The OPEC countries must realize they are being shortsighted.”

Mujib: “We are having a famine, and I have just heard that a cyclone is hitting. We are in dire straits. I have opened food kitchens in each of the regional areas to keep people from starving.”

Ford: “Wouldn’t a Bangladesh consortium to include some rich oil producers be a good thing? It would give them a chance to...”

Mujib: “Abu Dhabi and Iran have joined the consortium. I have a crisis immediately, Mr President, in grain and food aid.”

Ford: “There are 250,000 tons of food grains that are being made available for you. As we look at our food picture we will do what we can. We had hoped for a bigger crop. We had a wet spring and then a drought, and now an early frost. So our crop is disappointing. We must see what we have and we will do our very best with what we have.”

Mujib: “You are very kind. I hope, if I can make the flood control project with the World Bank, we will be self-sufficient within five years. With our gas we hope for oil. We have signed contracts with Atlantic-Richfield and Union Oil. Eventually we can export. But that is in the future, and my crisis is immediate.”

Ford: “Do you work with the international lending institutions?”

Mujib: “We are a member of the World Bank. Mr McNamara visited Bangladesh just after our independence. Most of my mills are working now, but there are not enough materials and parts to go at capacity.”

Ford: “How about the price of jute?”

Mujib: “It has only gone up 10 percent to 12 percent. We were a majority in Pakistan. We are doing our best to be friends with them. Though millions were killed, or jailed or exiled, we want to forget. We released the Pakistani

prisoners, including 195 war criminals. We think we should get some share of the old Pakistani assets. Yet I have had to take on the liabilities of the new country. Bhutto came to Dacca and I told him this, but so far nothing has happened....”

Ford: “We congratulate you on your independence and UN membership. I was up there two weeks ago. I was encouraged with the improving attitude toward the United Nations. The American people in recent times had a better attitude toward the United Nations. I hope we can all work better in the United Nations. If it is just a debating society, it is no good. But we should use it to make it work.”

Mujib: “We are grateful to you. We are a poor country, but we want good relations with you.”

Ford: “What is the comparison between what used to be East and West Pakistan?”

Mujib: “Pakistan is 65 million. I am 75 million. Pakistan is larger than I. I am starting a family planning organization. We are having particular problems now. I am glad you know our problems. I want to survive.”

Ford: “The 150,000 tons [of wheat] is all set. The 100,000 is virtually assured and only depends on our supplies.”

Mujib: “Would you consider edible oil and cotton? Our people are discussing with yours now.”

Ford: “We will do what we can.”

Mujib: “Thank you. I officially invite you to visit Bangladesh.”

Ford: “Thank you. Isn’t Secretary Kissinger going there?”

Mujib: “Yes. On 30 October, but I want to invite you.”

[This article is an adaptation from B. Z. Khasru's book, The Bangladesh Military Coup and the CIA Link, published by Rupa Publications India Private Limited, New Delhi, 2014.]



Bangabandhu with Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury

Bangabandhu in Washington 1974

Iqbal Bahar Choudhury

There were not many Bangladeshis in America in the beginning, right after Bangladesh's Liberation War and Independence. Whenever someone from Dhaka would come to Washington we would be very happy. We would visit them, invite them home and eagerly listen to what was going on back in Bangladesh. Among the leaders of the country who came to Washington after independence were members of Cabinet Tajuddin Ahmad and A. H. M. Qamaruzzaman. Mr. Tajuddin visited the US more than once. In 1974, he was in Washington to take part in World Bank's Annual Conference.

In September, 1974 Bangladesh's Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman came to New York to take part in the annual session of the

United Nations General Assembly as leader of the Bangladesh delegation. He was accompanied by Foreign Minister Dr. Kamal Hossain and his Political Secretary Tofael Ahmed. Bangladesh became a member of the United Nations that time. Bangabandhu addressed the world body and spoke in Bangla. Among the Bangladeshi journalists there were Shahidul Huq, Toab Khan, Anwar Hossain Manju, Anis Choudhury, Golam Rasul and others.

Aside from participating in this General Assembly session, Bangabandhu had sat in meetings with leaders of other countries.

He also came to Washington for a two day visit beginning October 1, 1974 and had a meeting with President Ford

at the White House.

Bangabandhu and his team arrived in Andrews Air Force base in Washington in a special plane. Bangladesh Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmad, Deputy Chairman of Bangladesh's Planning Commission Prof. Nurul Islam, Bangladesh's Ambassador Hossain Ali and other were there to greet them.

On behalf of VOA, I had also gone to Andrews Air Force base to cover his visit with a tape recorder in hand. The then Editor of the Bangla Service Ishtiaq Ahmed and Head of the South Asia Division Lillard Hill were also there. Usually, esteemed dignitaries and leaders would land on this spot. In order to conduct a brief interview with Bangabandhu for VOA, I had tried to go close to the landing zone. Members



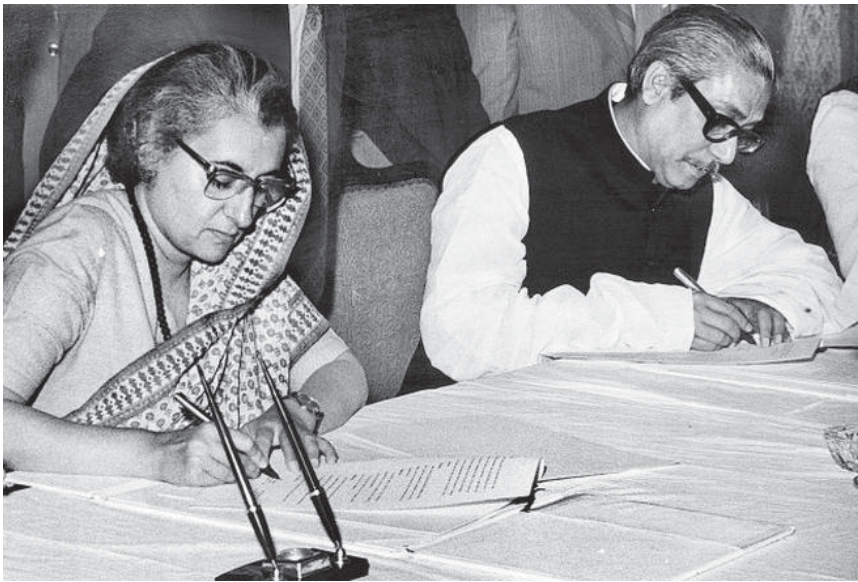
of the security team told me that I could not go close to the plane. After the landing, Tajuddin Ahmad, Bangladesh's Ambassador and some others went towards the plane. I was a little behind them. Bangabandhu and his fellow travelers noticed us while getting down from the plane. Right after stepping down, Bangabandhu loudly said, "How is everyone? All good?" I immediately went towards him. The security team did not stop me this time. I took a short interview of Bangabandhu with my tape recorder. I prepared a report based on that interview and arranged to broadcast that in our VOA Bangla program within a short time. From there Bangabandhu was taken to the President's guest house called Blair House. Arrangements for his visit were made there. Many well-known leaders of different nations had stayed in the historical Blair House. This guest house is on Pennsylvania Avenue opposite White House. At the appointed time, President Ford met with the war-torn Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Others present in that meeting were Foreign Minister Dr. Kamal Hossain and Bangladesh's

Ambassador Hossain Ali. When the American President had just sat with the foreign dignitaries for their meeting, a handful of reporters, cameramen and photographers were allowed inside for a short amount of time. Even though pictures were allowed, there was no question-answer session. That is the normal practice. Among foreign reporters, there were some Bangladeshi reporters and cameramen who had come with Bangabandhu. There were only Ishtiaq Ahmed and I, from VOA. President Ford and Bangabandhu were sitting side by side. Bangabandhu sat at ease and lit his pipe. He gave a smile when he looked at us. The meeting began. Bangabandhu started by saying, "We have heard of Mrs. Ford's state of health. How is she now? We hope for her speedy recovery." What a nice way to start a conversation. We left right after. Within these two days in Washington, Bangabandhu met with the President of World Bank Robert McNamara, Senator Edward Kennedy and few other US dignitaries. Bangabandhu was met with warm welcomes and services at a local hotel.

Amongst others, Pakistani Ambassador Sahebzada Yaqub Khan was present there. When he went up to Bangabandhu, he was hugged by the Bangladeshi Prime Minister. In 1971, General Yaqub Khan was East Pakistan's Military Administrator. When he staunchly protested against shooting Bangalis, he was relieved of his duty and replaced by General Tikka Khan and thus the mindless violence commenced.

After ending his visit to Washington, Bangabandhu left for Dhaka from Washington's Dulles International Airport. During his visit, Bangladesh gained a place in the United Nations which made him very proud. But he still seemed perturbed due to the holistic condition of the country. He said, "The condition of the country is not good." That day the Bangladeshis at the airport bid farewell to Bangabandhu.

(Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury is a Bangladeshi news presenter, elocutionist and voice actor. He served as the head of the Bangla Service, Voice of America during 1972-2010)



Foreign policy in Bangabandhu's times

Syed Badrul Ahsan

The times between 1972 and 1974 can justifiably be regarded as a bright era in Bangladesh's diplomacy. Bangabandhu's government earned, in these critical two years, the rare honor of seeing most nations in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas accord it diplomatic recognition. That Bangladesh was committed to pursuing a secular democratic structure was a powerful factor in persuading other nations of the need to give the new nation its rightful place in the councils of the world

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was unequivocal about the foreign policy Bangladesh would pursue under his leadership. He defined it in simple terms.

The new country would base its ties with the world outside its frontiers on the principle of friendship for all and malice toward none. It was this axiomatic thought, with its roots in the politics of the Civil War-era American President Abraham Lincoln, which Bangladesh adopted as core policy in

the early years of its independent nationhood.

In the years in which Bangabandhu was in office, till his assassination in August 1975, a sense of dynamism coupled with a huge dose of idealism was what constituted Bengali diplomacy soon after liberation in December 1971.

The foreign policy adopted by Bangabandhu's administration necessarily took into account the support, in moral as well as material terms, provided by those nations which clearly looked upon the genocide committed by the Pakistan occupation army in the country with dismay and derision.

In early April 1971, Soviet President Nikolai Podgorny left hardly anything to the imagination when he wrote to Pakistani junta leader Yahya Khan that the crisis in Bangladesh, which at that point in time was yet being referred to as East Pakistan in the outside world, called for a political settlement. Yahya Khan, of course, spurned the sugges-

tion and indeed looked upon the Soviet advice as interference in Pakistan's internal affairs.

Islamabad's negative feedback was thus instrumental in a hardening of Moscow's stance toward Pakistan and the subsequent role it played in the creation of Bangladesh.

The new government in Dhaka, conscious of the decisive Soviet role at the United Nations Security Council, where Moscow vetoed all resolutions that looked about to prevent the fall of Pakistan in Bangladesh, certainly understood the need for close ties with the Soviet Union.

It was against such a background of Soviet support to the Bangladesh cause in 1971 that Bangabandhu paid an official visit to Moscow in March 1972. This was one occasion where the Bengali political leadership, for the very first time, came in touch with the leaders of the communist state, a move which led to a strengthening of economic as well as educational ties.

A constructive result of such close Dhaka-Moscow links was the facilitating of higher academic programs for Bengali students at Soviet universities, a reality that was to add enormously to the promotion of excellence in education.

And, of course, Soviet assistance in clearing Chittagong port of the remnants of the 1971 war and helping to rebuild it were hugely to the advantage of a country which had had its economy battered and its infrastructure absolutely destroyed by the conflict.

Equally important in the Bangladesh foreign policy scheme of things were relations with India. The generosity of spirit with which Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her government came to the support of Bangladesh's people in 1971, especially in accommodating ten million Bengali refugees, providing space for the Mujibnagar government

to operate in and waging a diplomatic campaign in Bangladesh's support, were naturally acknowledged with gratitude by the people and government of Bangladesh.

More importantly, the entry of Indian forces in the war in December 1971, following the attack on Indian territory by Pakistan, and the eventual surrender of the Pakistani forces before the joint command of the Indian army and the Mukti Bahini were a strong reassertion of the growing links between the two countries.

