



The Daily Star



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NATIONAL MOURNING DAY TODAY

The man, the murder and his destiny

His world was his people

MAHFUZ ANAM

It is quite astounding that he lived for only 55 years (1920-1975) and achieved so much. He may not have written treaties in philosophy, literature and science but he brought to life a social and political epic that transformed the life of millions of his people and channelled history in a direction that Bangalees only dreamt of but hardly believed that it would happen.

If we allow the first 18 years of his

life for personal growth -- the universal age for young adulthood -- then within the subsequent 37 years he developed himself to be a man of strong personal character, found his calling of freeing his people, convinced them to follow his path, unified them into a political force, emboldened them to demand justice and freedom, and finally led them to their destiny of creating an independent state -- together making for a most successful political life in modern history.

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Efforts on to bring back fugitives

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The government has moved another step forward in ensuring justice for the August 15 bloodbath by executing a convicted killer this year while it expects to bring back at least one of the five fugitives from abroad within the Mujib Borsho.

The country is observing the period from March 17, 2020 to March 26, 2021 as the Mujib Borsho to celebrate the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

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TIMELINE

AUG 15, 1975

Early in the morning, some disgruntled army officers lead the pre-planned attack to assassinate and overthrow President Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Attackers open fire indiscriminately on his residence at Dhanmondi.

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BANGLADESH UPDATE



2,766

New cases in 24hrs



2,71,881

Total cases



3,591

Deaths



1,56,623

Recoveries



GLOBAL UPDATE



759,243

Deaths



21,162,554

Total cases

15 August
National Mourning Day

DEEPEST RESPECT

The Undisputed Torchbearer and Greatest Bangali of Thousand Years, the Heroic Leader of Independence & the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

Working to ensure justice, rights for all

PM tells doa mahfil marking national mourning day

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the killers of the Father of the Nation were awarded by the then governments through lucrative postings. "I want to make changes to that system. We are always alert so that people of the country can stay safe, live a beautiful life, and justice is established where all people will enjoy their rights," she said.

Hasina was addressing a Milad and Doa Mahfil, held at the Social Services Department, from the Gono Bhaban through videoconferencing. The department

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Infection rate was above 20pc for last 30 days

34 die, 2,766 test positive for Covid in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The average rate of Covid-19 infection in the last 30 days was 22.47 percent in Bangladesh.

One in every five tests was found positive in the country during this time whereas both India and Iran needed 10 tests to find one positive case.

Other most infected Asian countries like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are now doing 25 and 40 tests to find a Covid-19 case respectively, according to World Health Organization (WHO). Meanwhile, the record between July 16 and yesterday suggested that the total number of

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QUIZZING ON SINHA MURDER

Seven taken into Rab custody

STAR REPORT

Finally, the seven people, including four policemen, accused in the Maj (ret'd) Sinha murder case were taken into Rab custody from jail for interrogation.

It happened yesterday after the authorities appointed Rab Assistant Director Khairul Islam as the investigation officer (IO) of the case, replacing the previous one.

Though the seven accused were placed on a 7-day remand each by a Cox's Bazar court on Wednesday, Rab did not take them in custody.

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'Tortured to death'

Staffers at Jashore juvenile correction centre allegedly behind the death of 3 boys

STAR REPORT

Not in a clash, the three boys died in a Jashore juvenile correction centre on Thursday were allegedly tortured to death by several staffers and senior inmates.

The allegation has been raised by the injured inmates who had also been through similar abuse and are undergoing treatment at Jashore General Hospital.

They said they, including the deceased,

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১৫ আগস্ট
জাতীয় শোক দিবস

চেতনায় জাহ্নত চিরদিন

১৯৭৫ সালের ১৫ই আগস্ট জাতির পিতা বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানকে
সপরিবারে নির্মমভাবে হত্যা করে ঘাতক-দুর্ভাগ।
সর্বকালের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালীর ৪৫তম শাহাদাৎ বার্ষিকীতে তাঁর ও তাঁর পরিবারবর্গের রহের মাগফেরাত কামনা করে
ঢাকা ব্যাংক লিমিটেড এর পরিচালনা পর্ষদ ও সকল কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীর পক্ষ থেকে

শ্রদ্ধাঞ্জলি

Efforts on to bring back fugitives

FROM PAGE 1
"I hope we will be able to bring back at least one fugitive killer within the Mujib Borsho," Foreign minister AK Abdul Momen told journalists on August 7.

Abdul Majed, a self-confessed killer who had long been hiding abroad, was hanged on April 12 this year while five other convicts -- Syed Farooq Rahman, Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Bazlul Huda, AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed and Mohiuddin Ahmed -- were executed on January 28, 2010.

Convicted killer Aziz Pasha died in Zimbabwe in 2001.

The five fugitives are Col (dismissed) Khandaker Abdul Rashid, Lt Col (relieved) Shariful Haque Dalim, Maj (ret'd) Nur Chowdhury, Maj (ret'd) Rashed Chowdhury and Risaldar Moslehuddin Khan.

Nur Chowdhury is in Canada and Rashed Chowdhury in the US.

The US government recently reopened a case against Rashed, signalling that he could face deportation and death sentence, according to a Politico magazine report.

Amid these developments, the nation today will observe the National Mourning Day and pay tribute to Bangabandhu and his family members brutally murdered on this day in 1975.

Contacted for details about the case against Rashed in the US, Law Minister Anisul Huq and Foreign Minister Abdul Momen refrained from making any comment to this newspaper.

"I don't know about this [case against Rashed in the US]. I have read reports about it in newspapers. I am observing it now," the law minister told The Daily Star on August 12 over the phone.

On April 12, he told the media, "Once again, I am promising in the Mujib Borsho that the government will bring all the fugitive killers back from abroad and execute their death sentence."

This correspondent contacted Momen over the phone on August 11, to know the progress in bringing other fugitive killers back to the country. But he refused to give any details, saying he is making statements on this issue every day.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, a member of the taskforce formed to bring back the fugitives, told this correspondent on August 12 that he did not know about the case proceedings against Rashed in the US.

He said the foreign ministry can provide details about this issue.

"If the US deports Rashed Chowdhury to Bangladesh we will feel that the US believes in the rule of law and we will be happy," he added.

WHAT POLITICO SAYS
US Attorney General William Barr has reopened a sprawling case against Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's fugitive killer Rashed Chowdhury, signalling that he could face deportation and death sentence, the US magazine reported on July 24.

Bangladesh Supreme Court upheld the High Court verdict that had given death sentences to 12 killers of Bangabandhu, including Rashed, in 2009. Rashed and his family went to the US in 1996 from Brazil on visitor visas and later got political asylum.

The Bangladesh government has been demanding that the US send back the convicted killer for many years to implement the court verdict.

The Politico, in the report titled "He thought he had asylum. Now, he could face a death sentence" said Attorney General William Barr quietly reopened the case that spans four decades and two continents.

It involves the killing of a president, a decades-old death sentence and a hard-fought battle for asylum pitting a former Bangladesh military officer against the US Department of Homeland Security.

"For almost 15 years, the case was closed. But now, thanks to Barr, it's back. And immigration lawyers say the move sends a chilling message to people who have received asylum in the US. It signals, they argue, that even after years of successful legal battles, any protection could still be revoked out of the blue," Politico reports.

They also say the move's timing is inscrutable.
"It's purely a favour the Trump

administration is doing for Bangladesh," said Marc Van Der Hout, a lawyer for Rashed Chowdhury.

The Bangladesh government has for years been open about its efforts to persuade the US to extradite Rashed -- whom it calls a cold-blooded assassin, it said.

"For years, the effort bore no fruit. But under the Trump administration, the government of Bangladesh has sounded optimistic notes," the report said.

Last November, Bangladesh's foreign minister said a senior US diplomat -- Alice Wells, a career official who has since left government -- asked him for documents related to Rashed's trial so the US could review them.

In April this year, the foreign minister reportedly pressed the US ambassador in Dhaka, Earl Miller, on the case against Rashed.

And, on June 17, Barr directed the Board of Immigration Appeals to send Rashed's case to him for review -- making clear he would reopen the matter that had been decided more than a decade earlier.

The document in which the attorney general made this move doesn't mention Rashed. But it refers to "the matter of A-M-R-C," using his full initials. And the details of the case described in Barr's announcement match Rashed's.

Politico wrote that a spokesperson for the Bangladeshi embassy declined to comment for this story. A US Department of Justice (DOJ) spokesperson also declined to comment, noting the department does not confirm the identities of people in such proceedings.

A lawyer for Rashed, however, shared DOJ communications with Politico confirming that his is the case Barr reopened. Barr's move is the first step in a process that could result in Rashed losing asylum after more than a decade and potentially facing deportation, it says.

STATUS OF NUR
In September last year, the Federal Court of Canada in a judgement said Bangladesh's application for information about the status of Bangabandhu's killer Nur Chowdhury is valid and the disclosure of such information would not hamper the public interest.

This verdict is one step forward for Bangladesh High Commission in Canada to get pre-removal risk assessment (PRRA) information from the Canadian government. Judge James W O'Reilly delivered the judgement.

Nur and his wife were reportedly granted visitor status in Canada in 1996. Later, they applied for refugee protection.

In 2002, Nur and his wife were found to be excluded from refugee protection for having committed a serious non-political crime. Then, they were found to be inadmissible to Canada for serious criminality in 2006. In 2009, Nur requested a PRRA.

The Bangladesh government has been in discussions with Canadian officials about Nur's status and has expressed concern about the delay relating to his PRRA application since 2010.

In 2018, the high commissioner of Bangladesh to Canada wrote to the minister of immigration, refugees and citizenship requesting to disclose, in the public interest, information about the status of Nur's PRRA application and immigration status in Canada.

But the minister refused to do that saying that there was no information-sharing agreement between the two countries.

Bangladesh sought judicial review of the minister's decision to disclose the status of Nur's PRRA application. In response, the Canadian minister as well as Nur said Bangladesh's request was premature and non-judicial.

But the justice rejected Nur and the Canadian minister's claim in the verdict.

"In my view, Bangladesh's application for judicial review should be allowed because the minister failed to give serious consideration to the public interest that would be served if the information sought were disclosed," the justice said in the observation of the verdict.

Working to ensure justice

FROM PAGE 1
organised the programme marking the National Mourning Day today.

The PM recalled that seeking justice for the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was barred through enacting the infamous indemnity ordinance.

She said some derailed junior officers, along with some high-ranking army personnel, were involved in the August 15, 1975 massacre that left the Father of the Nation and most of his family members dead.

Hasina said Bangabandhu's military secretary Colonel Jamil Uddin Ahmad was a member of the army and her brother Lieutenant Sheikh Jamal was a serving officer of the army. Both were killed brutally.

She mentioned that her younger brother Sheikh Russell was only 10 years old at that time. His dream was to join the army.

"But the cruelty of the fate is he [Russell] was killed brutally by army members. What was his guilt? I'm still looking for the answer."

Elaborating the August 15 killing, the PM said the greatest Bangalee of all times Bangabandhu, Bangamata Fazilatunnesa, and most of their family members were killed.

Hasina said her younger sister and she herself could not file a case against the killers and even could not demand justice.

'MATERIALISING BANGABANDHU'S DREAMS'

The premier pledged to stay beside those, including orphans and distressed

children, who are left behind to make sure their life is meaningful.

She called upon all concerned to work with honesty, dedication, and integrity to this end.

She said the government was working round the clock for the welfare of the people of all sections to materialise the dreams of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The PM also urged all to stand beside the people like orphans, elderly citizens, autistic and especially abused persons as well as beside those who are still left behind.

Describing the steps taken by her government for the welfare of the orphans, she said various training and vocational education programmes have been taken up so that they can stand on their own feet.

She clarified that orphans should not think like they do not have parents or guardians, rather the government stands by them to ensure their better livelihood.

In this regard, Hasina mentioned about the previously introduced "Shanti Nibash" for the aged people, saying this project would be reintroduced in future.

Social Welfare Minister Nuruzzaman Ahmed also spoke on the occasion. State Minister for Social Welfare Ashraf Ali Khan and senior officials of the social welfare ministry and its various departments were present.

Ahead of the National Mourning Day today, a special munaajat was offered seeking eternal peace of the departed souls of Bangabandhu and his other family members.



The man, the murder and his destiny

FROM PAGE 1
In between, he spent nearly 13 years in jail, which amounted to almost one-third of his adult political life. To think that he organised, prepared and led his people to an armed struggle within a period of only two decades is nothing short of a miracle of achievement for any leader anywhere.

It is quite amazing how from the start he evolved into a people's man.

Public concerns always seemed to attract him. He almost instinctively converted what would start off as a demand of this or that group into his own, and within no time was able to bring all the votaries together and guide them to do something about it -- be it a matter pertaining to his school, his local football club and the like.

His taking charge of a situation came naturally and given his personality he would in no time become the central figure of any situation. What attracted others towards him was his dependability. He would not take up a cause today and forget about it tomorrow. If he made a commitment he would honour it. Along with dependability came the question of trust. He exuded trust because of his nature. Young boys who would gather around him, and later in life when people would flock to him, one of the main reasons would be the trust factor -- they could always count on him.

It was not in the birth of Pakistan -- in the struggle for which he was intimately involved both from his home town and in British Calcutta -- that he found his calling. It was in the gradual unfolding of the reality within which the Bangalees in East Pakistan lived and his intimate exposure to the oppressions they suffered that would strike a deep cord with his inner feelings thus transforming him from within.

The rights of the class-IV employees of Dhaka University, the founding of the Awami Muslim League, the Jinnah's speech triggering students and public outrage ("Urdu shall be the only state language of Pakistan"), the language movement and the wider issues of cultural identity, democratic rights, the fact of no election being held in the new state, military takeover and marginalisation of politicians and the throttling of almost all major dissenting voices transformed the young supporter of Pakistan of the early and mid-40s into the budding Bangalee nationalist of the late forties and early fifties. It was during this time that he came to instinctively feel that the ultimate solution of a separate country may be the only way for the true emancipation of his people.

