

# Migration: A paradigm for globalization and scope for Bangladesh

ABDUL ALIM

FROM time immemorial, human migration has played a dominant role in economic, social and cultural development of societies. By exchange of ideas, skills, innovations and interplay of diverse motivations brought in by migrating people, growth and development of societies are more often manifest than otherwise.

There are few instances where migration has caused strife and war, mainly attributable to religion and ethnicity, like in Palestine and Bosnia. On the other side of the scenario, take the instance of the United States of America, initially settled by shiploads of political outcasts and convicts from Europe, became known as 'melting pot' for its liberal policy of accommodating migrants from all corners of the world. It is believed that this liberal stance has largely contributed to its economic and cultural growth, culminating in the present position of USA as the guardian angel of world politics and trendsetter of morality! A parallel instance is Australia, endowed with immense natural resources, whose initiation into civilization coincided with the USA, sharing similar unloading of European convicts. But due to its biased policy on migration, friendly mainly to European origin migrants, it has lagged behind from its potential economic development and exerts only an inconspicuous role in

world politics. An Australian ex-prime minister perhaps rightly commented that unless his country took five million immigrants within short time, Australia would continue to remain a marginal state. Instances of direct correlation of development with migration are aplenty.

Developed countries of the world are now suffering from lack of cost-effective labour force. Countries like Japan, Korea and Taiwan are relocating their industries in developing countries mainly for taking advantage of cheap labour. Taiwan has invested 22 billion US dollars in hostile China. Basic theme of globalization is facilitating increased efficiency in production of goods and services by removing obstacles for easy mobility of factors of production -- land, labour, capital and organization. Except land, all other factors of production are easily movable. Capital and entrepreneurship are welcome to any country, but there is still great resistance, especially in developed countries, against movement of labour.

But the world scenario is changing fast. Countries with edge in cheap labour and right kind of entrepreneurship are occupying world consumer market rapidly. Even after Twin-Tower episode and general world economic slowdown, China and India will register GDP growth rate above 6 per cent. On the other hand, GDP of developed countries like Japan, Germany and

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France are approaching zero figures. Primary reason: comparative disadvantage in cost of labour. Here I wish to clarify one important concept that rate of unemployment has little correlation with cost of labour. A developed country in Europe with high unemployment rate may still suffer from lack of cost-effective labour, and remain at disadvantage in cost of production in comparison with, say India. This is one of the reasons for violent public demonstration during Seattle meet of WTO. The apprehension was that with the advent of globalization, the inflow of cheap labour from developing countries would cause massive unemployment in developed countries. In other words it was fear of equalization of standard of living at mass level!

This constraint is telling upon the developed countries. Their fortress of ethnic egos are giving way to economic realities. A conservative country like Germany has chosen to recruit IT professionals from India. Only the other day, they placed a bill in parliament for allowing import of skilled workers from other countries (The Daily Star, 13<sup>th</sup> Dec., 01). Britain is allowing special-

ized cooks. Italy is taking domestic help and farm labours even from Bangladesh, though at a very limited scale. Japanese industrialists are lobbying with their government for allowing foreign workers on limited contract basis just to maintain their *sansu quo*. Almost all the European countries have already made specific provisions in their immigration rules for foreign labourers under certain conditions. Even a country like Ukraine offers specific provision for migration there with whole family. Opportunity abounds in Latin America with easy settlement rules. Venezuela is taking foreign labourers and offers easy settlement rules. In contrast, if a foreign worker spends his lifetime in Middle East, there is no scope for settling there permanently. But few years' continuous residence in a Latin American or in most of developed countries will suffice for such opportunities.

Immense opportunities are opening up gradually. But there is lot of other takers too. World is replete with poor countries. How about our country, with too much people with too little skill? Are we mentally tuned and logistically prepared? I think, not. Take a simple example. Japan

has been taking about 7,000 young English language teachers every year since 1987 from many countries of the world under JET (Japan Exchange & Teaching) Programme offering high salary and other benefits. Listed eligible countries include, among others, Peru, Finland and Kazakhstan. Are not our students and teachers better equipped, at least in English language, than those in these countries? Surely, they are. Could not our embassy in Japan give a wake-up call to our government for a formal approach to Japan government for inclusion of Bangladesh in eligible country-list? If our government facilitated this, rest of the job would have been organized by our teachers and students at individual level, and by now thousands of Bangladeshis would be working there legally. And think of the missed remittance (at least Tk. 1 lac per teacher per month)! This is an unardonable lapse of our diplomats. With a popular government in the helms of affairs, the message should be 'deliver or quit'. Issues like this are more important for the country than august signing of non-proliferation of nuclear arms treat-

ties! Our diplomats should realign the priorities.

