

Khaleda Zia



ShirinSharminChaudhury



Sheikh Hasina



Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib



A woman votes during Bangladesh's election in December, 2008.

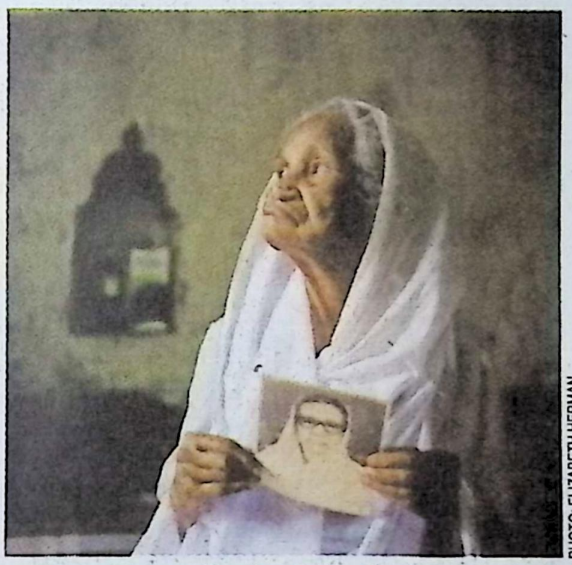


PHOTO: ELIZABETH HERMAN

Freedom-fighter Fauzilatunnesa Bulu.

When I Sheikh Hasina as Prime Minister am leading my government, meeting world leaders, delivering my speech at the UN, it is unthinkable that I shall not have my head adorned in a *ghomta.*

When I Khaleda Zia as Leader of the Opposition and even when I was Prime Minister, take part in national and international meetings and parleys, and although we do not see eye to eye on most matters, there is one thing common with our Prime Minister, and that is the *ghomta.*

When I Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury am conducting the Jatiya Sangsad as its first woman speaker, a pride I share with women and men all over the world, I am sat in the *manoniyo* Speaker's chair in a *ghomta.*

When I am offering my *namaaz* or I am attending the Puja, my whole being is sanctified by the *ghomta.*

When I an injured survivor of the Rana Plaza collapse am attending a follow-up medical treatment, I am comfortable in my *ghomta.*

When I Kabori Sarwar acted in movies as a virtuous woman of this land and now when I pursue my political career, I have my *ghomta.*

When I starred in a Satyajit Ray movie as a traditional Bangalee woman, the great maestro had my head dressed in the ways of this land, in a ghomta.

When I am wed as a Muslim bride or a Hindu, my bridal dress consists of a very pretty *ghomta.*

But no one has ever dared call us anything but a Bangalee.



Babita



KaboriSarwar

And, of course, you can remain a Bangalee without wearing a *ghomta;* we are that much *udaar* even without singing the songs of the Bangalee Nobel Laureate who also said, "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence".