

An Outline of the Economic

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sea-port was also reactivated with Soviet assistance. Some friendly countries including India and Iraq sent assistance of food and essential commodities. The central bank was launched with grants of foreign currencies from Sweden and Canada. The Netherlands gave a plant protection aeroplane. The UNDP sanctioned Bangladesh's share from the resources allotted for Pakistan.

Laying the Economic Foundation for the Medium Term:

With the objective of economic emancipation, the Father of the Nation attached highest priority to reducing the income inequality between the urban and rural areas through developing agriculture, education, health and industries sectors and rural development. A devoted well-wisher of the peasants and working class people, some of the steps that were taken for the benefit of agriculture and agriculturists as per specific desire, directives and instructions of the Father of the Nation were as follows:

1. Rebuild the agricultural infrastructure that was destroyed;
2. Supply of agricultural equipments; arrangements were made for supplying 40 thousand low-lift power-pumps, 2900 deep tube-wells and 3000 shallow tube-wells at reduced price within 1973;
3. 16,125 tons of rice-seed, 454 tons of jute-seed and 1,037 tons of wheat-seed were supplied on an emergency basis, either free of cost or at token price, for increasing agricultural production within 1972;
4. The peasant community were absolved from the 1 million certificate cases lodged during the rule of occupying Pakistani forces and all their arrear loans and interests were waived;
5. Taxes for land of up to 25 Bighas were waived;



6. As price support, minimum fair prices were fixed for ensuring fair price of important agricultural commodities like paddy, jute, tobacco and sugarcane;
7. The low-priced ration facility was brought within the purchasing power of the poor farmers in order to save them; and
8. Arrangements were made for educating the children of poor peasant families free of cost through government expenses.

The status of agriculture sector has been strengthened today due to the growth trend sown at the very beginning.

Bangabandhu: A Dreamer... People

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leaflets he was arrested under the Pakistan Press and Publication Ordinance and Pakistan Penal Code. He was later granted bail.

In this way he bravely stood by people even at the risk of his life. He had imprinted in him the philosophy of humanity. This is why, in his contemplation about the distressed people the religion of humanity irrespective of religion, caste and creed got the priority. Bangabandhu believed in the empowerment of women. After the independence, he gave the title "Birangana" (the female heroes) to the oppressed women. A Board for the Rehabilitation of Women was formed under his leadership. This board was constituted for the care and shelter of the oppressed women. In the post-war condition he faced this difficult problem with a cheerful heart. He tried his best to re-establish the social status of women.

On the other hand, he made an arrangement for the reserved seats of women in the National Parliament in 1973 in order to ensure the political empowerment of women. He gave ministerial duties to women in the cabinet of the government of the independent Bangladesh. Muslim marriage and marriage registration law was made in 1974. The question of men-women equality is mentioned in Chapter 17 of the Constitution. The dream of today's Bangladesh is not violence; it is a dream to go forward through the equality of men and women.

He thought about the common people right from his very early youth. He dreamed of doing something for them. The kind of far-sightedness that he demonstrated as a politician from the forties to the seventies was a direction for the freedom of a country. There was no question of fallibility there. Secondly, the kind of love and sympathy he had for the common people as a politician was a deep truth of life. He can be compared only with himself. Two of his speeches may be mentioned here. The first one was made on 5 October 1972 on the occasion of approving the draft constitution in the General Assembly. He explained there the four pillars of the constitution, namely nationalism, democracy, socialism and secularism. He made the next speech in the National Parliament on 25 January 1975. In policy making and implementation he asked the administration to become servants of the common people. He said in his speech that government employees should change their mentality and consider themselves not as rulers but as servants. He said, "Some people came to me and wanted protection from me. I told them, my people want protection from you, gentlemen". He was this type. He never spared the bureaucrats in his speeches.

In 1972, food-grain production in the country was only 11 million tons. The quantity of cultivable land has now decreased by 15 percent. Despite that, total food-grain production in Bangladesh stood at 39 million tons in 2016. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization says, currently Bangladesh occupies tenth position in the world by producing 55 million tons of food. Bangladesh is the fourth largest producer of fish in the world. This success could be achieved through continuation of the welfare-oriented and farsighted policies initiated by the Father of the Nation, as well as the policies and strategies pursued during the past eight and a half years.

The West Pakistani owners of industries, banks and insurance companies that were shut down during the liberation war fled from this country. The Bangabandhu government decided to revive these industries and other institutions under ten sector corporations. Administrators were appointed at abandoned enterprises, but they were inexperienced in management and were therefore failures in most cases. Corruption also emerged. In this backdrop, the government created the industrial management service cadre. Efforts were made to prevent the centralisation of economic power by reviving the banks and insurance companies under the state-owned sector. The central bank was established. The services were democratised, the number of levels were reduced, and the gap between the highest and lowest salaries was decreased.