Obviously, therefore, a strong, constructive bonding with India was in order. And Bangabandhu believed that in order for the two countries to reinforce the links forged during the war, it was important that Indian troops go back home and let the new country get on with its work.

A singular contribution of Bangabandhu's government was thus the return home of India's soldiers from Bangladesh. Dhaka was in little mood to be seen as being under the influence of Delhi. Indian soldiers trooped back to their country a few days before Mrs. Gandhi paid an official visit to Dhaka in March 1972.

And then came a defining moment in relations between the two neighbors when Bangladesh and India initialed a

25-year treaty of friendship that would have the two countries coming to mutual support and friendship in the event of hostilities imposed by other nations on either of them.

The times between 1972 and 1974 can justifiably be regarded as a bright era in Bangladesh's diplomacy. Bangabandhu's government earned, in these critical two years, the rare honor of seeing most nations in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas accord it diplomatic recognition.

That Bangladesh was committed to pursuing a secular democratic structure was a powerful factor in persuading other nations of the need to give the new nation its rightful place in the councils of the world. It was a policy which led to the Bangladesh cause in the times after liberation being looked upon with a huge degree of support and empathy.

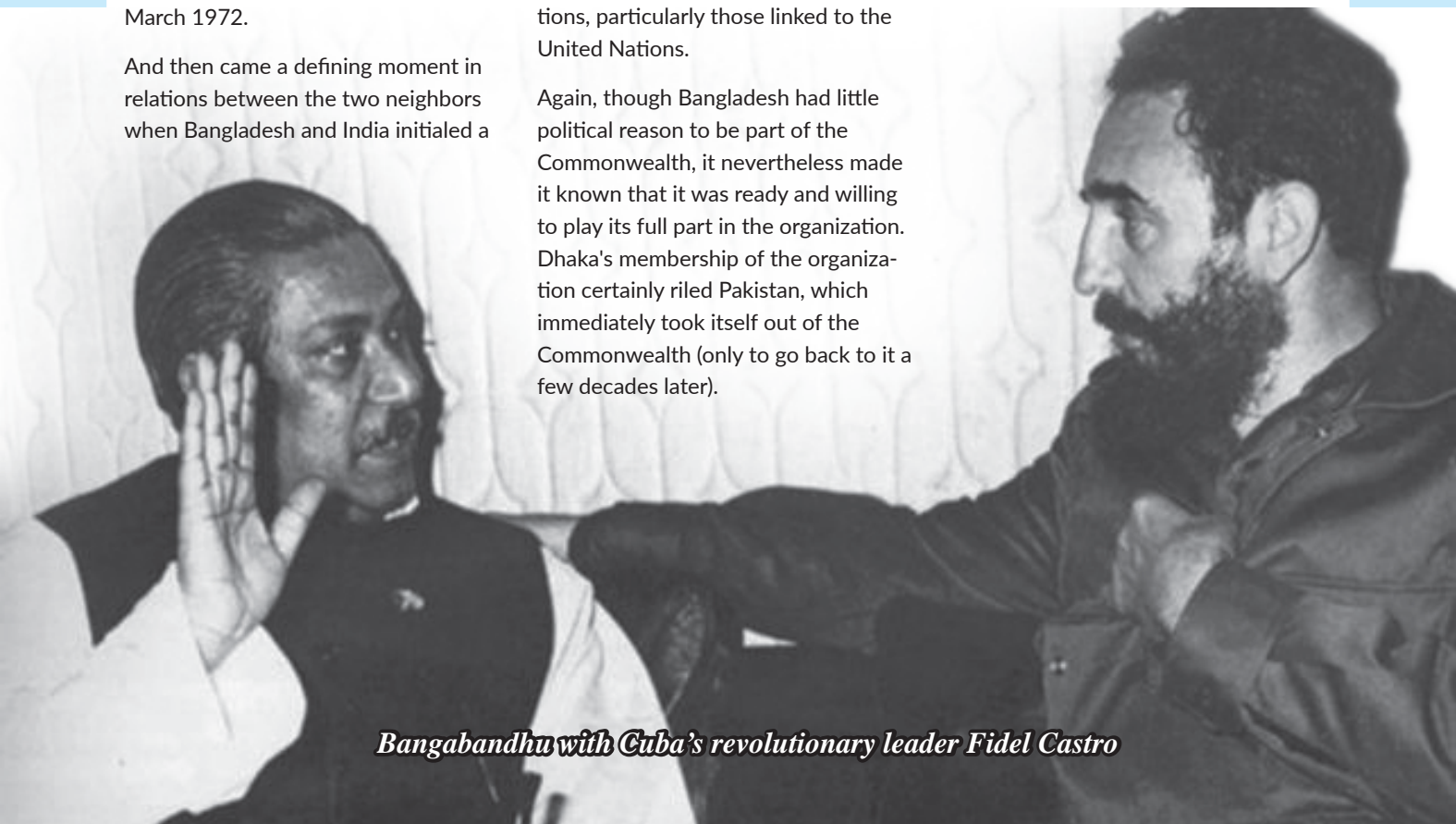
It can be argued, therefore, that Bengali secular democracy, having been acknowledged by the world as Bangladesh's defining diplomatic principle, led to a swift opening of doors everywhere. The country made its entry into various global organizations, particularly those linked to the United Nations.

Again, though Bangladesh had little political reason to be part of the Commonwealth, it nevertheless made it known that it was ready and willing to play its full part in the organization. Dhaka's membership of the organization certainly riled Pakistan, which immediately took itself out of the Commonwealth (only to go back to it a few decades later).

Bangladesh's efforts to obtain a place in the United Nations were decisively blocked through an exercise of the veto by China for two continuous years. Both in 1972 and 1973, the Chinese leadership refused to have Dhaka take its place in the world body, clearly out of an unwillingness to let Pakistan down.

The Chinese action surely dismayed Bangabandhu. Yet he was unwilling to go critical or condemnatory, of Beijing's position on Bangladesh. It was political pragmatism which came into play, for Bangabandhu, together with Foreign Minister Kamal Hossain, was under little doubt that until Bangladesh and Pakistan reached a deal on the issues that put up roadblocks to a normalization of ties between Dhaka and Islamabad, Beijing would go on playing the veto card and so keep Pakistan in good humor.

Such an assessment entailed, of course, a powerful requirement for a change of perceptions where links with Pakistan were concerned. The change came in February 1974, when Bangladesh's entry into the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) threw up a new



Bangabandhu with Cuba's revolutionary leader Fidel Castro

dimension to its diplomacy. Indeed, the OIC summit, held in the Pakistani city of Lahore, was instrumental in burnishing Bangladesh's image on the global scene.

And that was for two reasons. The first related to Pakistan, which had been in a state of denial regarding Bangladesh's emergence as an independent state but which now was forced to accord official recognition to the new country if it wished to make a success of the Islamic summit. Bangladesh's secularism notwithstanding, the country was home to a majority population comprising Muslims, which reality could not be ignored.

The second was Bangladesh's diplomatic opening out, at virtually one go, to the Islamic world. The perception at the time was that through joining the OIC, Bangladesh had filled a major gap in its diplomacy and was therefore now equipped to forge ahead with exploring trade and other possibilities with the Islamic world.

Bangladesh's foreign policy regarding the United States, in the initial stages, was informed by a couple of positions. First, Bangabandhu and his government were grateful to the American people for their unqualified support to the Bangladesh cause in 1971. Second, it was critical of the Nixon-Kissinger tilt toward Pakistan during the war, a position which clearly militated against the Bengali war of liberation.

It was not easily forgotten that where American politicians like Senator Edward Kennedy were loudly rooting for Bangladesh in 1971, the Nixon administration consistently explored the chances of a negotiated settlement between the Yahya Khan regime and the Bengali political leadership even when the opportunity for such a settlement did not exist after 25 March 1971.

The lengths to which the US administration was prepared to go toward

promoting a settlement within the Pakistani federal structure were soon revealed through reports of Khondokar Moshtaque, the Mujibnagar government's foreign minister, being ready to make a departure from the position of the government and lend his support to the American plan during his projected trip to New York.

The conspiracy, for so it was, was neutralized through the government's preventing Moshtaque from traveling to New York. His place was taken by Justice Abu Sayeed Chowdhury, the self-exiled vice chancellor of Dhaka University then serving as a special envoy of the Mujibnagar government.

The Bangabandhu government's diplomatic successes were surely capped by Washington's recognition of Bangladesh in April 1972. Though ties between the two countries were somewhat soured by the American position regarding Bangladesh's trade deals with Cuba, the government in Dhaka was careful not to let slip the opportunity of building on its new-found links with Washington.

Bangladesh made a significant move through making contact with the World Bank, a step that demonstrated the government's determination to pursue an independent foreign policy through an exercise of pragmatism in its dealings with foreign nations in an era yet constricted by the Cold War.

In much the same manner, Bangabandhu and his government were convinced that nothing short of non-alignment would enable the global community to steer away from the hard choices it would have to make between leaning toward the Soviet bloc and aligning itself with American policy.

Bangabandhu was keenly aware of the damage done to Pakistan through its membership of such anti-communist blocs as SEATO and CENTO; and because he was, it was his observation

that the path traversed by Jawaharlal Nehru, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Ahmed Sukarno and Josip Broz Tito in the 1950s was one his country needed to take if its goal was to carve a distinctive niche for itself in the world.

Forty seven years after 1971, the principles on which Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman shaped Bangladesh's foreign policy are in absolute need of reassertion.

The Father of the Nation believed, out of conviction and moral belief, that Bangladesh could be the Switzerland of the East. Given the trauma the Bengali nation has faced in the years since his assassination, the relevance of that belief rises out of the mists of time.

The message is patent and unmistakable: Bangladesh is in sore need of reclaiming the goodwill and respect of the international community, sentiments which once came its way through the nobility of its cause and the sagacity of its leadership. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman personified that cause and that sagacity.

On a personal note, this writer came across former British prime minister Edward Heath at a reception in London in the late 1990s.

On being informed by the writer that he was from Bangladesh, Heath stopped for a while; there was a twinkle in his eyes and a smile on his lips. "Ah", said he, "Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's country." And that said volumes about the era of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

(Syed Badrul Ahsan: Editor-in-Charge, *The Asian Age*)



Bangabandhu with British Prime Minister Edward Heath

Bangabandhu's Foreign Policy and the World

A. K. M. Atiqur Rahman

Diplomatic practices, not only in the present world, but did exist in ancient times for establishment of relations or cooperation between states. The head of a state or country used to send his trustworthy person as his special envoy at the time of need especially in crisis or delight. Usually the envoy had to carry some important message. The envoy's activities never crossed the boundary of the purpose of his mission. An envoy normally had never to face any disaster whether he could bring any positive result or not, even if the situation went more severe. Later on, that practices took the shape of present day diplomacy. Consequently foreign policies were formulated to establish diplomatic relations among states.

Formulation of foreign policies and

their implementation depend on the political philosophy of a country's leadership and its equation of relations with other countries. The success of foreign policies can not only be earned by framing powerful foreign policies but it needs a powerful leadership. Actually a country's success in international relations depends on the degree of correlation between its foreign policy and leadership. Bangladesh is not an exception of that.

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was flown secretly to London in the morning of 8 January after he was released from Pakistan's jail in the night of 7 January 1972. In London, he met British Prime Minister Edward Heath. He returned to Bangladesh on 10 January via India. At New Delhi, Bangabandhu was

accorded a very warm reception which was attended by Indian President V V Giri, Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi and other cabinet ministers in addition to millions of Indian people.

Returning home, Bangabandhu got a Bangladesh with burnt houses, destroyed roads. The central bank was empty. In that situation, he had to shoulder the responsibility of his motherland as well as his people. Bangabandhu was bewildered in his dream of reconstructing the independent Bangladesh. It was only possible for a brave patriotic leader like him to shoulder such hardest responsibility standing on the piles of ruins. That self-confident and farsighted person did not wait for a single moment to start the work of reconstruction of the country. Drafting of the country's constitution began. At the same time, foreign policies were drawn up. Based on the basic elements of his foreign policies- 'friendship with all, malice to none' and 'friendly co-existence', the present Bangladesh has established such stronger relationship with the world community.