The early, clear and powerful articulation of the aspirations of the people of East Pakistan came in the form of Ekush Dafa (21-point programme), the election manifesto of the Jukta Front (United Front) in 1954. The significance of this political programme is that it came within less than nine years of the formation of the new country.

It galvanised the people of the eastern wing and literally led to the obliteration of the Muslim League as

a political party. Seldom the founding party of a newly formed state faced such a massive rejection by the people in so short a time. Writings were clearly on the wall only if anybody bothered to read it. This was especially significant considering that it was the Muslims of Bengal that gave the Pakistan movement its crucial and timely support and consequent credibility.

The coup by Gen Ayub in 1958 and the subsequent 10 years of military rule was the time of the real emergence of the steely, visionary and widely loved leader. His repeated internment, introspection and intellectual maturing while in prison, not to mention the hardening of his core beliefs and developing of his inner strength and the gradual clearing of mind as to steps to be taken next, led to what was his most brilliant move of introducing the famous six-points at the Roundtable meeting convened by dictator Ayub in Lahore.

The beauty of the programme was that it was simple, to the point and incorporated all the important demands of the people. In a short time, it caught the imagination of the people especially when the Pakistani rulers termed it as a secessionist ploy to destroy Pakistan.

What followed in the form of "Agartala Conspiracy Case" turned out to be a classic instance of political miscalculation and a Himalayan blunder. Gen Ayub's plan was to convict Sheikh Mujib of trying to break up Pakistan with India's help, thinking that such a case and its daily one-sided coverage in the pro-regime Pakistani media would distance Mujib from his people. We must remember that radio and TV were state monopolies then.

Here was the "trust factor" in magnificent display. Because people trusted Sheikh Mujib the exact opposite happened to what the military-bureaucratic rulers of Pakistan had expected. Instead of distancing, it galvanised the people behind him and skyrocketed his already huge popularity, firming his grip on public mind, and he, almost overnight, flowered into the Bangabandhu, the idol of his people.

The Pakistani genocide, Bangabandhu's confinement in Pakistani jail, our valiant freedom struggle, the resultant devastation of our country and its people, 30 million refugees in India, the Indian assistance, particularly the brilliant role played by Indira Gandhi, and our independence and complete victory over all odds, international support, and Sheikh Mujib's return at the helm of Bangladesh is well known to be repeated at some length here.

Bangabandhu's spell as the head of the government from January, 1972, onwards spawned many critics. When euphoria of just-earned freedom gave away to the harsh realities of a war-ravaged country, coupled with corruption (Bangabandhu's cry to reign in the "Chatar Dal", the blood suckers of the people) an element of disappointment started to creep in. This added with the post-draught famine of 1974, mis-governance

and the turning of the country into a one-party state gave credence to those who worried about the country's democratic future.

But no failure of the government justified, in the remotest of sense, the nightmare that befell the nation with the brutal murder of Bangabandhu and his family, save his two daughters -- Sheikh Hasina, the present prime minister and Sheikh Rehana -- on the night of August 15, 1975, that we observe today.

Those of us who heard the boastful cries on Bangladesh radio that "Sheikh Mujib ke hattya kora hoyechhey" on August 16 morning, 1975, cannot still believe our ears that such a fate could have befallen a leader but for whose work our independence would not have come when it did.

In paraphrasing Churchill's tribute to the Royal Air Force that "Never in human history was so much owed by so many to so few" we can say that seldom in human history was so much owed by so many to one individual.

In my humble view, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Sheikh Mujib was not only the leader of our independence struggle, he was the conceiver, the designer, the planner, the energiser and the supreme visionary of it all. It is only the people of Bangladesh who have played a greater role, with the wholehearted involvement of the youth. There would not have been an independent Bangladesh in 1971 without the role of that single individual we lovingly call Bangabandhu.

So the question is why was he killed along with so many members of his family, and in such a brutal fashion that stupefies all civilised sensibilities. What was his crime? Was his leading us to create an independent Bangladesh the crime for which he was so brutally taken away from us? I cannot find any other reason but this. Those who killed him wanted to destroy Bangladesh. Let us have no doubts about that.

As we commemorate Bangabandhu's 45th death anniversary we must strengthen our resolve to build the Sonar Bangla of his dreams, our dreams and one that we have pledged to our martyrs.

But what is that Sonar Bangla? In economic terms we have a come a long way. But our Sonar Bangla is that of freedom, of equality, or cultural flourishing, of human rights, of dignity of individual and groups, and above all, of democracy.

We do disservice to the memory of our Founding Father when we create the artificial democracy vs development debate. Development does not come in the absence of democracy because development is not just building roads, bridges and power plants etc. but of people's capacity to maintain their freedom and independence through self-reliance and self-confidence which comes from a sustained human development which is the only and real measure of development.

To building that Sonar Bangla let us dedicate ourselves in the centenary year of Bangabandhu's birth and on the 45th anniversary of his martyrdom.

Covid-infected nurse attending patients 'under pressure' from authorities

Lalmonirhat Sadar hospital superintendent claims to be unaware of the matter

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

As bizarre as it may sound, a Covid positive nurse has been discharging duties at the children ward of Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital for about a week allegedly due to the pressure from the hospital authorities.

Shamin Afroz, a senior assistant nurse at the hospital, tested positive on August 2. She remained at home until August 8, but had to join the hospital on August 9 "as the authorities insisted." Shamin said she still had fever, sneeze and cough.

"Right now, I need to take rest at home and get treatment, but under the pressure from the authorities, I have to come to my duty regularly," she said.

Attendants who came to know about her infection have already had their patients released from the hospital.

Mominul Islam, a father who had his child admitted to the hospital on August 7.

He got to know about the nurse's infection on August 9 and took her child out of the hospital without informing the authorities.

"It is very risky to treat a child at a hospital ward where a nurse has been infected with coronavirus," Mominul told The Daily Star.

Contacted, the hospital's Superintendent Sirajul Islam said he did not know about the matter.

"Action would be taken against those who allowed the nurse to discharge her duty," he said.

Lalmonirhat Civil Surgeon Nirmalendu Roy said it could not be accepted at all.

He said he would take immediate action in this regard, he said.

Youth arrested for raping two students

STAR REPORT

Police yesterday arrested a youth for his alleged involvement in the gang-rape of two female students in Pirojpur's Mathbaria upazila.

The arrestee is Abu Bakar Sagar, 20, of the upazila's Uttar Mithakhali village, said police.

AJM Masuduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Mathbaria Police Station, said the girls, along with their two male classmates, went to a college in Banna upazila to submit papers for their admission.

On their way back to home, they planned to visit Hoirinpala Eco Park in Bhandaria upazila. A battery-run three-wheeler, by which they were going to the Eco Park, got damaged on their way.

A group of youths then abducted the girls, took them to a nearby isolated place, and raped them. The miscreants also demanded Tk 15,000 ransom from the girls' relatives.

On information, police recovered the girls from the spot but the criminals managed to flee the scene.

Later, police arrested Sagar in Charkhali area of Pirojpur's Bhandaria upazila early yesterday.

The girls' paternal grandfathers filed a case accusing four named and three unnamed youths under the Woman and Child Repression Prevention Act.

"We have sent the victims to Pirojpur civil surgeon's office for their medical tests," said the OC.

Infection rate

FROM PAGE 1
coronavirus tests and new cases were higher in the first half of the 30 days than the last.

Between July 16 and July 30, the total number of new cases was 41,299 while the number of total tests was 183,793.

Between July 31 and yesterday, the total number of new cases dropped to 36,992 whereas the total number of tests to 164,562.

In the last 30 days, a total of 1,134 people died of the virus infection and 51,600 people recovered.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), a total of 2,766 people tested positive for Covid-19 in 24 hours between Thursday and yesterday.

With the fresh cases, the total number of positive cases so far in the country stands at 271,881 and the infection rate is 21.52 percent.

Meanwhile, 34 more people died from Covid-19 in the country in those 24 hours. The total number of deaths has now reached 3,591 and the overall death rate stands at 1.32 percent.

Among the dead, 28 were male and six were female.

Two of them aged between 31 and 40, four between 41 and 50, six between 51 and 60 and 22 were above 60 years.

A total of 12,856 samples were tested in 86 labs across the country in those 24 hours.

Meanwhile, 1,752 Covid-19 patients have recovered in those 24 hours.

The total number of recoveries stands at 156,623 and the recovery rate at 57.61 percent.

Seven hundred and thirty-nine people were put under isolation in those 24 hours, said a DGHS press release.

TANGENTS
BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Timeless rural Bengal.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Shilghat

It was during the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 that I came to know and love rural Bengal. As political tensions escalated in March, we left Dhaka for our family home in Sylhet. Situated in the northern part of town, our house faced the Lakkatura Hills two miles to the north. Some days after their genocidal attack in Dhaka on 25th March, Pakistani army moved towards Sylhet. Late one afternoon we saw the enemy soldiers descending the hills and approaching our neighbourhood. Scattered gunfire rang out. We were prepared. Our extended family – nine of us – got into my father’s Jeep, packed minimal clothing and food, and fled ahead of the attackers. At nightfall we took refuge at Dargah Mahalla along with others fleeing the city towards the villages. Our destination was Shilghat, my paternal grandmother’s ancestral village. It wasn’t very far, but access was difficult, offering protection against enemy incursions. The next day we started for Shilghat. We stopped in town for provisions and petrol. Mid-afternoon, as we were crossing Keane Bridge, two Pakistani fighter planes appeared over town and strafed indiscriminately, causing widespread panic. By nightfall we reached Dhaka Dokkhin village, spending the night at the house of a family friend. The following day, after negotiating several miles of rough unpaved roads with the Jeep, we arrived at Shilghat. Our relatives welcomed us and made us feel at home. I had never actually lived in a village in my ten years. Now here I was in village Bengal, uncertain when - or if - our lives would return to normal. Village life required adjustments. The biggest was dealing with the lack of electricity. We used kerosene lanterns at night. Outhouses posed no problems as I grew up with them. For

bathing there were two ponds. One was open for all; the other, earmarked for women, had curtains for privacy. A small, shallow river ran a quarter mile away. I bathed and swam there. We quickly settled into the rhythm of village life, waking early to make the most of daylight hours. Shahin Chacha, a cousin of my father about my age, was one of our hosts. He guided me exploring the village. Spring rolled into summer and the trees brimmed with jackfruits, mangoes, lychees and *kalojaam*. We celebrated ripening of enormous jackfruits by competing to see who could eat the most. Otherwise, food was a struggle. The adults – particularly my parents – never let us understand this struggle, but eggs and potatoes became staple. Next came the rains. Clouds travelling north from the Bay of Bengal hit the Khasi Hills to the north of Sylhet. They dump their rain on the Sylhet region where torrential rain can last for days. And so, after the season’s first extended downpour, the tiny river swelled tenfold. Crossing it against swift currents was a challenge. After turning back halfway on several occasions, I finally made it across. Reaching the other side I realized the current had carried me downstream a great distance. This was a nuisance: I had to walk upstream double the distance before my return swim. After four months in the village, my parents thought I should return to school. So in August we left Shilghat for Sylhet, then on to Dhaka where my school awaited. Enemy soldiers reached Shilghat a month later; our relatives were not harmed. Those days in Shilghat deeply enriched my life. They instilled in me a love for village Bengal.

www.facebook.com/ikabirphotographs or follow “ihtishamkabir” on Instagram.

The nation’s voice is gagged now: Fakhrul BNP demands immediate revoke of Digital Security Act

BNP yesterday alleged that the government is using the Digital Security Act as a weapon to hang onto power. “Around 153 people were harassed by filing cases against them under the Digital Security Act from January to June 2020,” Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, secretary general of the party, told a virtual press conference from his residence. Fakhru claimed that analysing the allegations of the cases, one will find that those were filed for raising voice against ruling party plunderers, expressing political views and criticising the government. Demanding immediate scrapping of the law, the BNP leader alleged that action is being taken against journalists or persons who publish corruption and heinous acts of the ruling party men on social media or in print media. “The nation’s voice is gagged now in fear of facing cases under the Digital Security Act,” Fakhru said. Mentioning that BNP has been long saying this law is unconstitutional and a tool of the government to suppress voice of people, Fakhru alleged that the ruling party made the law only to cling to power.

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‘Tk 5 lakh for each murder’ Hitman for top criminal, four associates held

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

He started as a “shooter”, when he was 18 years old. His primary task was to kill those who refused to pay money to top-listed criminal Shahadat Hossain. For each “killing mission”, shooter Rafiqul Islam Rony used to charge around Tk 5 lakh. Whenever any such order came from Shahadat, who is believed to be hiding in India, Rony carried out the order without asking question. For each “mission”, he never took more than three associates with him. An accused of at least eight cases with different police stations in the capital’s Mirpur, Rony is also a life-term awarded convict in a murder case. Police’s Detective Branch (DB) disclosed the findings after arresting Rony and four others from the capital’s Bhasantek area on Thursday. The other arrestees are Monir Hossain Babu Alias Desperate Babu (34), Saiful Islam (35), Saheen Miah (39) and Sohel Rana (31). Police also seized a foreign-made pistol and four machetes from them.

The arrestees were produced before a Dhaka court, which put them on two-day remand each for interrogation, Shahadat Hossain Sumon, additional deputy commissioner of DB (Tejgaon division) police, told The Daily Star yesterday. Yesterday was first day of the remand. On December 12 of 2013, Rony and his friend Mohosin alias Killer Mohosin demanded Tk 50 lakh from a businessman of Mirpur 10 area for construction of a residential building. As he refused to pay the money, Rony and Mohosin allegedly killed the businessman’s son, said Md Rajon, complainant of the case and also a brother of the victim. The court later gave them life-term imprisonment but they had never been arrested, said police. On July 31, Mohosin was killed in a “shootout” with Rab. After that, Rony went into hiding, said ADC Sumon. “Arrestee Saiful and Sohel are close associates of Rony. They used to collect extortion money from different areas of Mirpur in name of top-criminal Shahadat and send it to him in India every month,” he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Housewife ‘beaten dead’ in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A housewife was allegedly beaten to death by her husband over a family row in Dhaka’s Mirpur area yesterday morning. Deceased Rizia Akter (45), who used to live with her family, bore injury marks on her head and other parts of the body, sources claimed. She was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared her dead. Victim’s son Md Joy told reporters at Dhaka Medical College Hospital that his parents locked in an altercation around 4am and at one stage, his father Jahir Uddin Babar beat his mother, leaving her critically injured. Sub-inspector Jahangir Hossain of Mirpur Police Station also said that Jahir hit his wife in the head with a flashlight. Law enforcers detained Jahir after the incident, he told this newspaper. Kalam Uddin, the elder brother of the victim, said the couple had three daughters and a son. “My sister never complained of family issues. I have no idea why he (Jahir) killed my sister,” Kalam said. Filing of a case was underway until filing of this report.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Demanding justice for mountaineer Reshma who was run over by a microbus in the capital last Friday, a group of cyclists yesterday rallied from Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban to Hatirjheel. They also demanded the arrest of the culprit driver, and bicycle lanes on city streets.