I would like to make an observation here that it is always illegal migrants that have opened a new country for Bangladesh. Be it Malaysia, Middle East, Japan, Italy, Mauritius, Maldives, Taiwan or any other country where a Bangladeshi is working, the initial Columbus is an illegal. My point is that no government or formal efforts have, as yet, opened any country for our people. Doesn't this look unfortunate?

We will do well to concentrate on facilitating manpower export and migration opportunities to developed countries. We should take a leaf from India's experience. Keeping pace with changing international scenario, they have designed and facilitated their manpower development, with active assistance from ILO and IOM. Within a span of 15 years, India became largest exporter of IT software and IT professionals, both on job-contracts and migrants. Contribution to India's foreign exchange remittance has gone up to US\$ 8 billion per year, and is projected to go into a yearly US\$ 85 billion within next six years. Does not our

US\$ 1.50 billion remitted every year by our massive four million expatriates look meagre? It does. And that too showing a receding trend. Moreover, India has distinctive advantage in English language proficiency at mass level, a basic prerequisite in training, be it in IT or anything else. Stress is now on skill, speed and communicating ability of recruits or migrants. Demand for IT professionals and highly skilled technicians, with proficiency in English, is increasing all over the world. In the last 20 years, our governments' policy of shifting emphasis on Bengali as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges and paying little attention to English has done irreparable damage to our young generation. They neither properly belong here, nor there. This is an unfortunate failure of vision of our leaders and our governments. With right kind of parameters, there is no reason for us to lag behind. Our youths are quite fast learners; all they need is proactive infrastructures.

Shortcut to economic emancipation lies in this sector alone. We must realize its true potential, assess changing world scenario and take right steps in right time. What stops us from establishing state-of-art IT and vocational training institutes, and from establishing world-class language institutes? Why there is no provision in our national budget for development of manpower sector? Why don't we send right signals to our missions abroad for tapping and

lobbying for manpower export from Bangladesh? Why not appoint professional lobbyist firms in developed countries for pushing and facilitating manpower intake from Bangladesh? Governmental neglect for this sector is abysmal. May be tainted image is the cause or may be because right kind of educated visionary people have not opted for this sector.

We need introspection. After the Twin-Tower episode, fate of our garments sector hinges on whims and dictates of the leaders of the developed countries and world political equation. Moreover, we are subjecting ourselves to blackmailing in gas export by over-emphasizing dependence on garments sector for foreign exchange. But so is not the case with manpower, nor will it ever be. Value addition of this sector in terms of foreign exchange is many times more than garments sector. There is no back-to-back LC to eliminate about 81 per cent of incoming LCs. With comparatively much less investment in human resource development and right lobbying, we can achieve so much in so less a time. It will not be an exaggeration if we say that safest, shortest and lasting route to economic emancipation for Bangladesh lies in this sector alone.

I hope somebody is listening!

Abdul Alim, a businessman, is former Joint Secretary General, BAIRA

# Euro a symbol of European integration

NASIRUDDIN AHMED

THE long awaited E-day came on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002 in Europe. On that very day EURO notes and coins started replacing national currencies in 12 of the 15 EU member states, marking the realization of the greatest political events and dreams in world history.

About 300 million peoples across the Europe had been looking forward to surrender their national currencies against EURO. The EURO has become the single currency of Ireland, Germany, France, Spain, Austria, Belgium, Finland, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal. The remaining three countries namely Britain, Denmark and Sweden will join sometime in the future.

Euro notes and coins have become legal tender from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002 in all the 12 member countries and they have already taken necessary steps for taking out their respective currencies out of circulation by 2<sup>nd</sup> week of February, 2002 and the last of existing euro-zone currencies will be vanished by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2002.