Bangabandhu did not only think the welfare of his people, but he always felt the miseries of the have-nots of the world. He used to say, "The world is divided into two parts - oppressors and oppressed. And I am with the oppressed". Bangabandhu never stood silent if there were any injustice and exploitation at any place against any person irrespective of caste or creed. By born he was a world leader who always spoke for the oppressed people. Bangabandhu was compared with the Himalayas. He stood against apartheid in Africa, foreign occupation in Asia and Africa or Latin America. He expressed his solidarity with the people of Palestine. In the same way, he condemned the overthrowing of the democratically elected Government of Cyprus.

Bangabandhu went to Kolkata on 6 February 1972. Indian Prime Minister

Mrs Indira Gandhi received him at Domdom Airport. During the visit, it was decided that India would withdraw its army from Bangladesh by March. Accordingly on 1 March, India declared to withdraw its army from Bangladesh and the withdrawal was completed on 15 March. Bangabandhu visited Moscow from 29 February to 6 March. Indian Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi came to Bangladesh on 17 March. The two Prime Ministers signed a 25-year Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace on 19 March. Bangabandhu met British Prime Minister Edward Heath on 18 August. From London he went to Geneva on 21 August to convalesce in Switzerland as their guest. On his return from Geneva on 13 September, he held talks with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi during his stop over at New Delhi.

In 1972, Bangladesh became member of IMF (17 June), ILO (22 June), Inter-Parliamentary Union (20 September), UNESCO (19 October), Colombo Plan (6 November) and GATT (9 November).

On 8 August 1972, Bangladesh officially forwarded application to UN Secretary General seeking UN membership. Bangabandhu, on 10 August, wrote to all members of the Security Council for their support. On 23 August, a resolution backed by UK, India, USSR and Yugoslavia urged UN Security Council to admit Bangladesh but China vetoed. However, UN General Assembly, on 30 November, recommended Bangladesh's membership.

In September, Bangladesh Peace Council urged the US government to stop all bombings in Vietnam. Patrice Lumumba University of USSR decided to award peace medal to Bangabandhu on 23 November. Students' Union of Bangladesh organised a procession on 22 December to condemn the resumption of US bombing on North Vietnam.

On 9 February 1973, UN Secretary



Bangabandhu meets Queen Elizabeth

General Dr Kurt Waldheim called on Bangabandhu at Ganabhaban. Yugoslav Prime Minister Mr Dzermal Bijedic arrived in Dhaka on 25 March. Bangabandhu left Dhaka for Belgrade on 26 June on a 17-day visit to Yugoslavia and Canada. Yugoslavian President Marshal Tito pledged all out support to Bangladesh including admission to NAM and UN. On 7 August, Bangabandhu addressed the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Ottawa. Bangabandhu left Dhaka on 6 September for Algiers to attend the 4th NAM Summit. During the Summit, he met King Faisal, President Tito, President Anwar Sadaat, President Idi Amin, President Gaddafi and Prime Minister Takeddine Sloth. He went to Tokyo on 18 October on a 7-day visit. He also paid a short visit to Malaysia in that year.

Bangabandhu loved his people as much his people loved him. In April, Bangabandhu sent a message to UN Secretary General proposing unconditional and immediate repatriation of all Bangalis from Pakistan and all Pakistanis from Bangladesh. During the visit of UN High Commissioner for Refugees to Dhaka in May, Bangabandhu urged him to save Bangalis in Pakistan. On 28

August, India and Pakistan signed an agreement for resolving repatriation of half a million Bangalis and Pakistanis. Bangabandhu hailed this agreement. British Prime Minister Edward Heath in a message assured Bangabandhu all possible help for repatriation of Bangalis. Finally the repatriation began on 19 September (first batch of 168 persons).

In 1973, Bangladesh became a member of ADB (18 February), ICAO (28 February), ECAFE (23 April) and FAO (12 November). The Foreign Ministers of NAM approved Bangladesh's membership for NAM on 3 September.

Bangabandhu hailed Vietnam peace accord on 24 January. The World Peace Council during its 3-day Asian Conference in May in Dhaka conferred Bangabandhu with Juliet Curie Gold Medal for Peace. On 10 July, National Assembly of Pakistan passed a resolution authorising President Bhutto to accord recognition to Bangladesh. In July, Bangladesh condemned Portugal's atrocities in Mozambique. Bangladesh, on 21 July, recognised the new Afghan government headed by Sarder Mohammad Daud Khan. Bangladesh also accorded recognition to the provisional Revolutionary Government of Vietnam in July.

On 6 October 1973, Bangabandhu condemned latest Israeli aggression in the Middle East. He instructed to send one lakh pounds of tea for Egypt and Syria as gift. He hailed Tito-Boumedienne move for a concerted effort of the Non-aligned countries in support of Arab cause. Bangabandhu sent a medical team to Egypt and Syria in aid to war victims in Arab-Israel war.

The year 1974 began with a 4-day visit of New Zealand Prime Minister Mr Norman Kirk. Yugoslav President Marshall Tito arrived in Dhaka on 29 January. The Secretary General of OIC visited Dhaka in February. Pakistan gave recognition to Bangladesh on 22 February. Bangabandhu went to Lahore on 23 February to attend the OIC Summit. President of Egypt Anwar Sadat arrived in Dhaka on 25 February. On 8 March, Algerian President Col. Houari Bomedienne had a stopover in Dhaka and held talks with Bangabandhu. In March, Bangabandhu went to Moscow for treatment. President Ne Win of Myanmar visited Bangladesh in the last week of April. Bangabandhu went to India on 12 May on a 5-day visit. Mr Leopold Sedar Senghor, President of Senegal paid a visit in the last week of May. On 1 June, President of Bangladesh went to Bhutan to attend the coronation ceremony of King Jigme Singye Wangchuk. Indian President V V Giri came to Dhaka on 15 June on a 5-day visit. Pakistan Prime Minister visited Bangladesh in June. President of South Vietnam Nguyen Hu Thu had a brief stopover at Dhaka in September.

On 17 September, UN General Assembly unanimously approved the entry of Bangladesh in the UN as its 136th member. Bangabandhu left Dhaka on 23 September to attend the UNGA. He spoke before the UNGA in Bangla. He met US President Gerald Ford at the White House on 1 October. In the first week of October, Bangabandhu paid a visit to Iraq. US

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger came to Dhaka in October. Bangabandhu went to Kuwait on 10 November on a 4-day visit. Malaysian King arrived in Dhaka on 3 December. Bangabandhu left for Abu Dhabi on 18 December. The King of Bhutan paid a visit to Dhaka in December. Director General of FAO also came to Dhaka in December.

On 19 July, Bangladesh condemned the use of force aimed at overthrowing the democratically elected government of the Republic of Cyprus headed by Archbishop Makarios. In its first appearance before the UN Security Council on 22 October, Bangladesh urged for immediate expulsion of South Africa from the UN.

Bangladesh became a founder member of the Islamic Bank in August. In November, the site for construction of a 3 mile long bridge over Jamuna was finally selected by Japan and Bangladesh. UNGA nominated Bangladesh to its Commission on Namibia on 19 December.

On 19 January 1975, Australian Prime Minister EG Whitlam came to Dhaka. Crown Prince Akihito of Japan arrived in Dhaka on 20 February. A Bangladesh delegation attended the coronation of the Nepalese monarch held in February. President of Asian Development Bank (ADB) came to Bangladesh in March. President of Afghanistan Muhammad Daud arrived in Dhaka on 14 March on a two-day visit. President of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) arrived in Dhaka in March. Bangabandhu spoke at the Commonwealth Summit Conference in Kingston on 5 May.

Bangladesh was elected a member of the Executive Council of World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and the Executive Board of World Health Organisation on 19 May and 22 May respectively. On 23 June, Bangladesh was elected as the Vice President of the World Food Council.

From January 1972 to July 1975, Bangladesh received more than a hundred delegations including about fifty VVIPs. During this short time, Bangladesh signed more than seventy treaty, agreement, memorandum and contract with countries all over the world. Many countries and organisations like India, USSR, Sweden, Germany, USA, IDA, Japan, Poland, UK, Canada, Denmark, UNICEF, UN, Australia, France, WFP, UAE, Qatar, Bulgaria, Belgium, Algeria, Netherlands, UNHCR, etc provided billions of dollar as credit, grant, aid, soft loan, assistance and donation (for flood victims).

Bangladesh became orphan on 15 August 1975 at the age of four when it just started to walk step by step. People all over the world became astounded, anxious. World leaders, except few, reproached. Millions of Bangalis silently bathed in tears. The people, who grabbed the power unconstitutionally, started implementation of their authority on a country that was born on the holy blood of thousands martyrs. However, directly or indirectly, the military ran the country till 1991.

We know that all countries of the world except Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Oman and China recognised Bangladesh as an independent country during Bangabandhu's time. What would be more than this success of our foreign policies? In fact, Bangabandhu's leadership, wisdom and personal relationship with world leaders played an important role behind this success. Analysis of the success Bangladesh attained so far in international sector since independence confirms that no other head of government of Bangladesh was able to reach at such height of our foreign relations like Bangabandhu.

(A. K. M. Atiqur Rahman: former Ambassador & Secretary)



The political philosophy of Bangabandhu

Dr Rounaq Jahan

A leader who was always one with the people.

For our generation who witnessed the birth of Bangladesh, it is a daunting task to express in words the unique role played by the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the creation of the new state. It is even more challenging to analyze the political ideas underpinning his life's work. Whenever I think of Bangabandhu I first remember those exciting and memorable days of March 1971.

I consider myself to be very lucky that I was able to witness the events of March 1971 and Bangabandhu's role in creating history. Very few people are fortunate enough to see the making of history. I witnessed the transformation of our movement for autonomy into our struggle for independence. I witnessed how the main actor of this

historic transformation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, realized an impossible dream. There have been leaders in other countries who led their nations. But few could create history. Bangabandhu was one such rare grand actor of history.

It is unfortunate that even after 48 years of our independence and 43 years after his assassination there is no well-researched comprehensive biography of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Fortunately two recent books, based on his personal diaries, have been published which can serve as original source that help us understand his ideals and political philosophy.

The first book, *The Unfinished Memoirs*, published in 2012, throws light on his childhood, and early political life. Though *The Unfinished Memoirs* does not include events after the late 1950s it still illuminates his

political thoughts very clearly.

The second book, *Karagarer Rojnamcha* (prison diaries) which was published in 2017, is based on his diaries when he was in prison after he launched the six point movement in 1966. Here again his political thoughts are made very clear. He discusses at length the different methods of suppression of people's movements pursued by an autocratic state. He highlights the importance of fundamental civil and political rights, particularly the need for ensuring freedom of expressions for sustaining democracy.

In this article I quote extensively from his writings so that we can hear his own voice. To understand his political philosophy we should always keep in mind that Bangabandhu spent most of his life as a political player outside state power. He struggled against colonial and undemocratic state power,

first against the British and later against the Pakistan state to establish the economic, political, and cultural rights of the Bengalees.

He exercised state power only for a limited period of time -- barely three and a half years after independence. His political discourse, as illustrated in these two books, is that of a leader fighting authoritarian state power, not that of a leader who was using state power to govern a country.

One of the remarkable features of his political life was his transformation from an ordinary rank and file worker of a political party to an unparalleled leader of millions of people.

Bangabandhu possessed outstanding organizational capacity; at the same time he was a great orator. Generally we do not find such a combination of qualities in one leader.

In his Unfinished Memoirs Bangabandhu notes that he was more interested in party organizational work than in discussing theoretical and ideological issues. Though he was not a political theoretician, Bangabandhu had a few specific political ideals and goals and he worked consistently to achieve them. His values are best captured in three sentences which Bangabandhu penned on May 3, 1973. He writes:

“As a man, what concerns mankind concerns me. As a Bengalee, I am deeply involved in all that concerns Bengalees. This abiding involvement is born of and nourished by love, enduring love, which gives meaning to my politics and to my very being.”