More emphasis was placed on the small and cottage industries so that they could flourish in rural Bangladesh, agro-based industries could be set up, poverty could be alleviated and disparities between the towns and villages and the rich and the poor could be reduced. But the Bangabandhu government was also aware that visible progress could not be made without large industries. Especial attention was paid to the health and education sectors as progress in these sectors raises the life expectancy of people, generates human resources and enhances responsibility as well as productivity at the work-place.

Long-term Interest of Bangladesh Economy:

The government took the initiative to build infrastructures for long-term benefit of the economy. The Father of the Nation started preliminary work for building the Jamuna Bridge with assistance from his old friend and Japanese parliamentarian Hayakawa. He made arrangement with India under the historic Ganges water-sharing agreement to get 44,000 cusecs of water for the lower riparian Bangladesh. Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman refused to take responsibility for the liability Pakistan owed to the development partners; rather he extracted Bangladesh's share from the grants sanctioned by the development partners including the United Nations. In the face of opposition from the socialist currents within the government, he adopted a realistic policy and agreed to join the consortium for aid to Bangladesh led by the World Bank; but as an exception, its first meeting was held in Dhaka. A land boundary agreement was signed with India. For eliciting the just share of Bangladesh with regard to the maritime boundary and the continental shelf, Bangabandhu submitted Bangladesh's claim in September 1974 to the United Nations and started discussions on the issue with Burma (At present Myanmar). Boosted by that strength and through exceptional diplomatic initiatives, legal preparations, survey maps and all other ground-works, the daughter of the Father of the Nation and leader of the masses Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government got positive verdicts from the International Tribunal on the Laws of the Seas (ITLOS) in the dispute with Burma (Myanmar) in 2012 and with India in 2014. A maritime area of 118 thousand square kilometres could be obtained in the process, as well as the right over 200 nautical miles of territorial waters and the continental shelf. Huge potentials of a blue economy materialized thereby. The Father of the Nation also nationalised oil and gas sectors in 1973 by applying his farsighted wisdom.

Within the framework of a perspective plan, the First Five Year Plan (1973-78) was launched in line with the four

pillars of the constitution, viz. democracy, socialism, secularism and nationalism. It was aimed at alleviating poverty, rehabilitating the economy, a macroeconomic growth rate of at least 5.5 percent per year, fast production of essential commodities, controlling inflation, increasing per capita income by at least two and a half percent per year, extending incentives for employment generation and reduction of urban-rural and rich-poor disparities for evolving into a socialist economy, reducing dependence on foreign aid for building a self-reliant economy, bringing about a revolution in the agriculture sector through institutional and technological advancements, achieving self-sufficiency in food, planned families, achieving excellence in social security and human resources, equity and justice-based employment and



opportunities for earning incomes. Policies and strategies were adopted for enhancing efficiency in economic activities and thereby creating opportunities for increased incomes for the working class. The Father of the Nation also took initiative for ensuring the progress of the disadvantaged population through imposing more taxes on the affluent classes if needed through the five-year plan; efforts were made to generate dynamism in raising the per capita income and standard of living of the working classes through economic activities. The goodwill that was created all over the world during a just and great war of liberation cum independence struggle under the dynamic, farsighted and fearless leadership of Sheikh Mujib gave rise to a unique ambience of goodwill and benevolence for Bangladesh, with the Mujib government pursuing the policy of "Friendship towards all, malice towards none".

With the evolution of time, the economy of Bangladesh also took a turn for a free-market economy like most other countries. But by upholding and attaching highest priority and resolve for a welfare-state as desired by the Father of the Nation, Bangladesh's socio-economic orbit and path of advancement have been strengthened during the past decade. Bangladesh has achieved enviable macroeconomic progress and heart-warming exceptional social advancement under the innovative and courageous leadership at the front of the friend of the masses Sheikh Hasina. Many organizations and eminent personalities including the United Nations, World Food Program, Washington Times and the Fortune Magazine have conferred laudatory citations and awards for the selfless services of Sheikh Hasina. The trend of our great progress would be speeded up by treading the path and economic philosophy left behind by the Father of the Nation. That would fulfil our dream for a democratic Bangla of gold free from hunger, poverty, ill-health, shelter-deprivation, illiteracy, communalism and violent militancy. And the nation is now repaying the debt of blood of 15 August in that way. □

Translation: **Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed**

To cite a little more from Bangabandhu's speech, "I came to learn that a cold storage had been built at Thakurgaon a year ago. But there was no electricity there. I gathered that it would take one year to send electricity there, because

foreign conspiracies. He was never afraid of his own life. He even did not have the mental meanness to distrust the Bangali nation.



there was no pole. Poles, they said, had to be brought from abroad. I said to the minister, I don't bother about poles. We have bamboos for sure. Stand here, cut bamboos into poles with machetes. Within a month and a half or two this work should be done. Do it. I don't want to hear how you'll do it. Then I saw it was done. If they hadn't come to me, they wouldn't have got poles in a year and the work wouldn't have been done. Where did poles come from? Electricity was there and potatoes were stored. There is no place to store potatoes. Why do we have this mentality? Poles come from trees in Bangladesh. I want to supply every police station in Bangladesh with power".