The hawkers’ market near the capital’s Baitul Muqarram mosque butles on a weekend afternoon, as scores of people crowd the street with no regard for social distancing. Many were also spotted wearing either no masks, or wearing them on their chin, which defeats its ultimate purpose.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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আজীয় শোক দিবসে

বঙ্গবন্ধুর স্বপ্নের সোনার বাংলা

গড়ার প্রত্যয়ে আসুন আমরা উদ্বীণিত ছই

স্ট্যান্ডার্ড ব্যাংক লিমিটেড



THIS CHAIR IS NOT FOR SITTING ... With this manhole cover in the middle of the street gone missing in the capital's Arambagh, locals have placed a broken chair frame and a wooden box to demarcate the gape, so vehicles can steer clear of danger. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Moderate to heavy rainfall likely this week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country may experience moderate to heavy rain in the next three to four days as a depression has formed over Bay of Bengal.

The Met office asked maritime ports to hoist local cautionary signal number-3.

Due to a depression over Bay of Bengal, many parts of the country may face light to heavy rain from today, said meteorologist Abdur Rahman Khan.

It may fade after a day or two, but rain may continue across the country, as monsoon will be active, he said.

The Met office predicts light to moderate rain and thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind in places in Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram and Sylhet divisions, and at one or two places in Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh and Dhaka divisions.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN CTG
No care for health guidelines
Transport workers, passengers blame each other

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Health guidelines are not being followed in public transports in Chattogram, increasing the risk of worsening coronavirus situation.

The government has instructed transport owners and workers to carry passengers half of the vehicle's capacity and to keep one of every two seats vacant to maintain social distance. It has also increased fare 60 percent so that vehicle owners do not incur loss.

The instructions were followed only for around 15 days in Chattogram after it were imposed, said locals.

According to transport leaders, around 1,200 mini buses and 2,000 human hauliers ply on 12 routes in the port city every day.

Passengers and transport workers blame each other for the violation of health rules.

"When the government decided to resume public transports with following health directives, we appreciated the move. Even we also accepted to pay 60 percent additional fare," said Abdus Sattar Roni, general secretary of South Chattogram Passengers' Welfare Association.

"The transport workers followed the rules for two to three weeks and thereafter they started taking passengers like in the past without maintaining physical distance," he said.

Now they take passengers as many as they can with that extra fare, he added.

"The drivers do not start vehicles until all the seats are filled up," he told The Daily Star. "When any passenger protests, they are humiliated by transport workers," Roni said.

Sulata Chowdhury, a resident from Chawkbazar, said she faced such a situation in a bus while she was going

to New Market from her residence on Wednesday. "When I protested, they asked me to get down..."

Transport owners and law enforcement agencies especially the traffic department should be held responsible for the situation, she said.

On the other hand, Imran Hossain, line secretary of Chattogram Auto-rickshaw Auto-tempo Workers' Union, blamed the passengers for violating the rules.

"The passengers do not pay heed to our words when we forbid them to board vehicles violating health rules," he said. "Many of them said, 'there is no more coronavirus...'"

When asked why they charge passengers extra then, Imran said they have nothing to do with the fare set by the government in consultation with the owners.

Contacted, Tarun Dasgupta, general secretary of City Bus Owners' Association, Chattogram, admitted that public vehicles were realising extra fare from passengers.

"We instructed the workers to follow health guidelines and not to realise fare more than 60 percent; but in many cases, we get complaints of violation of the instructions," he said.

Contacted, Ilias Kanchan, chairman of Nirapad Sarak Chai, said health guidelines are actually not being maintained in public transports, posing threat to further deterioration of Covid-19 situation.

Mohammad Shahidullah, deputy commissioner (traffic) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, said they file around 200 cases a day on different routes against the vehicles for violating traffic and health rules.

"Passengers also have to be aware of health guidelines," he said.

ATTACK ON PEERS
CMCH intern doctors go on work abstention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Intern doctors at Chattogram Medical College Hospital went on a work stoppage yesterday, protesting an alleged attack on two of their fellows the day before.

MA Auwal Rafi, joint convener of Intern Doctors' Association at CMCH and vice president of CMC Central Students Union, alleged that their rival group attacked the two with sticks at the city's Gulzar intersection around 11:30pm on Thursday.

Osman Gani, convener of the association; and Sunny Hasnain Prantik, a fifth-year student of the college, were going to Chawkbazar Police Station to file a case following a scuffle that took place on Thursday evening between two Bangladesh Chhatra League groups. They belonged one of the factions, said Rafi.

Immediately after the attack, the injured two were admitted to CMCH, he said. "We will continue the work stoppage until the authorities take punitive action against the attackers," he added.

Contacted, CMCH Director Brig Gen SM Humayun Kabir said, to settle the matter, he will soon hold a meeting with all departmental heads where the student leaders from both the groups will be present.



PHOTO: STAR

Interns of CMCH gathered in front of the hospital yesterday to protest the alleged attack on their peers.

Police official dies from Covid-19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A police officer died from Covid-19 at Central Police Hospital Dhaka early yesterday.

The deceased, Suman Ali (38), was inspector (investigation) of Baraigram Police Station in Natore.

He was admitted to the hospital on August 2 after testing Covid-19 positive. He was later put on life-support as his condition deteriorated, says a press release of Police Headquarters.

With him, at least 67 members of Bangladesh Police died from Covid-19 while discharging duties across the country.

Hailing from Chapainawabganj's Shibganj upazila, Suman joined Bangladesh Police as a sub-inspector in 2008. He left behind his wife and daughter.

The body was buried at the family graveyard in his village home.

Suman's father Abdul Latif said his son was an honest officer and did not harm anyone in his service life. He was dedicated to his duty.

He requested all to pray for the salvation of Suman's departed soul.

Disinformation campaign targeting Bangladesh condemned

Indian Deputy High Commission urges all to disregard false info

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in India has condemned what it said is a disinformation campaign by some Indian media targeting Bangladesh, and urged all to disregard the false information peddled by those outlets.

In a statement yesterday, it said it recently noticed that some web portals based in India's northeastern region have published totally false and baseless articles and rumours regarding Bangladesh's prime minister, ministers, advisers, military and security forces and intelligence agencies.

"Most notably, the said portals have run distorted and photoshopped image of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan, in an attempt to hurt the existing friendly ties between Bangladesh and India."

The Deputy High Commission said it understands the web portals -- theeasternlink.com, nenow.in and lookeast.in -- are operated by or under the auspices of a discredited Indian journalist with a track record of disseminating false information about Bangladesh. In 2017, he published a baseless and debunked article suggesting a deadly coup and murder attempt against the Bangladeshi premier.

"In addition, these portals have published serious and provocative articles about Bangladesh military and security forces, lacking any sense of journalistic integrity," it said.

The Deputy High Commission said, "We condemn such disinformation campaign targeting Bangladesh. We would like to urge all concerned to disregard the false information peddled by these web portals."

Tk 5 lakh

FROM PAGE 3

Another arrestee Babu mostly worked for top-criminal Jamil and his brother Mamun. Babu also used to send money to Jamil in India and Mamun in Nepal, said ADC Sumon.

Babu is wanted in a number of cases filed with Pallabi and Bhasantek police stations.

The activities of Jamil, Mamun and Shahadat came to the fore following arrest of three associates of Jamil on July 29 on charges of killing two ruling party leaders in Mirpur.

Police sources said these gangs, especially Jamil, took contracts to kill either Pallabi Jubo League general secretary Jewel Rana or councillor of ward-6 Taizul Islam Bappi.

The criminals were given the contracts for Tk 5 crore to take control over "extortion scene" in Mirpur and Pallabi areas, according to sources.

But the "dramatic bomb explosion" inside Pallabi Police Station foiled their plan, according to police officials involved with the investigation.

Asked about it, ADC Sumon said they have learned about the plot but did not find involvement of these five arrestees.

"The associates of these top-criminals went into hiding after the arrest of the five. We, however, got their identities and some locations and we are now conducting drives to arrest them," he added.

The nation's

FROM PAGE 3


"The law should be revoked immediately and freedom of expression of free thinkers should be ensured," he said.

"Whenever a government becomes authoritarian, autocrat, and fascist, it first attacks freedom of expression, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press; it also controls social media. That is what this government is doing in a planned and conscious manner," Fakhrul said.

Fakhrul said the Editors' Council has already voiced concern that journalists cannot write freely due to the Digital Security Act. He said for arrest warrant for many renowned editors have been issued by filing cases against them under the act, forcing them to go to court for bail, while some journalists have been arrested. The BNP leader demanded the government to free all those arrested in cases filed under Digital Security Act and withdraw cases, including that against Manabzamin editor-in-chief Matiuir Rahman Chowdhury and Prothom Alo editor Matiuir Rahman.

Replying to a question, the BNP secretary general said their party, if it returns to power through a fair election, will abolish all laws that curtail rights of the people, freedom of speech and freedom of thoughts.

Mirza Fakhrul also said his party will send a letter to the government urging it to scrap the Digital Security Act, but did not specify when that could happen.



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Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Manikganj
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Reference No. 46.02.5600.000.07.001.20-1955 Date: 13/08/2020

Invitation for Tender (Works)
e-Tender Notice No. 02/2020-2021

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following packages:

SL No.	ID No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender method
1	482581	e-Tender/LGED/Manik/GOBM/20-21/W-01	On-Pavement Routine Maintenance Supplying Stone Chips 16mm & 12mm & 8mm down graded Coarse Sand Sylhet Sand 1st class Picked Bricks & Picked Bricks Bats Bitumin Bitumin Emulsion Empty Ganny Bag Local Sand etc. under XEN Office, LGED, Manikganj.	
2	482582	IPCP/MAN/SINGA/P/19-20/4.01	1. (a) Re-Excavation of Vakum Mosque & Madrasa Pond (b) Construction of 01 No. Ghatia 9.80 X 5.00m for Vakum Mosque & Madrasa Pond under union Joymontop upazila Singair, Dist: Manikganj.	LTM
3	482583	IPCP/MAN/SADAR/P/19-20/3.02	1. (a) Re-Excavation of LGED Pond (b) Construction of 01 No. Ghatia 9.80 X 5.00m for LGED Pond (c) Construction of LGED Pond Walkway XEN Office LGED Manikganj under Manikganj Pourashava Dist: Manikganj. 2. (a) Re-Excavation of DC Banglo Pond (b) Construction of 01 No. Ghatia 9.80 X 5.00m for DC Banglo Pond under Manikganj Pourashava, Dist: Manikganj.	
4	482584	LGED/SSWRDP/PHASE-2/BD-P98/2019/2071005-Structure	a) Construction of Katakhalai Khali WRS 3x2.5m2.5m at Ch. 0475km (b) Construction of WMCA Office 12.0m6.0m (c) Electrical works of WMCA Office (d) Supply of office Furniture of WMCA Office (e) Documentation of Works (f) Provisional sum of Katakhalai Sub-Project SP ID-71005 under Upazila Ghior, District: Manikganj 2019-20 (4th Call)	
5	482585	MAN/AF-56	Rehabilitation of Manikganj-Bangladesh Hat-Tilli-Kolia-Sonka-Nagarpur GC Road Doulatpur part. Ch. 0000-8040m (ID-356102007) Upazila: Doulatpur District: Manikganj (Salvage cost: 2661021.00) (5th Call)	OTM
6	482586	GDP-3/MA-53	Improvement of Manikganj-Harirampur Road Sorupi Bazar-Balirtek Bazar Putal-Balirtek Bazar Road Manikganj-Harirampur RHD at Sharupai Bazar-Balirtek Road at Ch. 5500-7575m under Upazila Sadar Dist: Manikganj (Road ID 356462008) Part-A (Salvage cost 231165.00) (4th Call)	OSTETM

These are online tenders where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches up to 05.00pm on 31-08-2020. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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GD-1260