The above quote makes it clear that Bangabandhu identified himself both as a human being and as a Bengalee.

This self-identification helps us explore the main features of his political philosophy, such as nationalism, secularism, socialism, and people-orientation.

Nationalism

Independence, liberation, and democracy

From the beginning of his political life, Bangabandhu was proud of his Bengali national identity. He was involved in the Pakistan movement but he believed that Pakistan should be established on the basis of the Lahore Resolution which envisaged two Muslim majority independent sovereign states.

He perceived the nationalist movement not simply as a struggle to gain independence from the rule of an external colonial power but also as a struggle for the economic and political emancipation of the down-trodden masses from various forms of oppression.

He joined the Pakistan movement in the hope that poor Muslim peasants will be liberated from the exploitation of the landlord classes. He had always viewed the Bengali nationalist movement as a movement for the achievement of democracy as well as liberation of the oppressed people. Thus on March 7, 1971 he called upon the people to launch simultaneously the struggle for independence and liberation.

Prior to the establishment of Pakistan, when as a student in Kolkata, Bangabandhu joined the Muslim League. He belonged to the Shaheed Suhrawardy and Abul Hashem faction of the party which was known as the progressives group. In his Unfinished Memoirs he writes:

“Under Mr Suhrawardy’s leadership we wanted to make the Muslim League the party of the people and make it represent middle-class Bengali aspirations. Upto that time Muslim League had not become an organization that was rooted in the people. It used to serve the interests of landlords, moneyed men, and Nawabs and Khan Bahadurs.”

After the creation of Pakistan, Bangabandhu returned to Dhaka and

became involved in various progressive movements and organizations which championed the linguistic, cultural, and economic rights of the Bengalis. In 1948 he was imprisoned for participating in the movement demanding recognition of Bengali as one of the state languages of Pakistan.

He was also involved in other social and political protest movements, such as the movement of poor peasants against prohibiting inter-district trade in rice known as the “cordon” system. He supported the movement of the fourth class employees of Dhaka university and was again imprisoned in 1949.

Within a relatively short period after the establishment of Pakistan he became convinced about the need for establishing an opposition political party not only for championing the rights of the Bengalis but also to challenge the authoritarian rule of the Muslim League. In his Unfinished Memoirs he explained the rationale for the establishment of the Awami League in the following way:

“There is no point in pursuing the Muslim League any longer. This party has now become the establishment. They can no longer be called a party of the people ... if we did not form an organization that could take on the role of the opposition the country would turn into a dictatorship.”

In 1949, the Awami Muslim League (AML) was founded and Bangabandhu was elected the joint secretary of the party though he was still in prison. In 1953 he became the general secretary of the party. The demand for self-rule gained increasing popular support in East Bengal from the mid-1950s. In 1955 Bangabandhu became a member of the Pakistan National Assembly (NA). In one of his speeches in the NA we already find a strong articulation of various demands of the Bengali nationalists and his strong sense of Bengali identity. He said:

“They want to place the word ‘East Pakistan’ instead of ‘East Bengal.’ We have demanded so many times that you should use Bengal instead of Pakistan. The word Bengal has a history, has a tradition of its own. You can change it only after people have been consulted. If you want to change it then we have to go back to Bengal and ask them whether they accept it ... what about the state language Bengali? What about joint electorate? What about autonomy? ... I appeal to my friends on that side to allow the people to give their verdict in any way, in the form of referendum or in the form of plebiscite.”

In the council session of the party in 1955 the Awami League (AL) dropped the word “Muslim” from its name and Bangabandhu again became the general secretary of the party. In February 1966, Bangabandhu presented his historic six points demand which put forward a very radical notion of provincial autonomy leaving only limited powers in the hands of the central government.

In March of that year he became the president of the AL and began a country-wide campaign to popularize the six points which soon became the sole agenda of the party. Six points captured the aspirations of the nation and it was billed as the charter for the liberation of the Bengalis. Following the launch of the six points, Bangabandhu was again imprisoned and he was charged with treason by the Pakistan government in the Agartala conspiracy case.

In 1969, Ayub fell from power in the face of massive students’ movement. Bangabandhu was released from prison and the students conferred on him the title of Bangabandhu (friend of Bengal). During the 1970 election campaign Bangabandhu started using nationalist slogans such as “Bangladesh” and “Joy Bangla.”

Thus, within a relatively short span of four years, between 1966 to 1970,

Bangabandhu was able to unite the whole Bengali nation behind his demand for liberation and independence. I do not think any other nationalist leader had been so successful in mobilizing such a huge number of people within such a short period of time.

It is noteworthy that though throughout his life Bangabandhu was involved in movement politics and talked about people’s emancipation from exploitation and oppression, he believed in peaceful non-violent political movements. From 1947 till 1970 the Bengali nationalist movement became stronger day-by-day under his leadership but he stayed within the bounds of democratic politics.

Whenever Pakistani rulers gave opportunities for election he participated in them, though the elections were often not free and fair and attempts were made to foil the election results. In Karagarer Rojnamcha he points out repeatedly that by limiting the democratic space an autocratic regime ultimately leads the country towards terrorist politics. He writes:

“Newspapers arrived. I was alarmed that they [the Pakistani government] are trying to shut down democratic politics ... If anybody criticizes the government there will be cases against them under the proposed secret act ... I myself am facing five cases under article 124, section 7 (3) for making public speeches ... My fear is they are leading Pakistan toward terrorist politics. We do not believe in that politics. But those of us who want to do good for the people through democratic politics, our space is shrinking.”

Secularism

Non-communalism and equal rights for all citizens

Though he was a Bengali nationalist, Bangabandhu never tried to create

division and hatred between different identity groups. Many nationalist politicians use provocative languages and symbols that encourage violence between different groups. These days we are witnessing the rise of such nationalist leaders even in Western democratic countries who are trying to instigate intolerance and violence towards minority groups. But Bangabandhu’s nationalist politics was different. He believed in co-existence and mutual tolerance of different identity groups and talked about equal rights of all citizens. He always stood against communal violence.

Though he was involved in the Pakistan movement he believed that in India, Muslims and in Pakistan, Hindus should enjoy equal rights as citizens and live together in peace and harmony. He talked about equal rights of all groups to practice their respective religions.

He witnessed the communal riots in Kolkata on August 16, 1947. He points out that Suhrawardy asked his supporters to observe the day in a peaceful way so that no blame could fall on the Suhrawardy government. But unfortunately, communal riots did break out in Kolkata and later spread to Noakhali. Bangabandhu saved both Muslims and Hindus from acts of communal violence in Kolkata. Later when Suhrawardy joined Mahatma Gandhi in efforts to bring back communal harmony, Bangabandhu joined them.

After returning to Dhaka he joined Gonotantik Jubo League and took up the cause of building communal harmony as his main mission. He was against all forms of communal violence, not simply between Hindus and Muslims but also between different Muslim sects and between Bengalis and non-Bengalis.

In his Unfinished Memoirs he strongly condemns the anti-Kadiyani riots that took place in Lahore in 1953. In 1954, when riots broke out between Bengali

and non-Bengali workers in Adamjee jute mills in Narayanganj, he rushed to the area to calm the situation. In 1964 when Hindu-Muslim riots spread in India he started a civic campaign to prevent communal riots in East Bengal. Even in his March 7, 1971 speech he asked people to remain vigilant against the threat of communal violence. He said:

“Be very careful, keep in mind that the enemy has infiltrated our ranks to engage in the work of provocateurs. Whether Bengalee or non-Bengalee, Hindu or Muslim, all are our brothers and it is our responsibility to ensure their safety.”

In his personal life he followed the preachings of Islam. But Bangabandhu was against the political use of religion. He condemned the Muslim League’s practice of using the slogan of Islam and not paying attention to the economic well-being of the people which he argued was the goal for which “the working class, the peasants, and the labourers had made sacrifice during the movement for independence.”

Socialism

Equality, freedom from exploitation, and oppression

In his Unfinished Memoirs Bangabandhu writes:

“I myself am no communist, but I believe in socialism and not in capitalism. I believe capital is a tool of the oppressor. As long as capitalism is the mainspring of the economic order people all over the world will continue to be oppressed.”

By socialism he meant a system that would free people from exploitation and oppression and remove inequality. He visited China in 1952 which left a deep imprint in his mind. He found great differences in the living conditions of people in Pakistan and China which he attributed to the differences in the two political

systems.

Bangabandhu believed that the government has a role to play in removing inequality and freeing people from exploitation. He admired the priorities set by the Chinese government in improving the socio-economic conditions of the people. He writes:

“Everywhere we could see new schools and colleges coming up. The government has taken charge of education.” He further writes:

“The communist government had confiscated the land owned by landlords and had distributed it among all farmers. Thus landless peasants had become land owners. China now belonged to peasants and workers and the class that used to dominate and exploit had had their day.”

He did not want to see inequality grow in Bangladesh. In the council session of the AL held during April 7-8, 1972, he reiterated his commitment to promote an exploitation-free socio-economic system and socialism was formally adopted as one of the ideals of the party. In the next council session of the party held in 1974 he, again, pledged to work for freeing the nation of exploitation and oppression.

People Orientation

People’s issues, people’s politics

Often we find leaders who lead people towards great goals but they do not become emotionally involved with the people. Bangabandhu was an exception. When I compare the speeches of various leaders of the world with those of Bangabandhu, one of his off-repeated expressions -- “love for people” -- stands out as unique. He often talked about his love for people and people’s love for him in return.

He always prioritized the issues that are upper-most in ordinary people’s lives. His politics was people’s politics. During the campaign for Pakistan when famine struck, he worked in

feeding centres for the famine victims. He worked to rescue the victims of communal riots in Kolkata. He participated in street rallies demanding food security for the poor in East Bengal. His political philosophy was not centred only around the goal of getting state power: He developed his political ideas by being involved with the concerns of the ordinary masses.

This people’s orientation made him a pragmatist. In his diaries he constantly refers to issues that would affect ordinary people’s everyday life such as the rise in essential commodity prices or tax increase or flood or famine.

At one level, Bangabandhu was a man of the masses. He learned about people’s aspirations from them. At another level he was the leader of the people. He carried forward ordinary people’s aspirations. He had faith in people. That is why he could call upon people on March 7, 1971 to join the liberation struggle with “whatever little they have.”

Four guiding principles of state

We see the reflections of Bangabandhu’s political philosophy in the four guiding principles of state adopted by our constitution: Nationalism, democracy, secularism, and socialism. He defended these four principles in various speeches delivered in the parliament, in the party forums, and in addresses to the nation.

Bangabandhu used to articulate the goals of his life’s work in two simple words. He would either say he wants to build again “Shonar Bangla” or he would say he wants to bring “a smile on the faces of the poor and unhappy people.” Bangabandhu never talked about GDP growth or other theoretical issues. He knew very well how precious a smile was and his goal was to achieve that priceless objective.

(Rounaq Jahan: *Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka, Bangladesh.*)

How to show proper respect to Bangabandhu

Nazrul Islam *



1. Introduction

The nation is celebrating 2020 as the “Mujib Year,” marking the centenary of the birth of the great leader, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the Father of the Nation of Bangladesh. Despite attempts by some quarters to belittle him and his contribution, the decisive and glorious role of Bangabandhu in Bangladesh’s independence has only become clearer with time. The recent publication of Bangabandhu’s *অসমাপ্ত আত্মজীবনী* (রহমান ২০১২) and *কারাগারের রোজনামা* (রহমান ২০১৭) and the *Secret Documents of the Pakistani Intelligence Branch* (বন্দবন্ধু মেমোরিয়াল ট্রাস্ট ২০১৯) have helped all see more clearly Bangabandhu’s dedication and sacrifice for the people of Bangladesh and his foresight, organizing ability, leadership acumen, and the greatness as a person. The combination of qualities that Bangabandhu embodied is simply unparalleled. The speech that he gave on March 7, 1971 was like a miracle. It is a great fortune that the nation could have a leader like him.