The conversion and change of 12 member countries' currencies to the EURO has been a monumental logistical exercise. In the biggest movement of cash of a single currency (EURO), some 50 billion coins and 14.5 billion banknotes are coming into circulation. More than 1 billion bank accounts have already been converted into euro on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002. About seven million vending machines, 140,000 cash machines and four million tills have been filled with the new currency of

EURO. Business and the international money markets were well acquainted with EURO from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1999, when it was first launched on world currency market. But for most Europeans the EURO have only become a reality on E-Day when they started to pay for groceries and services in EURO notes and coins; but it will inevitably take days and even months for some to feel confident about the new currency.

There are eight euro coins denominated in 2 and 1 euro, then 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cent. Every coin will carry a common European face. On the obverse, each member state has decorated the coins with their own motifs. No matter, which motif is on the coins but that can be used anywhere within the 12 member states. For example, a French citizen will be able to buy a hot dog in Berlin using a euro coin carrying the imprint of the King of Spain. The common European face of the coins represents a map of the European Union against a background of transverse lines to which are attached the stars of the European flag. The 1, 2 and 5 cent coins put emphasis on Europe's place in the world while the 10, 20 and 50 present the Union as a gathering of nations. The 1 and 2 euro coins depict Europe without frontiers. Final designs were agreed at the European Council meeting in Amsterdam in June 1997. Coins can be obtained from banks and at retail outlets. In some member states mini-kits will be made available in advance.

There are 7 euro notes. In different colors and sizes they are denominated in 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and

5 euros. The notes will be uniform throughout the euro area; but unlike coins, they will have no national design. The designs are symbolic for Europe's architectural heritage. They do not represent any existing monuments. Windows and gateways dominate the front side of each banknote as symbols of the spirit of openness and cooperation in the EU. The reverse side of each banknote features a bridge from a particular age, a metaphor for communication among the people of Europe and between Europe and the rest of the world. Final designs were announced in December 1996 at the Dublin European Council. All notes have advanced security features. Notes can be obtained from bank cash machines and at the banking counter. Many people are expected to find it more convenient to use credit and cash cards in January 2002. By 28 February 2002 at the latest, old notes and coins will be withdrawn from circulation.

The most unusual coin and one most likely to be sought by collectors is the Vatican coin. The Vatican has designed its own set of 670,000 coins featuring the Pope's profile. All Vatican coins will be accepted throughout the Euro Zone. The graphic symbol for the euro looks like an E with two clearly marked horizontal parallel lines across it. It was inspired by the Greek letter epsilon, in reference to the cradle of European civilization and to the first letter of the word 'Europe'. The parallel lines represent the stability of the euro. The official abbreviation for the euro is 'EUR'. It has been registered with the International Standards Organisation (ISO), and will be used for all business, financial and commercial purposes, just as the terms 'FRF' (French franc), 'DEM' (Deutschmark), 'GBP' (pound sterling) and 'BEF' (Belgian franc) are used today.

On 15 April 1998, the Commission recommended a standard of good practice on banking charges for conversion to the euro. Its basic principle is that compulsory aspects of the changeover should be free for consumers. Recommendations cover conversion of accounts, payments (incoming and outgoing), exchange of bank notes and coins and transparency. Banks are urged to apply the same charges for a given

service whether it is denominated in euros or in national currencies. In February 2000, the Commission urged banks to improve cross-frontier payment systems so as to ensure inexpensive, efficient and secure small value credit transfers between member states. The Commission is monitoring the level of transfer charges and publishing its findings on the Internet every six months.

The protection of consumers has been given the highest possible priority in the planning and execution of the changeover to the euro. The most important legal protection covers the conversion of national currency units into euro. The only conversion rate that can be used is the one established for each national participating currency on 01 January 1999. Any body using any other rate is breaching the law. Consumers are also protected by rules on the rounding of odd amounts after conversion.

The Fixed rates to the euro are:		
Austria	13.7603	ATS
Belgium	40.3399	BEF
Finland	5.94573	FIM
France	6.55957	FRE
Germany	1.95583	DEM
Ireland	0.787564	IEP
Italy	1936.27	ITL
Luxembourg	40.3399	LUF
Netherlands	2.20371	NLG
Portugal	200.482	PTE
Spain	166.386	ESP
Greece	340.750	GRD

A third aspect of consumer protection is the European Union-level agreement between consumers and retailers on the use of a logo guaranteeing that retailers displaying it are respecting the laws on conversion and rounding. The EU Commissioner for monetary affairs Mr Pedro Solbes has expressed his sentiment on the introduction of new currency saying, "Citizens will hold a piece of Europe in their hands every day." But worries persist about practicalities involved in the task of conversion and transition of 12 currencies into one. Transporting such quantities of cash coins has been a great task and exercise and there are concerns that central banks might have underestimated the quantities of coins to be required and could have to mint more before

all the national currencies of participating countries are withdrawn from the circulation.

European Central Bank (ECB) president Mr Wim Duisenberg believes that the circulation of the euro would truly mark European integration. He further commented that "It will, I believe, help to change the way in which we think about one another as Europeans. The Euro is more than just a currency. It is a symbol of European integration in every sense of the word."

In the past two years, the 12 member-states have surrendered the two most important controls over their economies to ESCB i) The right to devalue money and set interest rates and ii) to facilitate the introduction of the single currency in the market.

In the planning and process towards conversion of 12 currencies into one single currency, the Central bankers of member countries have not faced any problem and they could not have foreseen any doubts about the euro's stability as an international currency despite economic problems that have threatened Germany during the period.

The Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, Mr Alan Greenspan, recently expressed his "tremendous respect" for the EURO, and such respect many commentators did not have five years ago. The greatest task and responsibilities awaits for the ECB to reassure the international market that its management of the EURO Zone Economy will be further strengthened by introducing uniform effective economic policy appropriate for each of the 12 member-states.

The single currency by itself will not break down the barriers that are still impeding the completion of a single EU market. There are still huge price differentials between goods and services among various states and it will take many years before these are dissolved. The introduction of the new currency has also triggered a massive spending boom across Europe as billions of francs, deutschmarks, pesetas, pounds and schillings have been emptied out of jam jars and from under mattresses. The so-called black economy is estimated to be worth up to €

#8364.1 trillion, with the amount of cash held believed to be anywhere from £8364: 100 billion to £8364: £300 billion.

A lot of this money has never been declared for income tax and many people have decided the best way to regularize it is to spend it. Most of this money has gone into luxury goods and property.

Those travelling to any of the participating EU member-states

will immediately see the benefits of a single currency, in terms of convenience and price transparency.

Within the euro zone, consumers will be able to compare the price of a cup of coffee, a car or a house, from Galway to Andalusia.

A major concern for consumers is that the euro's introduction will trigger a surge in prices as retailers round up prices. It is up to consumers to be vigilant and the Director of

Consumer Affairs will also be maintaining a watching brief. But sadly there are no sanctions that can be applied other than the naming and shaming of those taking advantage of the transition.

The entire world is looking forward with keen interest to see the safe and sound voyage of EURO in the super highway of world currencies.

Nasiruddin Ahmed is a banker

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Education  
Section-13  
No. S-13/1-3 (Brunei)/2000/357  
Dated: 03-01-2002

### Notice

**Sub: Brunei Darus Salam Govt Scholarship 2002-2003.**  
Applications are invited from Bangladeshi candidates for nomination to the undermentioned courses under "Brunei Darus Salam Govt Scholarship" during 2002-2003 academic year.

Course level, duration & number of opportunities	Educational qualification	Name of course
(A) Honours degree, Duration: 4 years.	Should possess 75 per cent marks in SSC & HSC in humanities/commerce/science group or recipient of credit in total 5 subjects with 3 'C' grade in GCE 'A' level.	Business Administration, Economics, Anthropology, Finance & Mathematics.
(B) Higher National Diploma (HND), Duration: 2 years 6 months.	Should possess 70 percent marks in aggregate in SSC & HSC or be recipient of credit in 4 subjects in GCE 'O' level & 1 in 'A' level. Should be skilled in English & Mathematics.	HND Business and Finance, HND Civil Engineering, HND Computer Studies, HND Communication and Computer System Engineering, HND Electrical, Power and Building Services Engineering, HND Mechanical Engineering.
(C) Diploma in Nursing, Duration: 3 years 6 months.	Should possess 70 per cent marks in SSC or be recipient of credit in undermentioned 4 subjects in GCE 'O' level (a) English (b) Mathematics (c) Biology (d) Physics or Chemistry.	(1) Diploma in Nursing.
(D) Post-graduate, Duration: 2 years.	Should possess 1 <sup>st</sup> Division in both SSC & HSC exams with 2 <sup>nd</sup> class bachelors (Honours) degree in respective subject.	(1) M.A.: Geography, Economics & Applied Linguistics. (2) M.Ed.: Education Management.