SPECIAL ON AUG 15

DHAKA SATURDAY AUGUST 15, 2020, SRABAN 31, 1427 BS

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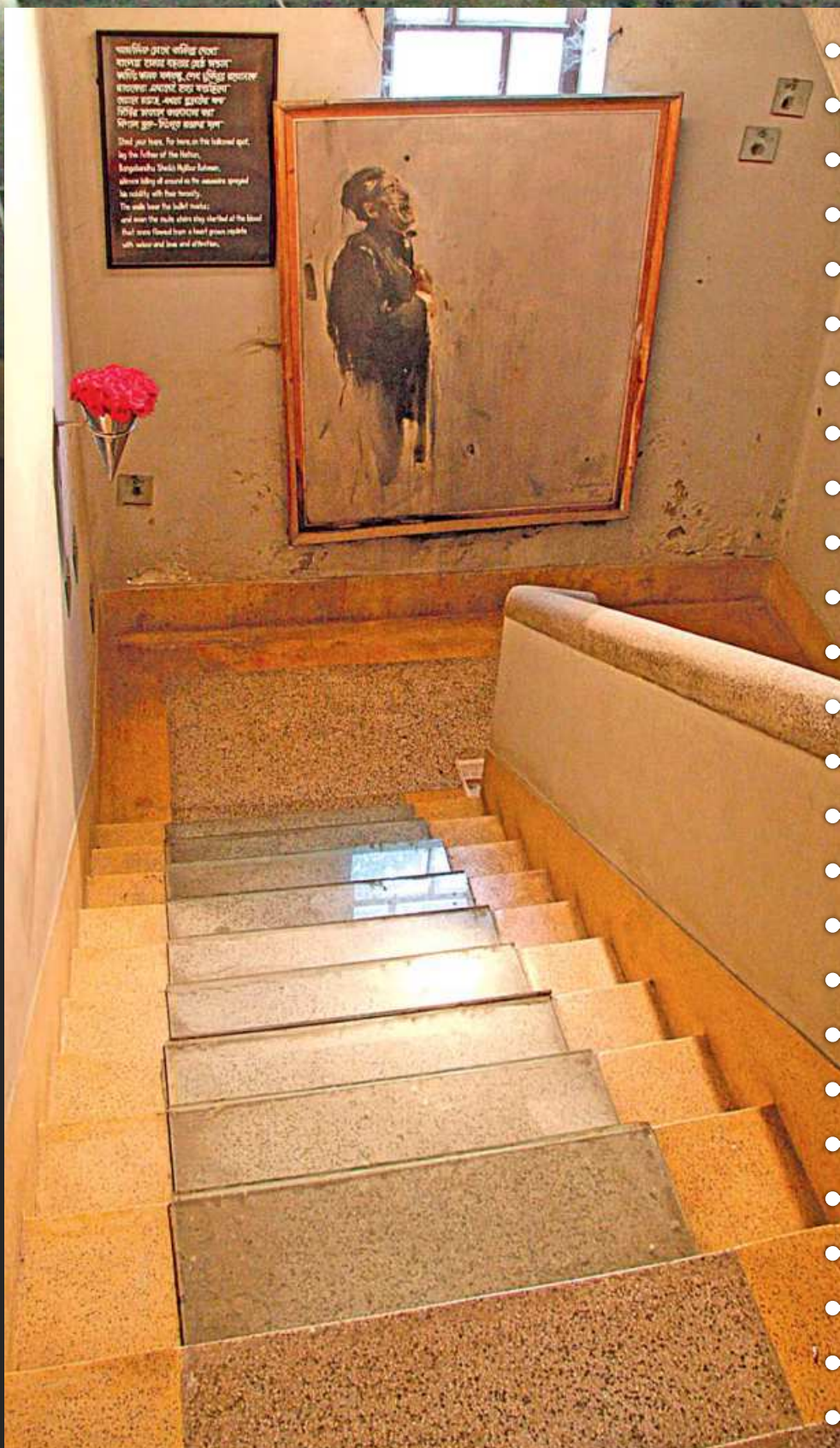


Photo: COPIED FROM BANGABANDHU MUSEUM

BLOODBATH ON ROAD 32

August 15, 1975. A false dawn spread its pale light across the sky. At the residence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, everybody was still in deep sleep. It was a bizarre moment for the country, medieval in its dark dimensions. Tanks rolled down Sher-e-Banglanagar and made their way towards Dhanmondi. In a matter of minutes, soldiers, led by a group of majors and colonels, were storming the historic house on Road 32. Bangabandhu desperately worked the telephones. General KM Shafiullah, the army chief of staff, asked him if he could move out of his home. That was an impossibility. All hell broke loose as bullets pinged and whizzed around. The Father of the Nation was assassinated along with his family on the land he had freed just four years back.

Photos: ANISUR RAHMAN



The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA SATURDAY AUGUST 15, 2020, SRABAN 31, 1427 BS

Planning ministry frustrated with the state of development projects!

But will it take steps to rectify the problems hindering timely implementation?

We share the planning ministry's frustration over repeated modifications in projects, long delays, increased costs, failure to conduct proper feasibility tests and flouting of rules and regulations of high-ups, among other long-standing problems that hinder the efficient implementation of development schemes. At a meeting of secretaries from all ministries and divisions, concerns were also raised about people directing as many as eight or nine projects at a time, even though there are rules stating that one person cannot be the director for multiple projects. Directors are absent from project sites and officials design the project without testing its feasibility, as a result of which costs increase and there is lag in implementation. Even the Planning Minister MA Mannan admitted that rules get "ignored on some occasions" while Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam reminded the secretaries that there are provisions for punishment if rules and regulations are not followed.

Cost escalations, modification of components and time extensions of development projects have, unfortunately, become a norm, and while we appreciate the planning ministry's candour and concern in this regard, we can't help but wonder what steps, if any, it has taken over the years to ensure that rules and project deadlines are followed and that corruption is put in check from the design to the implementation phases. Despite repeated instances of corruption, inefficiency and a lack of foresight on the part of those directing and designing the projects, no one has been held responsible for the exponential increase in costs or the unacceptable delays in implementation, for which ordinary citizens, i.e. taxpayers, have to suffer. We were encouraged by the planning minister last year when he announced that no project would be revised more than twice and that implementation agencies would have to explain any delay, but it remains unclear if, and to what extent, that announcement was realised.

A working paper by the planning ministry stated that it approved 18 amended projects worth Tk 51,113 crore under nine ministries in June and July this year, but that on average, the cost of these projects increased by 34.86 percent—in some cases, the cost increased by 100 percent. This is unacceptable. We urge the concerned ministries, particularly the planning ministry, to take urgent and exacting steps to rectify the long-standing issues impeding the timely and cost-effective implementation of development projects.

70 pc students bearing the brunt of the pandemic

A more inclusive response crucial to rescue the youth

The uncertainty over public exams is weighing heavy on students as well as their families. Educational institutions all over the world are extending their closures to ensure safety of students but in the process are pushing them towards further insecurity. According to a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO), over 70 percent of the youths who study or combine study with work have been negatively impacted by the disruption in education brought about by Covid-19. It has diminished the employment prospects for the younger generation, pushing them further into depression and shock. The study also reveals that young women and young workers are being hit the hardest by the ongoing crisis.

The situation is even worse for youths living in lower-income countries—only 18 percent could afford to study online compared to 65 percent in high-income countries—as their access to internet and other resources to attend online classes is inadequate. Due to the transition from regular classes to online classes, 65 percent of young people reported having learned less since the beginning of the pandemic, while 38 percent are uncertain of their future careers. It seems that the crisis will create more obstacles in the labour market as one in six youths have already stopped working, and 42 percent of those who have continued to work have suffered from reduced incomes. A survey found that 50 percent of the youth are suffering from anxiety or depression, while an additional 17 percent are probably affected by it.

Poor access to online education and the shortage of IT support, along with the lack of study space at home, are problems across many households in our country and urgent steps must be taken to protect our youth from the mental and physical sufferings caused by the socio-economic fallout. The concerned ministries must immediately set up targeted policy responses to prevent further damage, ensuring the inclusion of the youth in these policy decisions. The government and private sector must work together in this regard to address the impending education and employment crisis and come up with concrete recommendations. This may also be a good time to revise the whole education system and make it more dynamic and inclusive so that the loss in education can be made up.

He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear



Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. In the UN Assembly in 1974, Bangabandhu said, "only an environment of peace would enable us to... mobilise and concentrate all our energies and resources in combating the scourges of poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy and unemployment." Bangabandhu seems to be in total harmony with Mandela, who elsewhere said, "as long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, no one can rest in peace." What brings these two leaders together is not only their shared attitude towards peace but also their prison experience including their empathy towards their people.

With everyone joining the Sustainable Development Goals bandwagon, the categories such as hunger, poverty, peace, illiteracy have been reduced to quantifiable figures and development jargon. For Bangabandhu and Mandela, these were life lessons. Going through their personal jottings, shards from diaries, personal snippets, it is easy to see how their prison experiences influenced their understanding of the terms we often take for granted. Bangabandhu's *Prison Diaries* and Mandela's *Conversation with Myself* proffer moving accounts of their raw and unmediated thoughts. With outpouring numbers of books and publications, these two great figures have been subjected to a "culture industry". It is often tempting to get carried away with the larger than life aspects of these giant figures. But it is the simple things that they did and the tears they shed for common misery that make them human, and make them one of us.

While reading the *Prison Diaries*, I was struck by Bangabandhu's attention to the simple things in life. On his death anniversary, I shall reflect on some of the prison anecdotes that he recorded in five of his notebooks written between 1958 and 1969. These notes *Karagarer Rojnamcha*, have been folded into one volume as *Prison Diaries* (2018). Bangabandhu spent almost a quarter of his 55 years of life in prison. He became aware of the many jails that exist within a jail. In the first notebook, Bangabandhu writes, "I have been there as a political prisoner, as a prisoner sentenced to hard

labour as well as an under-trial prisoner. I can feel the state of the prisoners in my bones. I won't go into detail about the things that happened to me, rather I shall describe what others do while in jail." I find this to be the most selfless statement of the book. True to his claim, seldom does he linger on his personal pain and trauma, yet he takes time to give sympathetic ears to the stories of other inmates. For instance, while describing different segments (*dafa*) of jail, he describes the *Shaitaner Kol* (Devil's Engine) where inmates are engaged in producing blankets from cotton. After a day's work in the factory, the prison-workers would look like "devils" covered in clouds of cotton dust. He learns the



Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, 1973, Dhaka.

meaning of the prison lingo from a convict and records it verbatim in his notebook. Yet when he was forced to work in a cotton factory in Faridpur Jail, where he was not given division as a political prisoner, he simply reported: "I was assigned work after being brought to Faridpur Jail. I had to cut cotton threads since I was no longer a political prisoner but a convict serving out his sentence. After I had served three months thus, my sentence of hard labour was done. I became a purely political prisoner once more." Notice the lack of hardship in his account.

This is the very man who listens to others with childlike simplicity. He stands by the water reservoir where the mentally challenged inmates are given a forced bath; he makes sure that the use

of convicts in place of bullocks in an oil-seed crusher is topped; he listens to the sweeping chants of the cleaners loaded with insults for the police superiors, or he tries to make sense of the prison lingo. He wonders how could the phrase "case table" (where prisoner's case history is recorded or evaluated) turn into "casetakol". He reflects on the sage looking religious man preaching verses from the holy book who has come to jail convicted of raping a minor. He talks about the doctors who take bribe to place prisoners on a special diet or send to medical centres. He tells us of the sodomy that goes on inside the prison, and how two inmates fought over one juvenile prisoner. He talks about his desire to kiss

because he allowed an admirer to pass on a sweet while he was being transported from one jail to another. *Prison Diaries* tells us how he found comfort in listening to the stories of others.

Towards the end of his first notebook, he details the life of a thief, Ludu of Lutfur Rahman Lane. When Bangabandhu met him inside the jail, he was already the longest-serving prisoner there. The story of Ludu's life is rather ordinary, but it is the extraordinary attention with which Bangabandhu notes down the details that intrigued me the most. Ludu came from a well-to-do family, but his luck changed when his father remarried. Ludu had to learn to take care of his mother at an early age and eventually entered the world of crime. Drinking, pickpocketing, mugging, raiding, burglary—you name it. He even carved a cavity inside his throat ("khokaru") to hide away stolen goods. He climbed up the crime ladder by paying corrupt police officials a portion of his booty.

Bangabandhu knew that such a detailed account of a thief may confuse his readers. He explains, "You may wonder why I took an interest in the life of a simple thief. His life, for me, is a true reflection of our society. Only by musing seriously about the lives of people within our society can we arrive at an understanding of the malaise afflicting it; only then might we be able to work out how some individuals around us end up as pickpockets or dacoits."

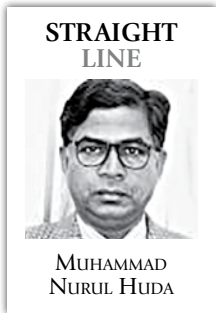
This for me is the essential Bangabandhu. A man who is ready to listen. A man who is willing to give voice to the voiceless. A man who knows how circumstances can construct one's destiny. The man who authored the destiny of our nation and made Bangladesh its *magnum opus* was successful because he paid attention to every word (read, ward) of his text. Ludu is a case study. His case could have been different if he had not had to face hunger while growing up.

Great leaders such as Bangabandhu and Mandela know from their experiences that people are essentially peace-loving. Injustice, inequalities, hunger morph them into things that they are not. They sought peace by ending the cause of human misery, and they factored in people as they believed all lives matter.

It is the simplicity and humility that makes a great leader great; that makes a man a friend. In the case of Bangabandhu—he gave his country all he had, a symbolic tear, his sympathies. In return, we have found a friend in him: *Banga Bandhu*, a friend of Bangladesh.

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Understanding the greatness of Bangabandhu



personified Bengali nationalism, just as Gamal Abdul Nasser personified Arab nationalism. His charisma was all-pervasive and he became a household name in every village of Bangladesh. He succeeded in articulating the basic emotions which put him at his pinnacle. History singled him out to lead Bengal's struggle to complete emancipation.

The greatness of Bangabandhu can be adequately and realistically understood and appreciated if we correctly grasp the then socio-political situation of East Pakistan, the plight of Bangalis therein and how amidst huge adversity, the battle for complete emancipation had to be fought. It would be relevant to recall that the historic Lahore Resolution, in constitutional terms, demanded regional autonomy for the two Muslim majority, geographically and administratively delineated, areas.

The Lahore Resolution of 1940 had, in effect, sought regional autonomy and definitely not religious autonomy for the Muslims. This demand for autonomy remained the central driving force of the politics of the Bangalis throughout its incorporation in the Pakistan State. In that scenario, Bangabandhu was always at the forefront, forcefully advocating the cause of autonomy. He realised, quite correctly, that the commitment for regional self-rule, had been usurped by the central government of Pakistan. For him, in practical terms, it meant the exercise of central power by a non-Bangali dominated ruling elite drawn from the feudal classes of West Pakistan, allied with a military and bureaucratic elite where Bangalis were virtually excluded.

History bears witness to the fact that the denial of political power and also the demand for provincial autonomy was compounded by the assault on the cultural identity of the Bangalis, with the proclamation of Urdu as the only national language of Pakistan. Here also Bangabandhu was closely involved with the protest emanating from the student

and the cultural front. Additionally, one could see that the political domination and cultural subordination of the Bangalis was further compounded by the denial of democratic access to the economic opportunity being created by the Pakistan State.