It is therefore highly appropriate that the nation should mark the centenary of Bangabandhu’s birth in a befitting manner. The government has taken several initiatives; several committees have been formed; and a series of events have started to be organized under their auspices and also independently. However, **often these events appear to be formalistic, without adequate substance and sincerity.** Thus, speakers at these events routinely praise Bangabandhu for his role and qualities, claim themselves to be his followers and either call for or even pledge to fulfill his unfinished dreams. However, there is hardly any serious effort at self-examination to find out how their actual behaviour matches Bangabandhu’s ideals and practice and how they actually could fulfill his dreams.

In this short piece, I will try to illustrate this inadequacy and insincerity and point to a few ways in which proper respect can be shown to Bangabandhu.

* *Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations. The views expressed in this article are author’s personal and should not be ascribed to organizations to which he belongs E-mail: nislam13@yahoo.com*

2. Corruption and malpractice vs. Bangabandhu’s dream of a prosperous Bangladesh

Broadly, Bangabandhu’s dream was to see “a happy and prosperous” Bangladesh. He wanted to see “smile on the face of the low income people and the downtrodden.” That is why, even before the movement for Bengali national self-determination gained steam, he engaged himself in fight for the protection of the rights of *daoals*, the poor agricultural labourers who travelled from one district to another in search of work. He came out so strongly in support of the demands of Dhaka University’s class-three and class-four employees that the authorities expelled him, along with few others, from the university, and while the others got themselves readmitted by repenting (providing *muchleka*), Bangabandhu never returned, thus giving up the opportunity of finishing the law degree and becoming a prosperous lawyer. Despite twice being a minister in the 1950s, Bangabandhu was extremely reluctant to apply for a plot in Dhanmondi Residential Area, and it is only due to the initiative and insistence of Begum Mujib, the great lady who matched Bangabandhu well in terms of patriotism and dedication, that he ultimately had a plot, and that too half in size compared to the standard ones. The difficulty and loans that Begum Mujib had to incur to construct the modest house on that plot is well-known. So, this was Bangabandhu – a man not only of the other qualities that I mentioned above, a man who spent most of this youth in jail and faced certain death many occasions, but also he was **completely devoid of any greed and proneness toward malpractice for personal material gain.**

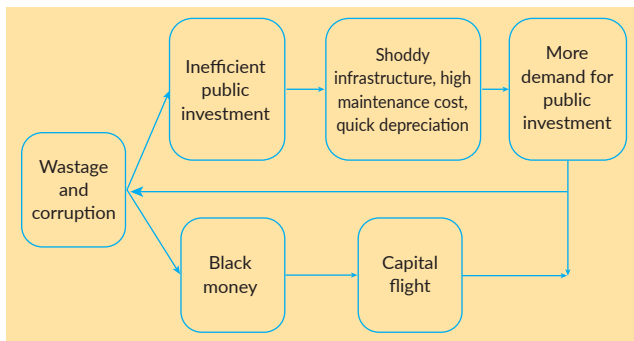
Now compare the above practice of Bangabandhu with the current behaviour of much of the bureaucracy, political cadres, and business folk. So far as business folk are concerned, the mere fact that the size of the default bank loans increased from Tk 22,480 crore in 2009 to Tk 100,000 crore in 2019, speaks for itself. While a fraction of the above may be due to true difficulties regarding business, there is no doubt that much of this massive default is deliberate and represents a culture of defrauding the nation to increase personal wealth. Needless to say, they do this in collusion with bureaucrats and politicians.

So far as the bureaucracy is concerned, recent press reports are revealing, one by one, horror stories of corruption and malpractice. In July 2018, it was reported that 1.42 lakh tonnes of coal from the Barapukuria mine, valued at Tk 227 crore, just vanished. In May, 2019, the nation came to know about pillows of Rooppur project costing Tk 6,000 per piece, with another Tk 760 billed for carrying. In September, 2019, there came the news about curtain used as bed screen in the Faridpur government hospital costing Tk 37.5 lakh per piece. In August 2019, the nation watched video showing Jamalpur DC using his private chamber as a room for extra-marital sex. Misappropriation of funds and misuse of power seem to have become the general norm.

Coming to politicians and political cadres, the situation was well-reflected by the recent (September 14, 2019) revelation by Prof. Farzana Islam, Vice Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University, that the president and general secretary of the Central Committee of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), demanded from her 4 to 6 per cent cut from the Jahangirnagar University's Tk 1,445 crore development project as their "fair share" and misbehaved with her when she did not agree. It is an open secret that almost everywhere in Bangladesh, politicians and political cadres demand and get their "fair share" from public sector projects. As a result, the efficiency of public investment suffers badly.

Needless to say, the above behaviour of politicians, bureaucrats, and business folk is far removed from Bangabandhu's practice and is making realization of Bangabandhu's dream of a "happy and prosperous" Bangladesh difficult. The government of Sheikh Hasina has concretized the above goal of Bangabandhu into the goal of Bangladesh becoming a high-income country by 2041. However, a close analysis shows that with the above tendencies persisting, it is highly uncertain that Bangladesh will ever reach this goal. Figure 1 below may help understand why this is so. It shows that corruption and waste generate several reinforcing pernicious processes.

Figure 1: Economic consequences of waste and corruption



Source: Islam (2019)

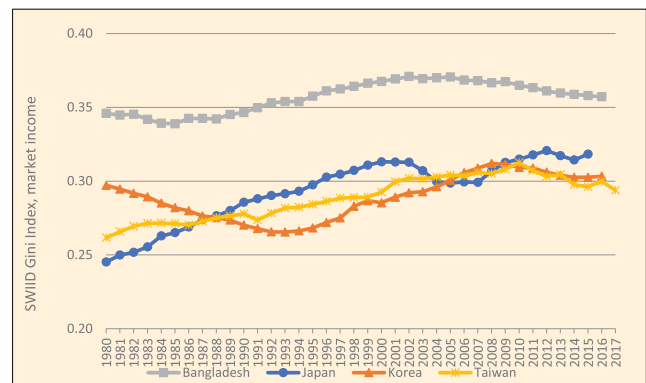
First, corruption and waste lead to poor quality of work and put additional demand on budget. In most cases, politicians and government officials have to collude with each other and with the business-folk (contractors) involved in order to

misappropriate the money. As a result, the supervisory role of politicians and officials get compromised, and hence they cannot ensure the quality of work. Taking the opportunity, contractors keep on padding the construction budget and ultimately deliver poor quality of work. For example, it has been widely reported that construction cost of roads and highways in Bangladesh is one of the highest in the world, while the quality of construction is one of the lowest. There are many instances that roads constructed at high costs have become unusable in two years, requiring additional budget for repair and reconstruction. Needless to say, corrupt politicians and bureaucrats are only too happy to approve these supplementary budgets!

Second, corruption and waste lead to black money and capital flight. The money earned through corruption is ill-gotten and thus becomes black money. Owners of these ill-gotten monies therefore become desperate to ship the money outside the country. According to a recent study by researchers at Global Financial Integrity (GFI), around \$5.9 billion was siphoned out of Bangladesh in 2015 through trade mis-invoicing. It has also been reported that Tk 4,091 crore of Bangladeshis is parked in the Swiss Bank. The phenomena of "Begum Para" in Canada, "Second Homes" in Malaysia, etc. offer visual evidence of the capital flight. In short, a large part of domestic capital, that could have been deployed for development in Bangladesh, is moving out of the country.

Third, corruption is adding to the rise in inequality. The huge amount of public money that was misappropriated through loan default went into the hands of the few. Similarly, money misappropriated from the country's Annual Development Programme (ADP) also goes to a handful few. Given that the size of the ADP has now reached about Tk. 4 lakh crore, even if it is assumed that only 25 per cent of ADP is misappropriated, the amount misappropriated stands at about Tk. 1 lakh crore per year. This is a huge engine working towards increasing inequality in the country. These processes are adding to the inequality that is inherent to the capitalist path of development that Bangladesh is currently following. No wonder therefore that inequality of income distribution in Bangladesh is now much higher than in other East Asian capitalist economies, such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (Figure 2).

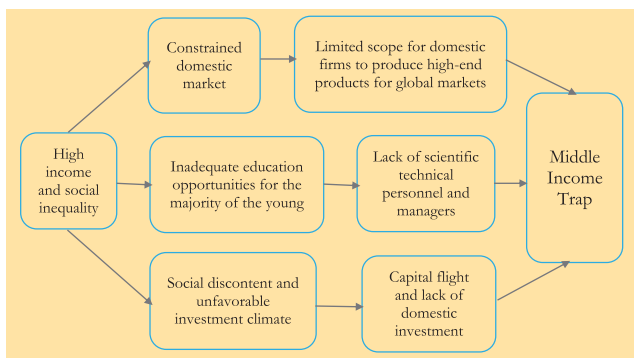
Figure 2: Inequality of distribution of market income: Bangladesh compared with Japan, South Korea and Taiwan



Source: Author, based on data from SWIID

Unfortunately, the high inequality is becoming another obstacle to Bangladesh's way to realizing Bangabandhu's dream of a "happy and prosperous country." As Figure 3 shows, instead of reaching the High-Income status by 2041, Bangladesh may soon get caught in the Middle-Income Trap, perhaps even at the lower middle-income stage. Several processes may lead Bangladesh to this disappointing outcome. First, high inequality constrains the domestic market, so that entrepreneurs cannot use domestic market to develop technologically sophisticated, high-end products for export. The country may then remain stuck to producing low-end, labour-intensive products, thus earning less income. Second, high economic and social inequality may leave the majority of the young population unprepared for the jobs of the globalized world with fast pacing technology. Bangladesh may thus be unable to make use of the "demographic bonus." Third, high inequality may lead to social discontent, damaging investment climate, and pushing more capital to take flight. Together, the goal of reaching the High-Income status may remain elusive.

Figure 3: Inequality and "Middle Income Trap"



Source: Author

In short, the current behaviour of large sections of politicians, bureaucrats and business folk of Bangladesh does not match Bangabandhu's ideals and practice at all. For them to claim to be Bangabandhu's followers and working for realizing Bangabandhu's dream is mockery. Their behaviour is, in fact, leaving the job of achieving Bangabandhu's dream of a "happy and prosperous" Bangladesh more difficult. The proper way of showing respect to Bangabandhu would be for them to change their behaviour and follow Bangabandhu's path of honesty, dedication, and sincerity.

3. Towards fulfilling Bangabandhu's dream regarding Bangladesh villages?

Another proper way of paying respect to Bangabandhu is not to remain limited to his general goal of "happy and prosperous" Bangladesh but also to pay attention to the specific ideas and objectives that he had put forward and that remain unfulfilled and then to make sincere effort to implement them. There are many such ideas. Here I will draw attention to just one of them, namely the idea of transforming Bangladesh villages into cooperatives.

It is well-known that in March 1975, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman announced the important initiative of transforming Bangladesh villages into production cooperatives. According to this proposal, all the cultivable land of a village would be pooled and collectively tilled. The output would be divided into three equal parts, of which one part would be distributed based on the proportion of labour, another part would be distributed based on the proportion of land, and the third part would go to a "Village Fund," which would be used for village development activities. This initiative regarding villages was part of the programme of a Second Revolution that Bangabandhu wanted to carry out in the country. However, the coup in August 15, 1975, in which Bangabandhu and most of his family members were killed, didn't allow him to implement this plan.

It is true that the international experience since 1975 has shown that the idea of collective farming using low-level technology is not effective, and as a result countries such as China and Vietnam have reverted from collective farming to family farming. Hence, it may not be appropriate to advocate collective farming now. However, this does not mean that Bangabandhu's idea regarding villages has no relevance for the present-day Bangladesh and needs to be discarded entirely. To the contrary, a close analysis shows that his general idea of creating a village level institution to allow joint initiatives by villagers themselves is still very potential and can help Bangladesh's further development in several ways.

First, **Bangabandhu's idea can help to fill an important void that currently exists in the local government structure of the country.** Historically villages were the basic social unit of Bangladesh; and the country has a long tradition of *village level self-governance*. It is therefore somewhat ironic that Bangladesh currently does not have any village-level self-governing institution. Second, introduction of village level self-governance, as envisaged by Bangabandhu, can help mobilize and use the labour and material resources that remain unutilized in the villages due to the lack of an institution that can facilitate *joint* efforts. Greater utilization of village-level resources can make the development process more *self-reliant*. Third, formation of a village-level tier and strengthening the local government in general can change the development process—from the *top-down* process, as it currently is, to a more *bottom-up* process, with more participation of the people at the grass-roots. This can help reduce corruption and waste that are involved with the top-down development processes, as noted above.