2. Age of candidate should be 18-25 years as of 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2002. This age limit is slightly relaxable in case of applicants for Higher National Diploma & Post-graduate degree. Maximum 03 (three) scholarship opportunities for each Commonwealth member country has been proposed. Bio-data in plainpaper in the following proforma with recent 1 copy passport size photo and attested true copy of original certificate & marksheet of all examinations passed should reach the undersigned by 30th January.

3. The proforma of application shall be as the following:  
**Application for Brunei Darus Salam Govt Scholarship -2002.**

Name of the course applied for:

(A) Name of candidate:  
(B) Father's name:  
(C) Present address:  
(D) Permanent address:  
(E) Date of birth:  
(F) Age (as of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2001):  
(G) Nationality:  
(H) Present address (telephone No., if any):  
(I) Description of examinations passed:

Name of examination	Board/University year of passing	Division/class secured	Total marks secured	Percentage

4. Application should reach the address of the undersigned by 19-01-2002. Incomplete application shall be treated as cancelled. "Brunei Darus Salam Govt Scholarship" should be distinctly superscribed on the envelope of application.

5. List of provisionally selected candidates for nomination will be hung at the Secretariat gate by 15-2-2002 and the prescribed form will be distributed among the candidates. No separate correspondence will be made with the candidates. Those who will be provisionally selected by the Ministry, shall have to immediately collect the form from the Ministry, fill in and submit it again. Selection will be made on the basis of score of all examinations in the academic career of the candidates.

6. Decision of the authority will be treated as final in matters of selection of candidates.

Syeda Salma Zafrin  
Assistant Secretary  
Bldg No. 6, Room No. 1706  
Ministry of Education  
Secretariat, Dhaka  
Phone: 8615032

DFP-256/51  
G-87

## CAREER OPPORTUNITY

A leading Washing Plant looks for self-motivated and result oriented personnel's for immediate appointment in the following post:

Sl.No.	Name of Position	No. of Post	Academic Qualification and Experience
1.	Shift Incharge	02	Graduate with at least 4/5 years practical experience in the similar job.
2.	Store incharge	01	Graduate with at least 4/5 years practical experience in the similar job.
3.	Finishing Incharge	01	Graduate with at least 3/4 years practical experience.
4.	Electrical/ Mechanical Incharge	01	Diploma in Electrical/ Mechanical with at least 4/5 years practical experience in washing plant.
5.	Store Keeper	02	Graduate with at least 2/3 years practical experience.
6.	Sandblasting Supervisor	02	S.S.C with at least 6 months practical experience.
7.	Washing Supervisor	03	S.S.C with at least 3/4 years practical experience.
8.	Sandblasting Machine Operator	16	At least 6 months practical experience.
9.	Washing Machine Operator	10	At least 2/3 years practical experience.
10.	Un-Wash Quality Inspector	06	S.S.C with 2 years experience.
11.	Q.C (Sandblasting)	04	S.S.C with 6 months practical experience.
12.	Helper	32	Not required.

Interested candidates are requested to apply to the following address with recent 2 (Two) copies of passport size photograph & C.V latest by 24th January, 2002.

**Managing Director**  
**Ha-Meem Washing Plant**  
#71, Tejgaon I/A, Dhaka.

## Change of Address

**Janata Bank**  
Natore Academy Branch  
Has been shifted to the new building on 4th January 2002 and carrying out activities as usual.

Address of the Old Bhaban

**Janata Bank**  
Natore Academy Branch  
JL No.151, Dag No. 8483  
Khatian No. 17  
Holding No. 80  
Mouja: Natore  
Upazila & Dist: Natore

Address of the New Bhaban

**Janata Bank**  
Natore Academy Branch  
JL No.151, Dag No. 5902  
Khatian No. 316  
Mouja: Natore  
Upazila & Dist: Natore

All the esteemed clients and patrons of Janata Bank are requested to kindly contact in the new address.

**Janata Bank**  
DHAKA BANGLADESH  
Welcome to our Website: www.janatabank-bd.com