Professor Rehman Sobhan comments that, "This denial of political right and economic opportunity to the Bangalis of Bangladesh provided the dynamic of the demand for democracy and self-rule for Bangladesh which constituted the central motivating force of Pakistan's politics for twenty four years of its existence as a unified State". Bangabandhu realised quite early that the ruling cabal was bent on establishing a Pakistani identity over a Bangali identity and that this



PHOTO: COLLECTED

coterie mischievously revived the notion of religious identity. To the Pakistani establishment, the assertion of a Bangali identity was un-Islamic as well as anti-Pakistani.

The highlighting of the separate political and economic aspirations of the Bangalis in Pakistan and their distinct cultural identity was no easy task. Major political struggle of the Bangalis, starting from the Language Movement of 1952 to the mass upsurge for democracy in 1969 were driven by the passionately held notion of separateness. For this separateness to grow into a sense of shared nationhood, it required a major political effort. The political stewardship for such venture was surely Bangabandhu's, who performed the catalytic act of political entrepreneurship

History bears witness to the fact that the denial of political power and also the demand for provincial autonomy was compounded by the assault on the cultural identity of the Bangalis, with the proclamation of Urdu as the only national language of Pakistan.

needed to forge a sense of nationhood for the Bangalis.

It is also a fact of history that Bangabandhu played the politically critical role of institutionalising the growing sense of separateness between East and West Pakistan by presenting his historic Six Point Programme before the people of Pakistan in 1966. This programme brought into sharp focus the urgency of devolution of political power, policymaking and administrative authority as well as command over economic resources to the provinces. The Six Point demonstrated, for the first time, a formal recognition that political coexistence between East and West Pakistan, even within a democratic central government was no longer feasible.

Students of political science and history, in particular, need to understand that Bangabandhu realised the imperative of an overwhelming mandate from Bangalis to generate enough pressure on the military junta of Pakistan to devolve power to the Bangalis as per the Six Point Programme. He also believed that rejection of the universal demand of the Bangalis would jeopardise the very foundation of the Pakistan State. As events unfolded later, this assumption of Bangabandhu turned out to be prophetic.

Bangabandhu was extraordinarily brave and sagacious enough to seek a comprehensive popular mandate for his Six Point over the heads of his Bangali political rivals. This was necessary because in the preceding years all attempt to resist external political domination by Pakistani elite failed due to divisions amongst Bangali political leaders. Therefore, Bangabandhu's political campaign

from March 1969 emphasised on the separateness of our social, political and economic life. He successfully exhorted his Bangali audience to vote together to proclaim the right to live a separate life from West Pakistan.

To carry the message of Bangali nationalism into the consciousness of every household of Bangladesh, both rural and urban, was a huge task. Here also we witness the outstanding organisational skill of Bangabandhu. The most striking poster of the time titled "*Purbo Bangla shoshan keno?*" (Why Eastern Bengal is oppressed?) presented in simple language the statistics of disparity between East and West Pakistan. For the message to land on the doorstep of the voters, required large-scale party organisation and dedicated work. Bangabandhu's enviable organisational acumen facilitated the accomplishment of the monumental task.

In 1970, the massive electoral victory achieved due to Bangabandhu made complete regional autonomy a non-negotiable demand of the Bangalis. In early 1971, a resurgent Bangali people and a buoyant Bangabandhu convinced the obstinate military and scheming politicians that there was no scope to compromise on Six Point demand through inducement of power sharing at the centre. By this time, for Bangalis, the Six Point had turned into the only constitutional solution to the political crisis in Pakistan. The new found sense of nationalism had already started inspiring the demand for full political independence.

The uniqueness of Bangabandhu's leadership lay in the fact that national sovereignty was inculcated into the consciousness of the Bangali masses through a deliberate political process. Years of political mobilisation by Bangabandhu made the Bangalis conscious of their identity. The mass character of consciousness provided the underlying strength to the nationalist movement and the assertion of national sovereignty.

Bangabandhu's cruel assassination was an abominable conspiracy to marginalise the historic consciousness of the Bangalis. His assassination, quite clearly, was an assault on the inspirational sources of our nationhood. At present, when the nation mourns Bangabandhu's demise, it is time to gratefully remember and salute the great son of Bengal and at the same time renew our pledge to make sustained efforts to preserve our distinctive national identity.

Muhammad Nurul Huda is a former IGP.

‘Bangabandhu was a man void of vanity, a leader free of ego’

Apart from being a renowned educationist, Dr Fakrul Alam is also an eminent scholar, editor and translator. He has translated Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s *Ashamapto Attojibon*, “*Karagarer Rojnamcha*” and “*Amar Dekha Noya Chin*” (yet to be published). Not only did his translated works earn him widespread acclaim in the field of literature internationally, but it also gave an opportunity for readers all across the world to learn about our history and our struggle for liberation. Dr Fakrul Alam is now UGC Professor, Department of English, University of Dhaka. His works on post-colonial literature and Rabindranath Tagore have established him as one of the foremost intellectuals of Bangladesh. He received the SAARC Literary Award in 2012 and the Bangla Academy Award for translation in 2013. In this interview, Professor Fakrul Alam talks to Emran Mahfuz of *The Daily Star* about his translations on Bangabandhu’s work.

You are well known for your translations of the works of esteemed literary figures like Mir Mosharraf Hossain, Rabindranath Tagore and Jibanananda Das. What prompted you to translate the autobiography of a political leader for a change? It was not pre-planned; the proposal to translate the book came my way from my friend Kazi Shahidullah, who was then Professor of History at the University of Dhaka and is the current UGC Chairman. At the end of 2005, I met our Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who at that time was the leader of the Opposition. At that time the manuscript of Bangabandhu’s “The Unfinished Memoirs” (*Ashamapto Attojibon*) was being edited and composed from the manuscript. Mr. Shamshuzzaman Khan, current President of Bangla Academy and the late Mrs. Baby Moudud were involved in the process, along with our present Prime Minister. They would examine carefully whether the translations matched the original accurately. Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed the process of translating the work.

Have you got any fond memories with Bangabandhu which served as a source of inspiration for you to take up the task of translating his autobiography? Sheikh Kamal was a batch mate and we had friendly relations. In the late 1970s, he took me and some other friends to his house where we got a glimpse of Bangabandhu. I should add that Bangabandhu and what was happening in our country was often the topic of discussion in my family like many other families. Bangabandhu’s vibrant presence, the Six Point Movement, the mass uprising in 1969, the election of 1970, the Liberation War of 1971, all had a strong impact on me.

“The Unfinished Memoirs” is an extraordinary piece of literature. While translating it, did you come to recognise Bangabandhu as a politician, or someone beyond that? First, let me point out that I did not translate the book all at once. I would receive 30 pages of composed material from the original Bangla manuscript, and once I finished translating it, I would receive the second part, and that is how we progressed. Every page to me was radiated by the spirit of Bangabandhu who, we can tell, loved to tell stories as much as he enjoyed listening to them. And his narrative style truly inspired me. His larger-than-life character and friendly approach made him one with the sorrows as well as the joyful moments of his people. Apart from being a politician, his charisma is everywhere evident in his writing.

As a son, a husband, a father, and of course as spirited human being too he appealed to me. He has what one call “presence” and his personality made the process of translating the memoirs easy for me to a great extent.

Did you notice any difference between the personal life and the political life of our Father of the Nation, and how much does it have to do with the involvement of the marginalised people? No, there was no difference—he clearly wore his heart on his sleeve. Bangabandhu was a man void of vanity, a leader free of ego. His genial, warm personality is evident through his literary works like “*Ashamapto Attojibon*”, “*Karagarer Rojnamcha*” and “*Amar Dekha Noya Chin*”—all books composed within the confines of the prison cell. As a result, his writings reflect his personal grief, frustrations and emotions vividly. Among other things, Bangabandhu also wrote vibrantly about his family and friends, the crisis in which the state was in, and his relationships with prominent leaders of the period, including Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, Mr. Abul Hashem and Maulana Bhasani. His narrative describes loudly his situation as well as the lives of ordinary people.

Does the book “*Karagarer Rojnamcha*” paint a picture regarding Bangabandhu’s thoughts on nature and the people he met while he in prison? Your question reminds me of an incident that is truly amazing and that is recorded in this book. Bangabandhu wrote feelingly about a bird that would “visit” him and that did not show up one day, “Is the bird angry at me? Or else why wouldn’t it shown up?” The very thought of him waiting eagerly for a bird to pay him a visit tells us about his capacity of empathy and oneness with nature. Let me discuss another incident recorded in this book. He once came across another man in prison who had once robbed his home. The man was quite fearful as he met Bangabandhu, but instead of berating him, Bangabandhu reassured him and inquired about his current situation. One notes too how, as a student Bangabandhu stood up for the rights of the fourth-class employees at the University of Dhaka. He was always determined to stand beside his people through thick and thin. While in prison, he would cook for others as well as himself at times and inquire always about the welfare of his fellow prisoners. He had a gift for connecting with people of every level, and he would interact with them not merely as a politician but as a fellow human being.



Dr Fakrul Alam

You once said that it is clear, based on the narration of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that the Pakistan which he envisioned had not been established and was thus not acceptable. Could you please elaborate? If we look at the Lahore Resolution and the question of autonomous units, we can easily see that Bangabandhu believed firmly in the kind of autonomy which would benefit east Bengalis when it came to any kind of geographical division. Clearly, the political dreams he had regarding a part of Assam and Meghalaya being part of East Pakistan were never recognised. After the formation of Pakistan, he realised that there was no development work going on in East Pakistan whatsoever; the state of Pakistan did not pay heed to the people of this region while the masses were being treated unjustly. Inspired by Suhrawardy, Bangabandhu always nurtured the spirit of democracy. He decided to focus on dealing with a crisis situation where issues had become clouded due to all the kinds of political machinations. In his book, Bangabandhu articulated his vision of Bangladesh. Do you reckon that our leaders are taking that into consideration? Yes, indeed. They are determined at this time and thus are making progress and overcoming all sorts of obstacles along the way. However, I recommend that everyone who want to comprehend the essence of our history, politics and the state and become leaders better read “*Ashamapto Attojibon*”, “*Karagarer*

Rojnamcha” and “*Amar Dekha Noya Chin*”, for these books will help them broaden their horizons about our Father of the Nation and his vision of Bangladesh and acquaint them with his ideas about taking the nation forward.

There are plenty of history books out there, but what makes the autobiographical books of Bangabandhu stand out from the rest? The definition of history has changed drastically over the decades. Oral narratives, write autobiographies and memoirs, and letters of ordinary people are also of account in writing history. And Bangabandhu’s books have a lot of historical value. I would like to point out here that Bangabandhu’s “*Ashamapto Attojibon*” was written while he was in prison, like the allegorical novel “*Pilgrim’s Progress*” by John Bunyan. Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru’s prison book are also of great value as works reflecting on historically critical moments. Nelson Mandela’s book written in prison is invaluable too in this respect. So is Bangabandhu’s prison books! It should be noted that Bangabandhu’s prison writings reflect continuously on the nature of the state, the political struggles going on, as well as reveal his evolving political values. They record his thoughts on the working-class, people he knew and met in prison, etc. vividly and memorably. What he captured through his writings about events and places of the period stand as a testament to his narrative gifts but also his deep historical concerns and feelings for his people. They also are invaluable historical records.

How would you evaluate the manner in which Bangabandhu has portrayed other politicians of his time in his autobiography? Bangabandhu played an immense role in shaping the history of Bangladesh. He met many politicians and interacted closely with many of them. He wrote about them as he saw them. He described about crises he faced with them as well as their expectations, their weaknesses and failures, as well as their success and achievements. I have to point out in particular the tremendous love and respect he had for Suhrawardy; he always admired him.

How did readers in India and Pakistan receive the translation of “The Unfinished Memoirs” since the book was published there as well as Bangladesh? Readers in these countries assessed the book from their own perspectives. No doubt, Indian readers saw it in the light of their own history, while Pakistani readers, did so from their perspective. But it is unfortunate that even though it was published under the banner

of Penguin India, the Indian edition did not reach too many readers. Recently, I learned that due to lack of space in their warehouse, the Penguin edition has been remaindered. It is probably not readily available; perhaps it did not appeal that much to Indian bibliophiles. In Pakistan, though, it apparently attracted much more attention.

“*Amar Dekha Noya Chin*” has been translated, but not yet published. During his travel to China, Bangabandhu wrote a narrative in which he vibrantly discussed the political and socio-economic conditions of Pakistan and China at that time, the practice of democracy in the communist state and so on. What else did he notice? I am writing an essay at this time on three of the books by Bangabandhu in which I will try to show how all the four pillars of our 1972 constitution—secularism, socialism, democracy and nationalism—have their root in the evolving thoughts of Bangabandhu as recorded in these books. All three of his books are valuable works and I highly recommend them to readers. Read them in Bangla and if you don’t know the language well in their translated versions. In “*Amar Dekha Noya Chin*”, Bangabandhu took note of the state system as well as the life of the people in what he perceived was a “new” China. He states clearly at one point that he does not believe in communism but their experiment in governance and the system of administration they had evolved clearly influences him. He compares what was Pakistan to what was going on in China, and was asking questions during his trip all the time, and looking for answers in the light of his dreams about Bangladesh. The book also deals clearly with the positive aspects of nationalism, which has to do with building up one’s country according to ideals. Overall, it is a great work.

What advice would you give to those who are interested in the process of translating? I believe that for a translation to be effective, close reading is of utmost necessity. One has to be fully submerged in the original work to better comprehend the narrative’s feel, the people described, and the essence of the work. Close reading also involves paying attention to every detail, including the syntax, tone and punctuation. Through my own in-depth attempts at reading, I tried to capture Bangabandhu’s voice and the manner in which he spoke. His character and vision, I should add, truly fascinates me.

The interview has been translated from Bangla by Minam Haq of *The Daily Star*.