Bangladesh's lack of village-level self-governance is conspicuous in view of the fact that both India and China, Bangladesh's two important neighbouring countries, are using village-level local government for their development effectively. In India, for example, *Gram Panchayet* is the first tier of the country's *Panchayaet* (local government) system. Similarly, in China, "Village Governments" are playing an important role, including the role of periodic redistribution of the village land among its inhabitants.

It is true that following Bangabandhu's initiative in 1975, other governments, including a previous government led by Sheikh Hasina, took some initiatives to form a village-level tier of local government. Table 1 provides a brief list of these initiatives. However, none of these initiatives was properly followed through. As a result, villages of Bangladesh are now like *orphans*, with no effective mechanism for self-governance and representation at higher levels of government.

Table 2: Initiatives for setting up local government at the village level in Bangladesh

Year	Government taking the initiative	Initiative
1975	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib	Samabayi Gram (Villages as production cooperative)
1980	Ziaur Rahman	Swanirvar Gram Sarkar (Self-reliant village government)
1989	Husain Muhammad Ershad	Palli Parishad (Village Council)
1991	Khaleda Zia	Gram Shabha (Village Meeting)
1997	Sheikh Hasina	Gram Parishad (Village Council)
2003	Khaleda Zia	Gram Sarkar (Village Government)

Source: Islam (2017, p. 94)

Thus, an important way to show respect to Bangabandhu is to pay attention to his idea regarding transformation of villages into cooperatives. Of course, it is necessary to update his idea in the light of the international and national experience these days. In particular, the idea of combining land and tilling jointly may not be appropriate any more. However, there is a rational kernel in his idea, and this kernel may be developed in a way that can be of much help for Bangladesh's future development. In my 2017 book, *বঙ্গবন্ধুর স্বপ্ন এবং বাংলাদেশের গ্রাম*, I have offered a discussion about how this can be done. Those who are interested in this task may benefit from this discussion.

4. Conclusions

The nation is heading towards the centenary of Bangabandhu's birth. The government has rightly announced 2020 as the "Mujib Year" and taken initiatives to mark the occasion. Many events have already been held and many more will be held. However, in many cases, these events often lack sincerity and seriousness of purpose. The proper way of showing respect to Bangabandhu, however, is to strive to match Bangabandhu's honesty, dedication, patriotism, and self-less work for the common people. Unfortunately, large sections of politicians, bureaucrats, and business folk are now immersed in corruption and malpractice. **Praising Bangabandhu while engaging in corruption and malpractice is not the proper way of showing respect to him.** It is only through dedicated, honest, and efficient work that we can help realise Bangabandhu's overall dream of a "happy and prosperous" Bangladesh.

Apart from the overall dream above, Bangabandhu also had many specific ideas and proposals that still remain unrealized. Hence, another important way to show respect to Bangabandhu is to go back to these proposals, think about their relevance for the current situation, and make efforts to implement them. One of these proposals was Bangabandhu's announcement in March 1975 of transforming Bangladesh's villages into cooperatives. Some aspects of this proposal may not be appropriate now. However, it is necessary to revisit this proposal, modify it in the light of the current circumstances, and find ways of implementing it. That will indeed be a proper way of paying respect to Bangabandhu.

See <https://www.daily-sun.com/printversion/details/372813/2019/02/21/Loan-Default-Culture>. For discussion on capital flight from Bangladesh, see also Global Financial Integrity (2014), Imam et al. (1995), and Islam et al. (2014). For an analysis of Bangladesh's governance problems, see Islam (2016).
<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/just-vanished-1608787>
<https://www.thedailystar.net/country/rooppur-nuclear-power-plant-corruption-writ-seeks-judicial-inquiry-1745860>
<http://www.theindependentbd.com/post/214308>
<https://www.thedailystar.net/backpage/news/jamalpur-dc-made-os-d-over-lurid-video-1790521>
<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/bcl-president-secretary-demands-fair-share-in-jahangirnagar-university-project-1799683>
<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/4-lane-dhaka-ctg-highway-6yrs-make-6-months-break-1559266>.
 See also <http://m.theindependentbd.com/post/116608>
<https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/economics/news/checking-capital-flight-it-too-late-1697959>

References

- Alam, Muhammad Imam, Asif Dowla and Salim Rashid (1995). "Capital Flight from Bangladesh," *The Bangladesh Development Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1/2 (March-June 1995), pp. 67-87.
- Aziz, Shawkatul Islam Md., Md. Omer Khayyum, Md. Minhaj Uddin (2014). Determinants of capital flight in Bangladesh: An econometric investigation, *Developing Country Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 25, pp. 121-135.
- Bangabandhu Memorial Trust (2018), *Secret Documents of Intelligence Branch on Father of the Nation*, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Vol. I, 1948-1950, Hakkani Publishers, Dhaka,
- Global Financial Integrity (GFI) (2014), *Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) to and from Developing Countries: 2005-2014*, Washington DC, May 2. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/tribune-supplements/business-tribune/2017/07/09/unstoppable-growth-capital-flight>.
- Islam, Nazrul (2019), "Bangladesh in the next thirty years – Prospects and challenges," a paper presented at Bangladesh Development Initiative (BDI) conference held at Yale University, March 22-24
- Islam, Nazrul, (2016a). *Governance for Development – Political and Administrative Reforms in Bangladesh*, Chapter 2. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Islam, Nazrul (2014), "Will Inequality Lead China to the Middle-Income Trap?" *Frontier of Economics in China*, Vol. 9, Issue 3, pp. 398-437
- নজরুল ইসলাম (২০১৭), *বঙ্গবন্ধুর স্বপ্ন ও বাংলাদেশের গ্রাম*, ঢাকা। ইস্টার্ন একাডেমী।
 শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান (২০১২), *অসমাপ্ত আত্মজীবনী*, ইউনিভার্সিটি প্রেস লিমিটেড, ঢাকা
 শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান (২০১৭), *কারাগারের রোজনামাচা*, বাংলা একাডেমী, ঢাকা।



Picture of Alice Island, the major port of New York where all Bengalee paddlers used to arrive by ship.

History of Bengali Immigrants in America

Adnan Syed

There was a popular proverb about the nature of Bengalees and it was: 'Bengalees' are basically homesick and lazy. They don't tend to explore and find new home abroad". But now this proverb has changed and added a new dimension to Bengalees' lives. We can find Bengalees almost all over the world. Bengalees are dispersed beyond Asia from one continent to another. Of course, Bengalees are now playing an important and significant role in America. The question is: How did they settle in America? Was it so easy?

If we look back at the history of Bengalee immigrants in America, we definitely can get some sort of pictures. For various reasons, the Bengalees crossed the ocean and settled in the new unknown land. They climbed the hills, and threw themselves into the vulnerable situation in the foreign land. Needless to say that this migration process was not easy. They had sacrificed their lives and played a role to globalise the Bengali language and Bengali culture. This is the reason, in this modern age, Bengalees have become more united and connected with each other than ever. So, Bengalees are no longer identified only with their so-called old proverb. Rather, the Bengalees are now proving their worth around the

world with their hard work and integrity. But it should also be remembered that there is a lot of sacrifice and hard work behind this immigration story of Bengalees. They left their beloved country in search of a new life. It is not easy to leave behind their own culture, language and loved ones.

It is difficult to say exactly when and how the Bengalees migrated to America. Unfortunately we don't have any empirical evidence to shed enough light on this matter but we have seen that from the beginning of the eighteenth century a bunch of Bengalees started to migrate to the USA from then East Pakistan. It is well-known that when India was under the British Raj, the port of Hooghly became quite popular for travelers to travel to Europe and America from India. Gradually this port became popular and gradually became part of one of the major routes for transportation to Europe and America from India. After boarding a steamer or ship at the Hooghly port the vessel used to head towards the Port Liverpool, London and the final destination would be the USA. Ships used to arrive at various ports in the USA, the last destination. From that time Bengalees started getting

their jobs as Lascar and Khalasis aboard the ships and went to England and America.

But as I am describing, the journey was not so simple and easy. It was quite a tough situation indeed. Question is: how was that difficult task made possible on the way to discover America? As mentioned earlier that early eighteenth century transportation aboard ship/steamer became popular in India. So some of poor and destitute Bengalees found the way to migrate to the USA. They wanted to get a job aboard the ship as a lascar or simple khalasi/kuli. First of all, it was not so easy to find a job aboard a ship. The total plan was simple but not an easy process. It was important for them to get a job aboard a ship and once the ship was about to dock at a port in the USA, they jumped off the ship and settled in US permanently. But in the first place it was the most important obstacle to get a job aboard a ship. "Ghat sareng" was the supreme authority to decide on a job at a ship. But without bribing the 'Ghat Sarang (local recruiter)', no one would get a job. After getting the job at the ship the Lascars had to face the real challenge in their lives. The job was risky and painful. But "no risk no gain". They were hired as port boys, boiler men and for other menial jobs. Boiler men were assigned to work to run the boiler and keep up boiler temperature by supplying fire. Just imagine the boiler room temperature was around 600 degrees Fahrenheit. No doubt it was simply inhuman and can be compared with slavery. The next important task was more difficult. Once the ship was about to touch the dreamland, these poor Lascars were getting ready to face their second challenge. It was the challenge of jumping off from the ship before it reached the US port. In short terms we call them "Ship Jumpers". As simple as it may sound, the poor Bangladeshi sailors did not have any documents or visas to travel to the United States, so they had no choice but to flee to America in whatever alternative ways were available. Thus, Habib Ullah in New York, Moksud Ali of St. Louis, Ibrahim Chowdhury of New York or

Abedin Quder of Michigan and many more were among them. They came to the USA on different occasions as ship jumpers and settled in the USA. They struggled and built a Bengalee immigrant community in the USA. This is the way the story of Bengalee immigrants in the USA has begun. As mentioned earlier, Bengalees first learned to deal with the British than the Americans. Reasons were quite logical. If we go back to our history, we can see that Bengalees started their business with the Mughal, preserving the diplomatic relations of the Indian kings with the East India Company, and finally the Bengalees in various professions, including personal assistants, travelers, servants, sailors and Lascars came to England. But when was the first Bengalee flown to this USA? No, we do not have any exact information, however, we have come to know a lot about the arrival of the Bengalee peddlers through the United States Census Bureau's own library and various related auxiliary books which have been published in the USA. After India was under British rule, anti-British movements started at various times in Bengal. The crime of joining the agitation against the British, Bengalees were subjected to be sent to jail and treated inhumanly. So the life became miserable and at stake. Some of them had no option but to be fugitives and get jobs aboard ships and go to America. We all know about Tarkanath Das, the organizer of the anti-British movement who came to the USA in 1906. Tarkanath Das first secretly arrived in Japan and then moved onwards to America. He graduated from the University of Washington with an MA in 1911. On his way to the United States, Tarkanath secretly volunteered to speed up the anti-British movement as well. He died in New York on December 22, 1958. However, it is good to know that these Bengalee paddlers used to be hooked up as Lascars from East Bengal to London or employed aboard American ships. Then they went a long way. It is imperative to understand that during the eighteenth century, the Indian goods were highly valued in the American market. Particularly silk fabrics, muslin, scarves, handkerchiefs were in great demand. Many Bengalees



Picture of Habib Ullah who came to USA in 1920 as a ship jumper

came to America to take part in this garments business. We have to remember that these simple and destitute Bengalees came from very poor society, thus they did not have any other choice but to work as lascars aboard ships. At that time, going to

The headline of the news was "Hindoos in America". A reporter wrote "The dark-skinned Hindoo peddlers who infest the seaside resorts of the Jersey coast in summer are very interesting people. They are invariably courteous and their general shrewdness when trying to affect a sale is most engaging. As a rule, they are handsome men with clean-cut features and intellectual faces. They speak Hindustanee and occasionally Bengali, while their English is excellent."