If he had got help and cooperation for the implementation of the policies he made in state administration, he would certainly have been able to bring a smile to the suffering people's faces in the real sense of the term.

The huge amount of work that he wanted to undertake in three and a half years was Herculean. He also wanted to go forward facing all challenges. But he could not score the final goal. He was dauntless in the face of all local and

foreign conspiracies. He was never afraid of his own life. He even did not have the mental meanness to distrust the Bangali nation.

Rabindranath Tagore in his essay "Sabhyatar Sankat" (Crisis in Civilization) wrote "...Losing trust in people is a sin..." Bangabandhu accepted this immortal saying of the master poet as an unchangeable truth. That is why, just for the cause of safety he never thought of leaving his own residence and living in the government residence surrounded by security guards. If he had done it, there would have been a distance between him and the common people. He paid the price of loving the suffering people with his own life.

Regarding the fundamental idea of a modern state, Bangabandhu was far-sighted and had a modern mind. He never explained the idea of a nation and country with a backward mentality. He had a very extended vision. One of his extraordinary utterances was: "As a human being, I think about the entire mankind. As I am a Bangalee, everything related to the Bangalee makes me think deeply. The source of this endless attachment is love, immortal love--- the love which makes my politics and existence meaningful".

There was a song in Bangabandhu's diary. He wrote it down as one of his favourite songs:

Love isn't love till you give it away
Love isn't love till it's free
The love in your heart
Wasn't put there to stay
Oh love isn't love till you give it away
You might think love is a treasure to keep
Feeling to cherish and hold
But love is a treasure for people to share
You keep it by letting it go

This was one of the remarkable traits of his life-philosophy. He instilled this extraordinary message of the song into his own philosophy: love is a treasure for people to share. □

Translation: **M. Jahurul Islam**

He Is Much More With Us Today

Asad Chowdhury

How many times can a lone life bivouac on an alien land

When neither mighty snowstorm nor heated chasing sand prevails there?

How many times can the distressed folk become refugee?

With patience and courage in heart

They regarded the broken specs with thick frame
and the pipe that fell down yonder
as their lighthouse

For the way to freedom was far long to go.
Well, how a dead person can extend his helping hands

Show the right path
and correct destination?

This is how to tread one's way without a pause.

One who embraced marred, stained golden Bangla

With great affection

With full-throated voice I proclaim

'My golden Bangla

I love thee...!'

Translation: **Saera Habib**

This Bangla Thrives in Mujib's Waves

Muhammad Samad

In my sky shining with flood of light

In the smiles of water-lilies, river-tide,

In the bamboo-bushes with fire-flies

In the sweet swings of tuneful Bhatialies

In the sails and songs of tireless rowers

In the fields of paddy, grains, and bowers

In the dew-wet countryside of green grass

On his fond mother's lap Mujib appears.

Overflowing all the banks of mighty rivers

Padma-Meghna-Modhumoti and all others

Swelling the sea of rebels and heroic masses

With the victory of this Bangladesh of ours

Mujib appears dressed as a hero victorious.

In the songs of birds in green forests

The wind blows in delightful caresses

Look far and near, look near and far

Crushing the hills, out of hades under,

The sky smiles in Mujib's joyous shower.

Then darkness descends all on a sudden

The festive stars are all lost and gone;

Moonlight ceases, game of clouds stops;

In mango shoots and bright-red blossoms

Play of cheerful birds no more throbs!

The eyes of little girls and boys cry

Filled with tears down from the sky

Mother drowns deep in tear-drops

Of numberless sisters, their worries:

O Merciful, what a sad time it is!

Then the mourning ends, comes a dawn,

People are inspired: farmers and children,

Who erect their heads high, free forever

As Mujib reappears at dark in sun's attire.

Mujib brings us moments: joyous, victorious.

There appears Mujib; Yes, Mujib reappears:

He is a fount of endless joy and ceaseless craze:

This Bangla thrives forever in Mujib's waves.

Translation: **Mohammad Nurul Huda**