In affectionate remembrance An open letter to Bangabandhu



ASHFAQUE SWAPAN

DEAR Bangabandhu: How time flies! It’s hard to believe a full 45 years have passed since you became the victim of one of the most barbaric political murders in living memory. The grisly event is vividly etched in my memory because it happened literally next door. You and I were neighbours, by a fluke of coincidence, I was a teenager on August 15 1975, living with my parents at Sobhanbagh officers’ colony, a stone’s throw from your residence. The sound of gunfire in the middle of the night filled us with a terrible foreboding. When the news finally reached us, we were spellbound with shock. It wasn’t just you. Your entire family, including your recently-wed, pregnant daughter-in-law, your little boy Russell—nobody was spared. The brutal killing spree did not end there. Later, it extended to the unconscionable slaying of four leading Awami League leaders in jail—Tajuddin Ahmed, Mansur Ali, Syed Nazrul Islam, and Quamruzzaman. The bloodletting is a measure of the cowardice of your assassins. So deeply did they fear the power of your reach that they felt impelled to kill as indiscriminately as they did. For an extended period thereafter, the nation lived through a period of an enforced, surreal amnesia. Public discussions of our independence movement were devoid of the very mention of your name. It’s like reading Homer’s “*Odyssey*” without Ulysses! Those days are mercifully gone. No one can bury the truth forever. Today, the entire nation is celebrating your birth centenary. It’s heartbreaking that you had to leave us so soon after independence. The country was still in ruins, staggering to get back on its feet. Nine months of slaughter, pillage and rape by the occupying Pakistanis left a devastated economy in its wake. Internationally, Bangladesh had to grapple with hostile geopolitical forces led by vindictive US Cold Warriors. Forty-five years after your death, we live in a country that you would not recognise. You will be happy to know that Bangladesh is no longer poooh-pooohed as an economic basket case. We’re not rich yet, by any means, but Bangladesh is beginning to impress the world. Bangladesh defies economic and political gravity. Since its 1971 war of independence

with Pakistan, the country has been known for its tragedies,” *The Nikkei Asian Review* wrote in a December 2018 article. “Yet, with remarkably little international attention, Bangladesh has also become one of the world’s economic success stories. Aided by a fast-growing manufacturing sector—its garment industry is second only to China’s—Bangladesh’s economy has averaged above 6 percent annual growth for nearly a decade. “From mass starvation in 1974, the country has achieved near self-sufficiency in food production for its 166 million-plus population. Per capita income has risen nearly threefold since 2009, reaching USD 1,750



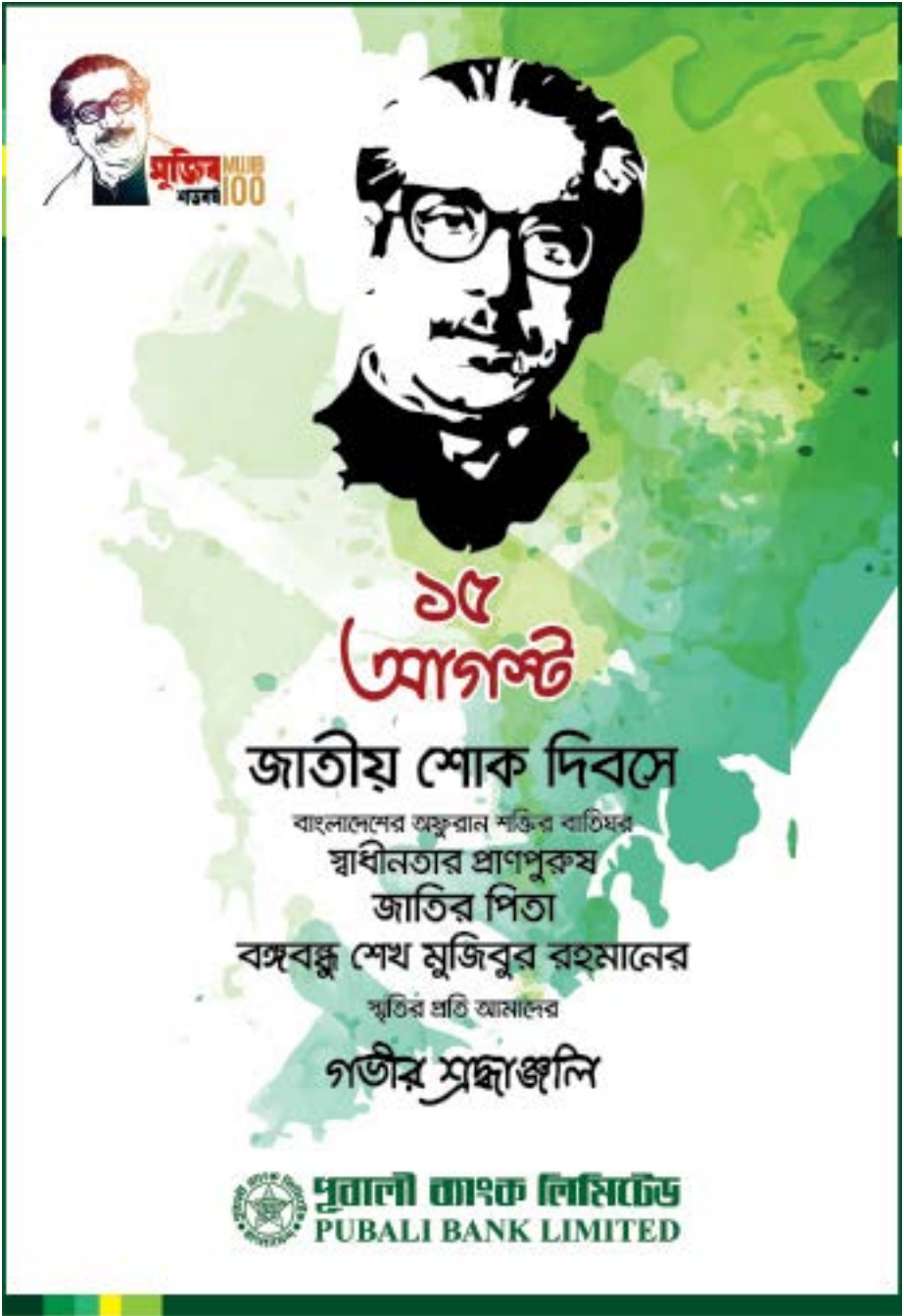
this year. And the number of people living in extreme poverty... has shrunk from about 19 percent of the population to less than 9 percent over the same period,” according to the World Bank. Yet as your daughter, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, remains laser-focused on bringing Bangladesh out of the least developed nations group, considerable challenges remain. It’s a toxic mix of intolerance, political gridlock and corruption that are beginning to cast a pall. What will surely pain you deeply is the complete loss of civility in political discourse. I remember the time when Maulana Bhashani, on the warpath against your government, was on a fast. That did not deter you from dropping by to visit the veteran leader. The Maulana, to his credit, received you graciously. Such niceties are unimaginable today. Political divisions have degenerated into a vicious, tribal, take-no-prisoners cage-fight.

(Sadly, this is a global phenomenon. In the US, where I live, or in the UK over Brexit, polarisation is every bit as bad.) Add to that the disturbing tales of white-collar financial shenanigans. Crooks loot banks and leave the country scot-free. This must displease you particularly, because I remember how you used to rail bitterly against grifters. (“*Chatar dol*” was your earthy Bangla sobriquet for them.) The nation has recently been roiled by the death of Major (Retd) Sinha Rashed Md Khan, who was shot dead by police. The incident betrays an appalling lack of accountability of the powers that be. The government, to its

undivided attention to ensuring better, accountable governance so that our economic success can endure. I feel a bit like Cordelia in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, but effusive protestations of love go only so far. Anything less than substantive reflection and effective action towards achieving your dream (and

ours)—your beloved *sonar bangla*—fails to do justice to your sacrifice. May you rest in eternal peace. Wherever you are, Bangabandhu, there will always be a place for you in our hearts.

Ashfaque Swapan is a contributing editor for *Silliconeer*, a digital daily for South Asians in the United States.





Alauddin Ali at work. (2) Gazi Mazharul Anwar, Alauddin Ali and Syed Abdul Hadi in conversation. (3) Alauddin Ali with Syed Abdul Hadi. (4) A young Alif Alauddin with her father, Alauddin Ali.

ALAUDDIN ALI

and his unforgettable melodies

SADYA AFREEN MALLICK

Initially published on June 15, 2007

It was one of those rare moments when I caught a glimpse of renowned composer Alauddin Ali, oblivious to the world around him, humming a catchy tune he probably just came up with. As I continued working on my songs in Sruti Studio, I occasionally saw him from the other side of the glass window.

Seeing the nonchalant way the piece of paper was left on the harmonium, my first intuition was that Ali was possibly creating yet another classic like *O amar Bangla ma tor, Shurjodoy-e tumi, Prothom Bangladesh amar shesh Bangladesh, Achhen amar mokhtar, Hai-re kopal mondo, Keu konodin amar-e tho, Tumi aarekhar ashiya, Ei duniya ekhon tho aar shei duniya nai, Harano diner moto*, among others. This certainly was not the time to intrude into his world, I reckoned.

It has been nearly two decades that we ran into each other once more. We talked about the days at the Shahbagh radio station, when he had not yet made his mark as a composer. Our conversation veered on his vast popularity as a music director.

Alauddin Ali's father, Jadob Ali, was a staff artiste at the radio. His uncle, Ustad Sadek Ali and cousins Dhir Ali Miah, Mansur Ali, Yunus Ali and Momotaz Uddin were all renowned music directors and composers of the Dacca Radio Station during the 60s.

When Ali was only a student of class three, his uncle, Ustad Sadek Ali had given him a Chinese violin as a gift. At that age he would be on the tabla, accompanying his



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

sister while she practised on the sitar; he even ventured on his father's esraj, composing tunes.

"In 1964, I won the 'All Pakistan Children's Award' for violin from President Ayub Khan. It was at that point that I dropped anchor in the world of music. I realised I was going to be here for the rest of my life," he had said.

By 1967-68, Ali, besides practicing violin, learnt the piano under music director Karim Shahabuddin. "I spent almost 18 to 20 hours practising every day, which gave me confidence to emerge as a violinist in playbacks," he had mentioned.



The maestro playing a piano.

Ali feels fortunate enough to have worked under eminent music composers like Khan Ataur Rahman, Altaf Mahmud and Robin Ghosh. In 1970, his urge to work in music direction intensified as he got the opportunity to assist late Altaf Mahmud. Prominent music directors Dhir Ali Miah, Mansur Ali and Anwar Parvez also guided him for several years.

Ali made his debut as a music composer through the film Shondhikkhon in 1974. In 1977 his compositions for the films *Golapi Ekhon Train-e* and *Fokir Mojnu Shah* earned him enormous popularity.

Ali was selected as the best music director and composer for three consecutive years (1978-80), which opened the door for him to work at HMV in India.

In 1978, one his best-selling albums featuring the diva Runa Laila was released. "The album broke all previous records and my songs attained greater popularity in West Bengal. In the last 20/25 years I'd recorded several songs in Dhaka, Kolkata, Mumbai, Lahore and Karachi. I consider myself fortunate that I've been able to have this kind of exposure," he had said.

His genius did not go unrecognised as

he received the greatest number of National Awards as a music director in our country.

In 1990, during the grand celebrations of 300th anniversary of Kolkata, Ali was accorded a reception at Salt Lake Stadium in the city, along with maestros including Salil Chowdhury and others. He was the music director for the SAAF Games Ceremony in 1993 at Dhaka Stadium, where over 8000 artistes sang to his tune. "Many prominent singers of the subcontinent have sung my compositions. A reputed French music company has included the background scores for the movie *ShurjoDighol Bari*, composed by me, in the curriculum of several music schools," Ali had said.

Speaking on upcoming talents, Ali saw no alternative to proper grammatical know-how. Despite access to modern electrical gadgets, it is next to impossible to venture into this field without a firm foothold in the basics of music, he had asserted.

"Substandard lyrics and compositions are an embarrassment. Audio piracy has fuelled this unwanted phenomenon, where people (I do not like to call them composers) simply copy or lift off popular (mostly Hindi) songs, in an attempt to become famous overnight," he had said. "Stern measures should be taken against them or we will soon lose our identity and like a tree with its roots severed, wither away into oblivion."

The author is a famed Nazrul Sangeet exponent and the Chief of Culture Initiatives, The Daily Star.

Zahid Gogon on his film 'Prem Puran'

PRİYANKA CHOWDHURY

Young filmmaker Zahid Gogon has a number of accolades to his credit, including the Tareque Masud Young Film Maker Award (2014). Through his remarkable talent, he has been steadily making his mark in the industry. Although his previous films *A Book Behind the Shoes* and *Ekti Mrityu = Tin Bigha Jami* (*One Death = Three Bighas of Land*) appeals to political ideas directly, his latest film, *Prem Puran* (*Myth of Love*), takes a different route. With the Honorable Jury Mention - Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival 2020 among twelve more international honours, the trailer of the film has attracted a large audience. In a conversation with *The Daily Star*, Zahid Gogon discusses his aspirations.

"I worked with the script of *Prem Puran* for one year. In 2016, I nearly completed half of the film. Sadly, the producers refused to make further investments, and the entire project was scraped off," recalls Zahid.

The story, however, was close to his heart. As a result, Zahid, along with his team, opted for crowd funding for the film. "You have to prove your worth before you step into a field. I tried to follow every aspect of filmmaking grammar with *Prem Puran*," asserts the director.

The film is inspired by *The Gift of The Magi* by O' Henry, *Rain coat* by Rituparno Ghosh, *Bhanga chora* by Zahir Raihan and some true stories of jute mill worker leader Shahid Tajul Islam, who demanded justice for workers in our country. For someone who has been politically driven



Zahid Gogon

PHOTO: COURTESY

from a young age, taking on the romance genre seems rather odd. "I get that a lot, especially from those who know me closely," smiles Zahid. "However, the name is a signifier - *Puran* - as we know, connects to myths and mythology. The story is romantic, but it also carries the essence of my beliefs."