America defying the risk of shipwreck was just like getting a moon in the hand. Imagine that they had no knowledge of English to do their jobs. They had no network. But they had courage to travel, they had dream. With all these minimal efforts, they sailed abroad and dreamed of their lives in the USA. During the World War I, the United States saw a huge demand for general workers. At that time, many Bengalee workers from different areas of East Bengal, including Noakhali, Sylhet,

Sandeep and Chattogram started coming to America. On 5th June, 1932, Ayub Ali came to America. He jumped from the ship into the water before the ship sailed to the American port. He moved to London in the next year which was 1933. It is just a picture that shows how people from the then East Bengal region migrated to the United States earlier. During this time we were able to track twelve destitute people from then East Pakistan who came to the USA. We can get an idea from an American Businessman Benjamin Franklin in his journal. As per his journal he rescued 12 Bengalee sailors from the New Haven Port of Pennsylvania and they were sent to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. It is acknowledged that a large portion of these ship jumpers from East Bengal, in India, used to sell Indian silk cloths, women's silk scarves, handkerchiefs for men to use at the port. Researcher Vivek Bald in his book "Bengali Harlems" also points out that in 1907 there were twelve Bengalees in New Orleans who permanently settled in the USA. Traders have been identified as Jainal Abedin, Rostom Ali, Soloiman Mondol, Solomon Mollah, Abdus Sobhan, Safur Ali, Ishaq, Bahadur, Mizan Ali at the St. Louis Street address. Vivek also learned that the Bengalees used to travel around the city—railway stations, French markets, Canal Street—and sell clothes. Many had a window shop (home). Buyers also bought cotton and other items from the Bengal peddlers. According to a survey, after the 1st World War a large number of ship jumpers settled in the USA. They started their new life in New York, New Jersey,

Baltimore, Michigan, St. Louis Louisiana, etc. In some cases, after being released from prison, many of the defendants sailed back to their country. At that time, foreign ship crew members were unable to enter American soil legally due to restrictions on 'aliens contract' law. Because of this law, they could not work permanently and legally in the United States. Because of this, most of the ship sailors had no choice but to jump. They jumped off the ship and started a new life in the USA. After that, very quickly they managed some jobs to work as dishwashers, laundry workers, lift men, machine workers, hot dog sellers, street vendors, etc. Once upon a time, a large number of Bengalee street hawkers were seen on Ellis Island, New York. They used to sell handmade shawls, tablecloths, bed sheets, various handmade goods which were originally brought from India. At that time everyone had eyes on making money. Don't think that all of these ship jumpers were illiterate. Not at all. Some of them were quite educated, could speak pure English. Let's keep an eye on a report from the Chicago Tribune published on July 19th 1891. The headline of the news was "Hindoos in America! A reporter wrote "The dark-skinned Hindoo peddlers who infest the seaside resorts of the Jersey coast in summer are very interesting people. They are invariably courteous and their general shrewdness when trying to affect a sale is most engaging. As a rule, they are handsome men with clean-cut features and intellectual faces. They speak Hindustanee and occasionally Bengali, while their English is excellent." The US Department of Immigration and Naturalization records a shocking incident. In order to satisfy your curiosity, I love to mention this incident so that you can get a clear picture of the then Bengalee immigrants in the Unites States of America. It was summer in New York. June 18, 1897. A ship named 'St. Louis' sailed from England to the port of Ellis Island. On the deck of the ship 12 ship peddlers were walking in pensive mood. They all came from East Bengal. From Hooghly to England, then to America. Later we could trace some of their names. Mintu Mondal, Musa Mondal,

Maqsood Ali, Abdul Aziz, Basiruddin, Obaidullah and Fazle Rahman. When they came to the port and faced immigration, they were looking perplexed and panicked. Everyone was preparing to face immigration along the line. The first to face was Abdul Aziz from Noakhali region of East Bengal. Immigration officer question: What is your profession? Instant Answer: Business. Q: Ethnicity? Answer: East Indian Immigration officer: Where were you before coming here and where to go? Instant Answer: I'll go to New Jersey Immigrant Officer: Who bought your ship ticket? I bought it sir, Abdul Aziz replied with a humble face. Immigration officer: Hmmm, understand. How much money did you bring? Answer: 1 pound. Immigration Officer: Ever been to the United States before? Or is it the first time? Aziz: Yes. Why did you come? What is the purpose of your visit? Aziz gave no answer as he kept silent. Immigration Officer shouted again: What was the reason? No word from Aziz. Are you a Communist? Aziz : No sir Then? Why came to America? Did you

come up with a job contract? Or want to work here? Abdul Aziz was baffled with all this sudden attack from the immigration officer and kept silent. Needless to say that all these six Bengali ship peddlers were sent to jail for their suspicious acts. This is the way stories of Bengalee immigrants in the United States have begun. After shedding tons of blood Bengalees have become now one of the most important and significant nation in the USA. They have been contributing important part in the USA by highlighting their thousand years old rooted arts,culture and language. Now this days they have been involved in various types of business in USA and proudly representing their beloved Bangladesh in American soil..

References:

1. *Bengali Harlem and the Lost Histories of South Asian America Hardcover* – November 19, 2012
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladeshi_Americans
3. *Across seven seas and thirteen rivers: Life stories of pioneer Sylhetti settlers in Britain Paperback*
4. <https://www.prothomalo.com/northamerica/article/1326531>

[By profession Adnan Syed is a financial anlyst in the USA. He is also a fiction and non-fiction writer writing in Bengali]



Picture of a bunch of ship jumpers from East Bengal



NRB Physicians can help make a difference back at home

Dr. Choudhury Hasan

It is a great honour for all of us, the NRB (nonresident Bangladeshi) community, to have the State of New York legislative resolution proclaiming September 25, 2019 as the Bangladeshi Immigrant Day in the state of New York. The choice of this date in the proclamation attests to recognition of the memorable day, September 25, 1974 when for the first time in its history, Father of the Nation of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Shaikh Mujibur Rahman gave a speech in Bangla in the general assembly of the United Nations. Also in this proclamation the state of New York recognises the accomplishments of the Bengalee population worldwide, their contribution to the war of independence and also acknowledges immense contributions of Bangladeshi

Americans to New York. The pioneer of this achievement is the Muktaadhara Foundation under the able leadership of its founder and CEO Mr. Bishawjit Saha.

As we obtain this appreciation from the State of New York, we have a moral obligation of contributing to the growth and development of our beloved country of origin, Bangladesh. Over the last century the Bangladeshi population has grown significantly to the second generation or third generation. Bangladeshi people have attained significant business and professional growth in the USA. Being a physician and specialist trained in the USA, I perceive a significant difference between Bangladesh and the USA in medical management of very

common diseases. Even though the economic situation of Bangladesh significantly contributes to these discrepancies of medical management and treatment, there are factors which are not financial in nature that contributes to a lot of negative scenarios in the healthcare sector of Bangladesh. Among the non-financial causes that contribute to poor healthcare in Bangladesh the following are more important: Lack of medical knowledge, lack of teamwork, lack of supervision by authorities, leadership failure (leadership failure in government and non-government sectors, also policy issues), a culture of rivalry among physicians, lack of empathy and lack of proper medical record keeping (this may include very rare

use of electronic medical record or electronic health record). Kickbacks (given to physicians by pharmaceutical companies or by laboratory/private clinics/ diagnostic services) and corruption in the healthcare sector are rampant as we see in news. The USA is unique in making sure that the physicians are not deprived of most recent medical advances by making it mandatory for physicians to keep up to date with medical knowledge. American Board certifications and other major certifications/degrees have a clearly written date of expiration. Most expire in 10 years and some expire in 5 years, unless the physician takes the same exact test again and gets him or herself recertified. The near-mandatory nature of this kind of recertification exams is obvious. Lack of recertification puts mostly financial sanctions on the physician or the practice the physician is involved in.

Possible role of NRB physicians
NRB physicians' expertise can be utilised, if the government of Bangladesh takes an initiative to that end with some financial or non-financial incentives. This initiative can reduce the deficits in medical knowledge, medical management knowledge and in technical know-how as mentioned above while enriching the medical field of Bangladesh. Many NRB physicians do visit Bangladesh yearly for a month or a slightly lesser period of time. NRB physician recruitment should be properly organised by the government in the private sector (including private medical colleges, which must fulfill government regulations in order to remain

accredited) matching the necessity of different areas of Bangladesh. NRB physicians may provide their services at facilities near their place of residence in Bangladesh since their commute will be less difficult this way. NRB physicians can be recruited online so that they can find their schedules in Bangladesh much ahead of time, therefore planning the travel and work day. Depending on their educational and professional status they can be given equivalent titles matching their Bangladeshi counterparts. Since in the USA physicians do a lot of hands-on work including procedures, sonography, this can give an opportunity to a Bangladeshi physician, who comes across the US-trained NRB physician, to learn invasive and noninvasive procedures as well as medical ethics. Occasionally very small sized medically equipment can be carried by the NRB physician to Bangladesh to give hands-on lessons on critical and complicated procedures. The government of Bangladesh should make sure that the safety, accommodation, transportation, status, honour and comfort of NRB physicians are guaranteed so that ongoing services from the same NRB physician are available in the following year also.

Access to advanced health care for underprivileged population is limited and given through government facilities since private clinics or hospitals are beyond the reach of common people. There should be an easily reachable hierarchy of contact persons or the government agency in Bangladesh who will supervise the above requirements of NRB physicians. It should be remembered that our

healthcare system in Bangladesh is less likely to acknowledge the deficits that exist in the healthcare field. Accordingly NRB physicians were not recruited in the past, since the necessity and the possibility of utilising the service of NRB physicians were not the top priority of healthcare leaderships. There is a culture in the health sector that recruitment of physicians from our big neighbouring country bridges the knowledge gap in the medical field. There is significant superiority of USA-trained physicians for obvious reasons and this factor has to be acknowledged.

Finally recruitment of NRB physicians may bring recognition and improve image of our Bangladeshi medical institutions. This is likely to elevate their image in the USA. This is really needed since many medical graduates from Bangladesh end up joining the USA hospitals for residency and fellowship/specialty training. Entrance to residency training is a difficult process and graduates from a properly-recognised medical institution is more likely to get accepted. As NRB physicians we too love our country Bangladesh and sometimes want to contribute to our healthcare sector only to see whether our existing healthcare leadership is either unwilling or partially cooperative.

Dr. Choudhury M. Hasan, MD, FACP, FACC, FCCP, FSCAI, RPVI, RVT, RDCS, RCCS, RVS (Board Certified in Interventional Cardiology, Cardiology, Internal Medicine and Advanced Diabetes Management and Cardiac Rehab. Practicing in New York Metropolitan area, affiliated with Mt. Sinai Hospital, Manhattan

The Big Picture: Digital Transformation

Tanveer Rabbani

In today's business world, digital transformation is a leading force. Why? Let me start with the story of Circuit City. In 1980s' U.S. stock market, the best performing stock was Circuit City. The company went public in 1984 and within six years the return on the stock was 8000%! The centerpiece of the company's success was superior customer service. They had revolutionised customer experience in the consumer electronics space. In the 1990s, Circuit City used its financial power to start other companies, including a technology firm and a bank. In 2000s, Amazon entered the consumer electronics space and Circuit City did not catch the digital train at all. Within 10 years Amazon started leading the consumer electronics space and the former leader went for bankruptcy.

The big companies are falling faster. The average tenure of the S&P 500 is around 15 years now. The average Fortune 500 business takes roughly 20 years to reach a billion-dollar evaluation. Uber, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Oculus Rift, each took less than four. All of this means that digital immigrant organisations, born prior to the digital age, need to think more like the digital native companies.

The Digital Revolution:

The term digital is used in many ways these days. But what does it really mean? There are a variety of terms related to this, such as **Digitization**, **Digitalization**, **Digital Transformation**. Let me offer some definitions.

Digitization is the conversion of analog or physical information to a digital format. Think of paper instruction manuals. Converting those from physical paper to a digital format represents digitization. Distributing digital contents of a newspaper through a digital channel like a website or an app is also an example of digitization.

Digitalization is the use of digital technologies and digitally-enabled approaches to enable or improve

business models and processes. This is the process of exploiting digital opportunities. The expansion of a newspaper's offering by including video news, podcast, online subscription and paywall can be examples of Digitalization.

Digital Transformation is the integration of digital technology and the coordinated digitalization change efforts into all areas of a business. Digital transformation requires rethinking of how an organization uses technology, people, and processes to fundamentally change its business performance. Digital transformation closes the gap between what digital customers already expect and what the businesses actually deliver.

The logical hierarchy is **Digitization-Digitalization-Digital Transformation**

The Stages of Digital Maturity:

Let's evaluate your business. Your company have a website and your business can interact with customers online. You have an active social media presence through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. You advertise through digital channels and you collaborate through collaborative technology. Yes, all these are important but none of them is considered a competitive advantage in today's market. Your company might consider as a **Digitally Active company**. Digitally Active companies take advantage of the solutions to increase revenue. Combined with a basic level of analytics and operational improvements such as the introduction of agile development methods. Organizations in this tier are beginning to utilize the peripheral advantages of a digital organization. From the retail sector, Sears is an example of a digitally active organization. Companies that remain digitally active are likely to fade away rather than to thrive.

Next is **Digitally Engaged** organization. Digitally engaged organizations develop digital solutions and processes that can be found throughout the organization. Digitally engaged organizations use more advantaged analytics and process automation

freeing up capacity and providing critical information for strategic decisions. To continue with the retail example I mentioned above, most retailers are currently digitally engaged.

Digitally competitive organizations push the envelope on how digital solutions and processes can be utilized to not only drive revenue but also to help forecast future needs and respond quickly to identified gaps. As AI (Artificial Intelligence) becomes more prevalent in business applications, these organizations use rudimentary machine learning to improve decision making in big data analysis. Walmart is an example of a company that is now digitally competitive. In recent years Walmart has developed a Silicon Valley-based e-commerce group and it made one of the biggest digital native acquisitions of all time in 2016 when it acquired jet.com for more than \$3.0 billion.

Digitally Mature companies often have an 'artificial intelligence first' perspective in their businesses. Companies with embedded AI solutions continue to drive what means to be leaders in the digital marketplace by providing unique revenue-generating channels from digital products and services, **digitally mature** companies turn customers' data and organizational flexibility into constant opportunities to drive new business.

Only a few organizations in the world are truly digitally mature. And those are the likes of Google, Amazon, and Facebook.

Bangladesh Perspective

Over the last decade, Bangladesh adopted digital technology in a massive way. The rapid advancement in this sector has significantly influenced our Industry. Still most of the companies are Digitally Active, whereas few are Digitally Engaged. Companies have gone through Digitization and Digitalization phases. What we need now is Digital Transformation.

(Software Architect & Technovangelist)

Article



EASTLAND INSURANCE CO., LTD.

The name you have learnt to Trust



Yet another feather in the Cap

CRISL has upgraded AA+
Credit Rating to Eastland

Awarded Best Corporate Award
by ICMAB for 4 consecutive years 2012-2015

Awarded **Certificate of Merit** by ICAB
for Best Presented Annual Report 2013



Eastland Insurance started its journey as one of the first generation Non-Life Insurance Companies in the private sector from 5th of November, 1986. The present **Authorized Capital of the Co. is Tk. 1000 million** and the **Paid-up Capital is Tk. 776 million**, **Total Asset is Tk. 2957 million**, **Total Reserve Fund is Tk. 1068 million** and **Total Investment Portfolio is Tk. 948 million**. The **Total Claims settled so far is Tk. 2814 million**. Eastland has been paying 'Double Digit' dividends to its shareholders ever since its inception including stock bonus in recent years.

Eastland offers a comprehensive range of insurance packages from its 28 branches throughout Bangladesh, which includes **Fire, Marine, Hull, Motor, Industrial All Risk, Engineering, Aviation, Personal Accident, contractors' All Risks (CAR), Overseas Medclaim Scheme and Miscellaneous Risks**. Eastland has the credit of being insurer to a host of clients ranging from distinguished individuals to big trading firms, Banks and Financial Institutions as well as large national and multi national companies.

The Company is living up to its promised slogan: *The name you have learnt to Trust* by upholding its personalized services in both Sunny & Rainy days! As such, Eastland's name has been embedded in the hearts of thousands of their clients.

Eastland- Committed to Excellence.

EASTLAND INSURANCE
COMPANY LIMITED



ইস্টল্যান্ড ইন্স্যুরেন্স
কোম্পানী লিমিটেড

ESTD.1986

Head Office: 13 Dilkusha Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh
PABX: 9564600 (Hunting), Fax: 9565706, 9554569, E-mail: info@eastlandinsurance.com

www.eastlandinsurance.com



How can I apply for
the CDPAP
Question
me as much as
you need

NO training necessary
certificate necessary
experience necessary
HIRE YOUR FAMILY OR FRIENDS TO CARE FOR YOU

আপনার মা-বাবা, আত্মীয়-স্বজন এবং প্রতিবেশীদের স্বাস্থ্য সেবা করার
মাধ্যমে আপনি আর্থিক স্বচ্ছলতা পেতে পারেন।

- কোন সার্টিফিকেট বা অভিজ্ঞতার প্রয়োজন নেই।
- আপনাকে দেখাওয়ার জন্য পরিচিত কাউকে বাছাই করুন।
- আপনার PAকে বেতন সহ ছুটি দেওয়া হবে।
- PA-কে বিনামূল্যে হেলথ ইন্স্যুরেন্স দেওয়া হবে।
- যদি মেডিকেইডের যোগ্য না হন, তাহলে সাহায্য করা হবে।
- সহজে ভর্তি/ Enroll করা হয়।
- কোন ভর্তি ফি'র প্রয়োজন নেই।



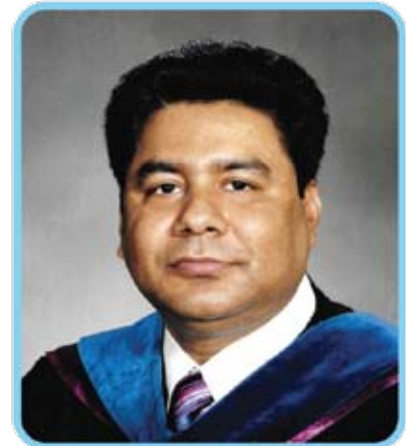
Do You Know
By Consumer Directed
Personal Assistance
Program (CDPAP), PCA & HHA

You can earn money taking care of
your Elderly Parents, Relatives,
Family, Friends & Neighbors

বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য যোগাযোগ করুনঃ

Mohammad Amir Hossain (Kamal)
Cell: 917-693-8661
Direct: 718-673-7726

37-20 74th Street, Jackson Heights, NY 11372
Tel: 718-697-7779 Fax: 718-713-0008
Email: mahk69@markshhc.com



Corona
40-04 Junction Blvd
Corona, NY 11368

Jackson Heights
37-20 74th Street
Jackson Heights, NY 11372

Brooklyn
219 Church Ave
Brooklyn, NY 11218

Bronx
1514 Castle Hill Ave
Bronx, NY 10462

Buffalo
737 Delaware Ave
Suite 215, Buffalo, NY 14290

Jamaica
148-37 Hillside Ave
Jamaica, NY 11435

Rego Park
97-17 64th Road, 4th Floor
REgo Park, NY 11374

Bay Ridge
409 Bay Ridge Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11220

www.markshhc.com

usbair.com f usbair

13605 or 01777777800-806



SUCCESS IS
ERASING BOUNDARIES
CONFIDENTLY

YEARS OF
TOGETHERNESS



BIRDS IN OUR FLEET



INTERNATIONAL ROUTES

GUANGZHOU	BANGKOK
CHENNAI	MUSCAT
KOLKATA	DOHA
KUALA LUMPUR	SINGAPORE

DOMESTIC ROUTES

CHATTOGRAM	COX'S BAZAR
JASHORE	SAIDPUR
SYLHET	RAJSHAHI
BARISHAL	

EXIM প্রবাসী

সুবিধা আরও বেশী

প্রবাসী ভাই বোনদের কষ্টার্জিত অর্থের নিরাপদ ও লাভজনক বিনিয়োগ নিশ্চিত করতে এক্সিম ব্যাংক এবার নিয়ে এলো দু'টি ব্যতিক্রমী ব্যাংকিং সেবা 'এক্সিম প্রবাসী মাসিক মুনাফা প্রকল্প' এবং 'এক্সিম প্রবাসী মাসিক সঞ্চয়ী প্রকল্প'।



এক্সিম প্রবাসী মাসিক মুনাফা প্রকল্পের বৈশিষ্ট্যসমূহ:

- বিদেশে বসবাসরত যেকোনো বাংলাদেশি এই প্রকল্পে ২৫০০০ টাকা বা তার গুণিতক টাকার হিসাব খুলতে পারেন
- মাস শেষে আকর্ষণীয় মুনাফা
- জমাকৃত টাকার ৮০ শতাংশ পর্যন্ত বিনিয়োগ সুবিধা প্রাপ্তির সুযোগ
- নবায়নের সুযোগসহ ১ বছর মেয়াদি এই হিসাব খোলার সুবিধা

এক্সিম প্রবাসী মাসিক সঞ্চয়ী প্রকল্পের বৈশিষ্ট্যসমূহ:

- বিদেশে বসবাসরত যেকোনো বাংলাদেশি এই প্রকল্পে ৫০০ টাকা বা তার গুণিতক টাকার হিসাব খুলতে পারবেন
- মেয়াদ শেষে আকর্ষণীয় মুনাফার হার
- ৩, ৫, ৮, ১০ ও ১২ বছরের জন্য এই প্রকল্পে হিসাব খোলা যায়
- জমাকৃত টাকার ৯০ শতাংশ পর্যন্ত বিনিয়োগ সুবিধা প্রাপ্তির সুযোগ*

EXIM
BANK
শরীয়াহ ডিভিউক ইসলামী ব্যাংক

এক্সপোর্ট ইমপোর্ট ব্যাংক
অব বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড

*শর্ত প্রযোজ্য

www.eximbankbd.com

স্বপ্নের ব্যাংকিং
তথ্যের জন্য



+88 09604016246



CMM HASAN, PHYSICIAN, PC

CM HASAN, MD, FACC, FSCAI

FACP, FCCP, RPVI, RVT, RDCS, RCS, RVS, RCCS, BC-ADM, CCRP
Board Certified, Interventional Cardiology, Cardiovascular Diseases
Internal Medicine & Advanced Diabetes Management (BC-ADM)

Certified Clinical **EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST**
ABCL Certified **LIPIDOLOGIST**
AACVPR Certified in **CARDIAC REHAB (CCRP)**
RPHS (Registered Phlebology Sonographer)



ডাঃ সিএম হাসান

Tel: 718-657-8001

cmmhasan8405@gmail.com (office)

Fax: 718-732-0783

Cell: (917) 687-5860

Text/SMS for Quick Response

cmmhasan03@gmail.com

84-05 169th St. Jamaica Hills, NY

Mon, Thurs, Fri, Sat: 1PM-4PM

Wed: 6PM-8PM

F Train to 169 Street

1564 Glover St.

Bronx, NY 10462

Tues 1-4PM

Fri 8PM-10PM

5810 Catalpa Ave.

Ridgewood, NY 11385

Tues 7PM-9PM

Cardiac Rehab

84-17 169th St.

Jamaica Hills, NY

F Train to 169 St.

602 Schenectady Ave.

Brooklyn, NY 11203

By Appointment only

105-16 75th St.

Brooklyn, NY 11208

Mon 7PM-10PM

Tues 10PM-11PM

3506 73rd St, Cellar #2

Jackson Heights, NY

Sat 9PM-11PM

Wed 7PM-10PM



Office Staff:

Manager: (917) 242-7161, (347) 591-9885

(347) 265-9182 (Bronx), Andrew Kennedy

(Manager) : 516-780-4450