Be it regular rehearsals, script readings, blockings or characterisations—Zahid was involved with every aspect of the

filmmaking process throughout *Prem Puran*. "I was the only one who knew the story and the characters precisely. "It was important for everyone in the team to be on the same page. I am grateful to the cast and crew for putting up with my demands," laughs Zahid. Manoj Kumar Pramanik, Samia Othoi, Arman Parvez Murad, Ashok Bepari and Pankaj Majumder play leading roles in the film, which was shot in Pabna and Dhaka.

Dhaka theke ashchen? Okhankar khobor ki ajkal? Manush bhalobashte shikheche?—these lines from the film have won hearts. "Dialogues are crucial. I did numerous drafts until I got everything right," says Zahid. "I am grateful to Zahidur Rahim Anjan for his guidance and supervision."

Zahid also had plans to enter the festival circuit. "Our advisor Mohammad Shazzad Hossain watched the first show and immediately announced some funds, with which we applied to some festivals. I cannot express my gratitude to him words," he says. The film will be available on OTT platforms soon.

Prem Puran won the Mumbai Shorts International Film Festival 2019 and Chittagong Short Film Festival 2020 for best actress for Samia Othoi, Finalist in International Moving Film Festival 2019, Semifinalist in Jaipur Film World 2020 and Official Selection from Goa Short Film Festival-19, Lift-Off Global Networks - 19, Kaaryat International Film Festival of India 2019, Chittagong Short Film Festival 2020 and Kuala Lumpur International Film Festival 2020.



A still from 'Prem Puran'.



PHOTO: STAR

SHAH ALAM SHAZI

Rumana Rashid Ishita is one of the most beloved faces in our television industry. Her powerful acting and charisma has immersed the audiences for decades. For the last few years, the actor has been very selective of her work, and often comes back into the limelight with intriguing performances. This Eid, she appeared in a lead role in the telefilm *Eti Ma*, directed by Ashfaq Nipun. It has been one of the most popular works this Eid, and was widely appreciated by audiences across the country. In a candid chat with *The Daily Star*, Ishita talks about her role in this project.

How was your experience working in 'Eti Ma'?
It has been wonderful. This was my first project with director Ashfaq Nipun, who has been producing some of the best works for television in the last few years. I finally had the opportunity to work with him, and it has been a great experience overall. We finished the shoot before the lockdown was issued.

The telefilm tells the audience a powerful story, which is scarce in today's television industry. Do you think this will create a positive impact overall?
Eti Ma was not a borrowed story --this is the story of our lives. The primary aspect of a telefilm is its script. A powerful script comes to life with the actors' performances. Our television industry often falls short in the storytelling aspect. I believe more projects like this will positively affect the industry.

How did you feel after watching it on the screen?
Whenever I work on a project, I always make time to watch it. Usually, the mistakes are noticeable while watching it on screen, but this time, the story captivated me completely. I received praises from friends and

acquaintances after it aired. The audience also had many expectations from this telefilm, and it could deliver.

How was it like working with actor Afran Nisho?
I have worked with Nisho before. He is an excellent actor, who is adept at portraying various characters - versatility is very important for any artist.

How are you spending time during this pandemic?
At home, mostly. My kids are participating in their online classes and I have to help them out. I am usually busy with them.



PHOTO: JISAN MIRZA

Afran Nisho, Rumana Rashid Ishita and Ashfaq Nipun on the sets of 'Eti Ma.'

Division in Arabs as West hails deal

AFP, Jerusalem

World leaders voiced hope yesterday that a historic deal between the UAE and Israel could kickstart moribund Middle East peace talks, even as the Palestinians and their supporters denounced the move to normalise ties as a betrayal of their cause.

Announced by US President Donald Trump on Thursday, it was only the third such accord Israel has struck with an Arab country, and raised the prospect of similar deals with other pro-Western Arab Gulf states.

The deal sees Israel pledge to suspend its planned annexation of Palestinian lands, a concession welcomed by European and some pro-Western Arab governments as a boost for hopes of peace.

But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stressed Israel was halting, not abandoning its plans to one day annex the Jordan Valley and Jewish settlements across the occupied West Bank.

News of the agreement was broken by US President Donald Trump, in a tweet hailing a “HUGE breakthrough”.

He said leaders from the two countries would sign the deal at the White House in around three weeks, evoking memories of previous US-mediated Middle East accords.

The Palestinian leadership rejected the deal as a “betrayal” of their cause, saying they would withdraw their ambassador from the

NORMALISATION OF ISRAEL-UAE TIES

Palestinians reject deal, call Arab League meeting

Saudi Arabia mute as Egypt, Bahrain, Oman backs deal

Iran, Turkey call deal ‘betrayal’

UN chief hopes deal can help two-state solution; China backs regional peace



Palestinians protest against the United Arab Emirates’ deal with Israel to normalise relations, in Nablus, West Bank, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Emirates.

In Ramallah in the West Bank, office worker Jihad Hussein, said: “The Palestinian people have been stabbed in the back by the Emirates leadership.”

“But neither this agreement nor anything else will undermine our will to fight for the freedom and independence,” he added.

Establishing diplomatic ties between Israel and Washington’s Middle East allies, including the oil-rich Gulf monarchies, has been central to Trump’s regional strategy to contain Iran, also an arch-foe of Israel.

Tehran yesterday condemned the deal

as an act of “strategic stupidity” that would only strengthen the Iranian-backed “axis of resistance”.

Among other US allies in the Gulf, both Bahrain and Oman put out statements backing the normalisation deal.

The European Union said normalisation would benefit both Israel and the UAE, but foreign policy spokeswoman Nabila Massrali stressed the bloc’s commitment to a two-state solution.

“We are, of course, ready to work on the resumption of the negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians,” she said.

Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a longtime critic of Israel and frequently at odds with western powers, threatened to suspend diplomatic relations with the UAE or withdraw Ankara’s ambassador.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said normalisation of ties between the two countries was “an important contribution to peace in the region”.

There was no immediate word from regional heavyweight and Emirati ally Saudi Arabia.

The controversial Trump plan, unveiled in January, had offered a path for Israel to annex the Jordan Valley and Jewish settlements across the West Bank, communities considered illegal under international law.

The Palestinians had rejected the plan outright as biased and untenable, as did Israel’s Arab neighbours, and it sparked fears of further escalation in a tense region.

UN chief Antonio Guterres said he hoped Israel’s suspension of annexations under the plan could help realise a two-state solution with the Palestinians.

Annexation would “effectively close the door” on negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian leaders and “destroy the prospect” of a viable Palestinian state, he said.

The deal marks a major foreign policy achievement for Trump as he heads into a difficult campaign for re-election in November.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Afghan govt releases 80 of final 400 Taliban prisoners

The Afghan government has begun releasing the last Taliban prisoners from a final batch of 400 who the militants want freed before they agree to start peace negotiations, a security agency spokesman said yesterday. The government agreed on Sunday to release the 400 “hard-core” prisoners after consulting a grand assembly of elders and other community leaders, known as a Loya Jirga. He did not say when the remaining 320 would be set free. Disagreement over the release of the prisoners, who include some of those accused in connection with some of Afghanistan’s bloodiest attacks, has delayed negotiations for months as the United States withdraws troops under a deal signed with the Taliban in February.

Militants kill 2 cops in Kashmir ahead of Independence Day

Militants attacked a police team in Kashmir yesterday, killing two officers and wounding one despite tight security in the disputed Muslim-majority region ahead of India’s Independence Day. A group of militants opened fire on the police team that was on duty in the Nowgam area of Srinagar city, the chief of police in Kashmir, Vijay Kumar, told Reuters. The attack comes days after the first anniversary of the revocation of Kashmir’s constitutional autonomy, a reform the Indian government said would promote the region’s development by drawing it closer to the rest of the country. But many people in Kashmir saw the loss of special autonomy as another step in the erosion of the rights of Muslims by the Hindu-nationalist government. The government rejects that. India celebrates Independence Day today.

Covid-19 vaccine will be free for Americans: officials

If a Covid-19 vaccine is proven effective, the US will ensure it’s distributed for free to all Americans, officials said Thursday, underscoring there will be no shortcuts on safety. “We are not at all reducing the regulatory rigor with which we will evaluate and hopefully approve vaccines,” Paul Mango, a senior health department official, told reporters. Washington has invested more than \$10 billion in six vaccine projects and signed contracts guaranteeing the delivery of hundreds of millions of doses should they be approved following clinical trials. Russia this week approved a vaccine even before the start of the last phase of clinical trials, in which the drug is injected into tens of thousands of volunteers to verify its effectiveness and safety. Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), compared Russia’s vaccinet to a game of “Russian roulette.”

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Malaysia to lift limit on hiring of foreign labour

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia has decided to lift an earlier limit on the hiring of foreign workers meant to protect jobs for locals in most sectors, the Human Resources Ministry said late on Thursday.

Last month, the ministry said the hiring of foreign labour would be limited to the construction, agriculture and plantation sectors, a move to increase employment opportunities for locals affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

The ministry said more than 67,000 local workers and over 4,700 foreign workers had lost their jobs as of July.

“However, there were some employers who claim to still need a number of foreign workers and urged the government to withdraw the freeze on recruitment of new foreign workers,” Minister Saravanan Murugan said in the statement.

Saravanan urged employers to prioritise filling job vacancies with local workers before considering re-employing foreign workers who are still in Malaysia with a valid work permit. The foreign workers, if rehired, must work in the same sectors they were previously employed in.

Malaysia hosts about 2.1 million documented foreign workers, according to government estimates.

EU readies Belarus sanctions

Set to confront Turkey amid tensions in the eastern Mediterranean

AFP, Brussels

The European Union yesterday began the process of imposing sanctions on Belarus and express its support for Greece and Cyprus in their stand-off with Turkey.

Foreign ministers from the 27 member states joined a hastily-arranged video conference hosted by Brussels’ diplomatic chief Josep Borrell, European officials told AFP.

Ahead of the meeting, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called for sanctions against those who “violated democratic values... and abused human rights” in Belarus.

In Berlin, German government spokesman Steffen Seibert said Chancellor Angela Merkel had been shocked by the detention and abuse of peaceful protesters.



The EU has declared the situation in Belarus, where President Alexander Lukashenko has launched a crackdown on protests after his disputed re-election, a “matter of grave concern”.

Poland, Latvia and Lithuania say they are ready to act as mediators to try to resolve the post-election crisis, after a poll that Brussels has said was “neither free nor fair”.

Belarus’ Foreign Minister Vladimir

Makei said in a call with his Swiss counterpart Ignazio Cassis that Minsk is ready “for a constructive and objective dialogue with foreign partners”.

The soaring tensions in the eastern Mediterranean will also be high on the agenda, after France dispatched naval vessels and jet fighters to back up Greece and Cyprus.

Longstanding tension between Turkey and EU member state Greece escalated when Ankara resumed energy exploration in the region off the Greek island of Kastellorizo on Monday.

Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan spoke to German Chancellor Angela Merkel and EU chief Charles Michel on Thursday and hit out at France’s President Emmanuel Macron, who sent warships, accusing him of “putting on a show”.



Flames from the Ranch Fire burn the hills in Azusa, California, yesterday, 40 kms east of Los Angeles. Mandatory evacuations were in place Thursday night after a wildfire erupted in Azusa and rapidly consumed 3,000 acres in the Angeles National Forest, officials said. The blaze was 0% contained Thursday night, fire officials said.

PHOTO: AFP

Landslides in Nepal kill 16; many missing

REUTERS, Kathmandu

Landslides triggered by heavy rain swept away dozens of houses and killed at least 16 people in mountainous villages of Nepal yesterday and many people were missing, a home ministry official said.

Nepal suffers flash floods and landslides during the June-September rainy season, resulting in loss of life and property every year.

A massive landslide swept away dozens of houses, killing at least 10 people, early yesterday in Sindhupalchowk, near the capital Kathmandu, ministry official Murari Wasti said.

He said 28 people were missing.

Six people, aged between 10 and 19, were killed in remote Kalikot in far west Nepal - four of them from the same family.

Floods and landslides have so far killed 215 people this year in Nepal, while 85 are missing, according to official data.

Diby Raj Poudel, of the Nepal Red Cross Society, said 40,000 people had been housed in temporary huts or were staying with relatives or friends.

EU agrees first vaccine deal with AstraZeneca

Move could weaken WHO-led vaccine initiative

REUTERS, Brussels

The European Union has agreed to buy at least 300 million doses of AstraZeneca’s potential Covid-19 vaccine in its first such advance purchase deal, which could weaken plans led by the World Health Organisation for a global approach.

The European Commission, which is negotiating on behalf of all 27 EU member states, said the deal included an option to purchase 100 million additional doses from the British drugmaker should its vaccine prove safe and effective.

The EU’s bilateral deal mirrors moves by the United States and other wealthy states, some of which are critical of the WHO’s initiative, and further reduces the potentially available stock in the race to secure effective Covid-19 vaccines.

The EU agreement follows an initial deal with AstraZeneca reached in June by Europe’s Inclusive Vaccines Alliance (IVA), a group formed by France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands to secure vaccine doses for all member states.

The Commission did not disclose the terms of the new deal and declined to say whether it had replaced the IVA’s.

“This new agreement will give all EU member states the option to access the vaccine in an equitable manner at no profit during the pandemic,” AstraZeneca said in a statement.

The EU executive said its deals are aimed at financing part of the upfront costs to develop vaccines. The funding would be partial down-payments to secure the shots, but actual purchases would be decided at a later stage by each EU state.

The EU said over the past two weeks

it was in advanced talks with Johnson & Johnson and Sanofi for their vaccines under development.

It is also in talks with Pfizer, Moderna and CureVac to buy upfront their potential Covid-19 vaccines, EU officials told Reuters in July.

The EU move could make more difficult efforts led by the WHO and GAVI, a global alliance for vaccines, to buy shots on behalf of rich and developing countries with a separate scheme.



The Commission has urged EU states to shun the WHO-led initiative because it sees it as too expensive and slow, EU officials told Reuters in July.

Now the Commission is openly saying that vaccines bought from AstraZeneca, and from other vaccine makers, could be donated to poorer states, effectively taking on the very task that the WHO is pursuing with the so-called ACT-Accelerator Hub.

Brussels has publicly said that its purchasing scheme is complementary to the WHO’s, but in private told EU states that there may be legal issues if they joined the WHO programme.

‘She doesn’t qualify’

Trump promotes false birther theory about Kamala Harris

AFP, Washington

President Donald Trump said Thursday he had heard Democratic vice-presidential running mate Kamala Harris was not eligible to serve, stoking a false claim echoing the baseless “birther” theory he promoted about Barack Obama.

At a White House news conference, Trump was asked about “claims circulating on social media” that Harris was not eligible and whether he could say she met the legal requirements for vice president.

“I heard it today that she doesn’t meet the requirements. And, by the way, the lawyer that wrote that piece is a very highly qualified, very talented lawyer. I have no idea if that’s right,” Trump said. “I would have assumed the Democrats would have checked that



out before she gets chosen to run for vice president,” he said.

“But that’s a very serious -- you’re saying that -- they’re saying that she doesn’t qualify because she wasn’t born in this country.”

In his Newsweek op-ed, Chapman University law professor John Eastman claimed some “commentators” said Harris was ineligible as she was not a “natural born citizen” as her parents were not naturalized US citizens at the

time of her birth.

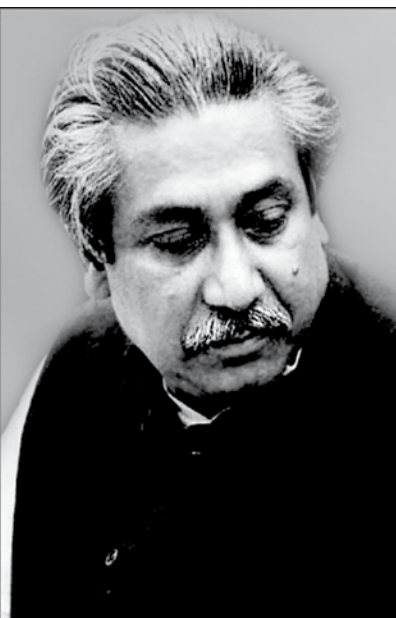
Harris was born in California in 1964 to a father from Jamaica and a mother from India. According to the Constitution, any natural born US citizen over the age of 35 is eligible to be president or vice president.

Constitutional law expert Erwin Chemerinsky told CBS News the claim about Harris “is a truly silly argument.”

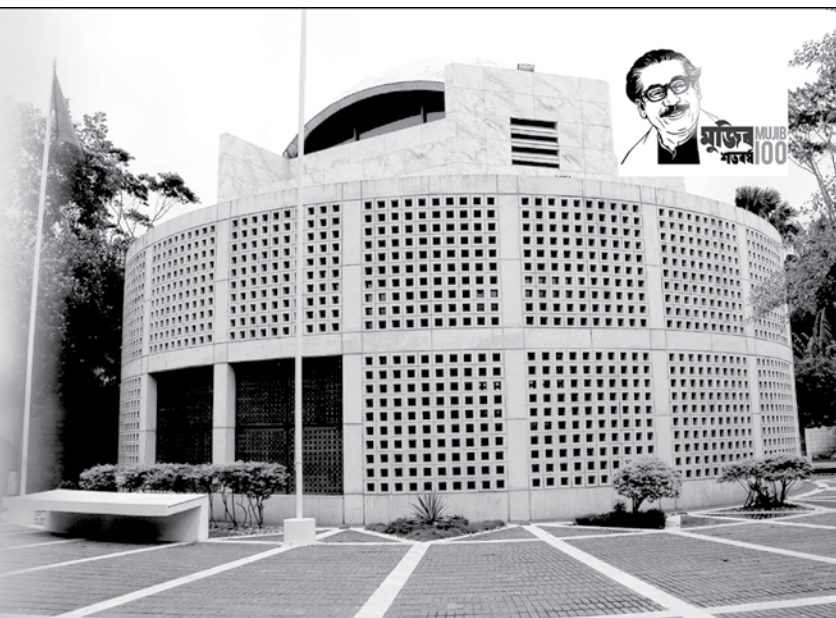
“Under section 1 of the 14th Amendment, anyone born in the United States is a United States citizen. The Supreme Court has held this since the 1890s,” the dean of UC Berkeley School of Law said in an email to CBS.

“Some conservatives, such as John Eastman, think that is wrong and being born in the country is not enough,” he said. “(They’re) clearly wrong under the language of the 14th Amendment and under Supreme Court precedent.”





15 August The National Mourning Day



Special Supplement

Art & Design : Department of Films & Publications (DFP) ♦ Assistance : Press Information Department (PID), Ministry of Information



**PRESIDENT
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH**

Message

Today is the National Mourning Day and the 45th martyrdom anniversary of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

August 15, 1975 is regarded as a scandalous chapter in the history of the Bangali nation. On this fateful night, the undisputed leader and Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was brutally assassinated at his Dhamondi residence by a group of killers with the direct and indirect connivance of anti-liberation forces. His wife Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, sons namely Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and Sheikh Russel, and some near and dear ones were also killed along with Bangabandhu. Such a barbarous incident was rare not only in the history of Bangladesh but also in the history of the world. With heavy heart, I pay my deep homage to them and pray to the Almighty Allah for the eternal peace of the departed souls on this Mourning Day.

Bangabandhu was a visionary leader and the architect of independence. He led the nation at every struggle and democratic movements including the 'All-party State Language Action Committee' formed to press home the right to mother-tongue in 1948, historic Language Movement in 1952, Juktafront Election in 1954, movement against Martial Law in 1958, Six-Point Movement in 1966, Mass Uprising in 1969 and the General Elections in 1970 which all were directed towards realizing Bangal's emancipation and their rights. For this, he had to embrace jail for several times.

Bangabandhu was uncompromising on the question of the rights of our people. He, even on the gallows, upheld the interest of Bengal and Bangali. After a long ups and downs, this great leader, ignoring the blood-shot eyes of the then Pakistani rulers, delivered historic address on 07 March in 1971 before a mammoth gathering at the then Race Course Maidan, and thunderously uttered, "The struggle this time is a struggle for emancipation, the struggle this time is a struggle for independence" which was, in fact, basically call for our independence. In line with this historic speech, he finally declared country's independence on March 26, 1971 and subsequently we achieved victory through a nine-month-long armed war of liberation under his leadership. Bangabandhu and Bangladesh thus emerged as a unique entity to the people of Bangladesh. Though the assassins killed Father of the Nation, they could not wipe out the principle and ideal of this great man. As long as Bangladesh exists, the name and fame of Father of the Nation will remain ever shining in the mind of millions of Bangalis of our country.

Bangabandhu, throughout his life, struggled for independence along with attaining people's economic emancipation. His dream was to build "Sonar Bangla" (Golden Bangla) to be freed from hunger and poverty. Therefore, our responsibility would be to make our country a happy and prosperous one by enriching ourselves with knowledge and completing the unfinished task of Bangabandhu. Only then we will be able to pay our due respect to the immortal soul of this great leader.

The birth centenary of Bangabandhu is being observed this year and the Golden Jubilee celebration of our independence will be celebrated in 2021. These two national events are a unique milestone in the history of the Bangali nation. I believe, by celebrating these two events with solemnity and dignity, our new generation will be able to know about Bangabandhu and the factual history of our independence. And thus they, being imbued with patriotism, will be able to devote themselves for the development of the country and the nation.

The whole world, including Bangladesh, is now fighting against COVID-19 pandemic. The entire globe has become standstill at present due to the adverse impact of coronavirus. The economy, including livelihood, employment, trade and commerce, transcontinental communication etc. are at a stake. The government of Bangladesh has taken all-out measures to address the corona situation. People of the country should extend the hand of cooperation with government efforts to face the challenges. Maintaining guidelines of hygiene in every aspect of life as well as keeping ourselves cautious, we have to be dealt with the pandemic by holding the principle of "Carefulness, not fear".

The Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has set Vision 2021, Vision 2041 and Delta Plan 2100 to transform Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed-prosperous one by 2041. I call upon all, irrespective of party affiliation and opinion, to materialize these programmes unitedly.

On the National Mourning Day, let us translate our grief into strength, and devote ourselves to build "Sonar Bangla" as dreamt of by Father of the Nation.

Joi Bangla.

Khoda Hafez, May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Md. Abdul Hamid

Bangali's Dream of Freedom and Immortal Bangabandhu

Anupam Sen

The most glorious days in the thousand year-old annals of Bengali-speaking people have been 26 March, 16 December and 21 February. These three days will keep the Bangalis forever illumined with ultimate glory. And 15 August will be remembered as the ineffaceable day of disgrace in the history of the Bangali nation. On this day, some treasonous, tyrannical, cruel men, who were worse than beasts, not only killed the Father of the Nation for covering up the shame of their political defeat, their conscience did not quiver as they did not even hesitate to kill a small child and the newly-wed brides.

The world knows, the Bangalis know, the great hero behind the creation of the above-mentioned dates was the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. It was Bangabandhu who had founded a homeland for the Bangalis. It was he who declared for the first time in the country's constitution that the people were the owners of that state. That is to say, the people were the sources of all power, and their vernacular language Bangla was the state language. It was Bangabandhu who had given shape to the first nation-state in the history of the Bangalis. Bangabandhu was also the first to deliver the first constitution for the Bangalis on 4 November 1972. The main language of this constitution is also Bangla. Prior to 26 March and 16 December 1971, the Bangalis had to undergo two colonial rules. The first one was the 190 year-long rule under the British, and the second one was the 23 year-long rule under the civil-military bureaucracy of the Punjabis and Urdu-speakers. These two colonial rules had reduced the most affluent nation in the world (according to the descriptions of travellers like Bernier, Tavernier, etc.) to among the poorest in the globe.

Bangabandhu had spent 13 years of the 23 year-long Pakistani colonial rule behind bars for freeing the Bangalis from subjugation and poverty, and bestowing them with an affluent



existence or life, a life bereft of hunger and rich in education and culture. This sincere wish and craving has been depicted in pages after pages of his 'Unfinished Memoirs'. He had written in 1953: 'On the one hand, a group of so-called central leaders of the west and top government employees were secretly working on how to develop West Pakistan swiftly by seizing the assets of East Bengal.... Then the Awami League proved through calculations that East Bengal was being exploited, they became desperate and started to mete out severe punishments to the Awami League and its leaders' (Unfinished Memoirs).

He further wrote: 'On the other hand, they were helping to build up industries and factories in West Pakistan through programs backed by foreign currencies earned from East Bengal. As a result, a band of industrialists were groomed, who could extract as much unrestrained profit as they liked from the masses. They became millionaires overnight. Many became industrialists by earning money through selling licences in the name of import-export business while sitting in Karachi. That was a misdeed of the Muslim League government.... The so-called leaders of the Bangalis failed to please Golam Mohammad and Chowdhury Mohammad Ali despite handing over to their Punjabi brethren the central capital, military headquarters, all the top government positions, trade and commerce. In the constituent assembly, the Bangalis were the majority despite giving away six seats to their West Pakistani brothers. They could have upheld the interests of the people of East Bengal. But without doing that, they threw down everything to their feet for clinging on to power. In spite of that, they could not hold on to their seats of authority' (Unfinished Memoirs).

Bangabandhu was arrested along with seventy of his associates while observing a strike on 11 March 1948 after calling the first strike in the history of East Bengal as the leader of 'East

(Continued to the next page)



**PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH**

Message



The 15 August is the National Mourning Day. On this day in 1975, the Greatest Bangali of all time, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman along with most of his family members was brutally assassinated.

Eighteen members of the Father of the Nation's family including Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, three sons-Captain Sheikh Kamal, Lieutenant Sheikh Jamal and 10-year old Sheikh Russel, two daughters-in-law Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal, brother Sheikh Abu Naser, peasant leader Abdur Rab Seraniat, youth leader Sheikh Fazlul Haq Moni and his pregnant wife Arzu Moni, Baby Seraniat, Sukanta Babu, Arif and Abdul Nayeem Khan Rintu, among others, were also killed by the heinous killers on that fateful night. Bangabandhu's Military Secretary Brigadier General Jamil was also murdered. Several members of a family died in the capital's Mohammadpur area by artillery shells fired by the killers on the same day.

On this National Mourning Day, I respectfully remember all the martyrs of the 15 August and pray to the Almighty Allah for the salvation of their departed souls.

Under the visionary and strong leadership of the Father of the Nation, the Bangalee Nation broke the shackles of subordination and snatched away our great Independence. The anti-liberation clique killed Bangabandhu at a time when he had engaged in the struggle to building a Golden Bangladesh along with the whole nation by reconstructing the war-ravaged country. Through the killing of Bangabandhu, the defeated forces of the Liberation War made abortive attempts to ruin the tradition, culture and advancement of the Bangali Nation. The aim of the killers was to break the state structure of secular democratic Bangladesh and foil our hard-earned Independence. The anti liberation forces involved in the carnage initiated the politics of killing, coup and conspiracy in the country right after the 15 August 1975. They also impeded the trial of Bangabandhu murder by promulgating Indemnity Ordinance.

Ziaur Rahman illegally took over the state power and promulgated Martial Law by desecrating the democracy and suspending the Constitution. He rewarded the killers of the Father of the Nation and gave them jobs at the Bangladesh missions abroad. He gave the anti-liberation war criminals nationality, made them partners in the state power and rehabilitated them politically and socially. The subsequent governments of BNP-Jamaat alliance followed the same path.

Winning the General Elections on 12 June 1996, Bangladesh Awami League assumed state power after 21 years. A new horizon of socio-economic development in the country was started in this 5-year (1996-2001) overcoming the obstacles of the past. We initiated the trial of the Father of the Nation murder case. But after coming to power in 2001, BNP-Jamaat alliance government stopped this trial.

The countrymen again voted Awami League to power in the 9th Parliamentary Elections on 29 December 2008. Overcoming the stalemate left by the previous BNP-Jamaat government, and global economic recession, we have put the country on firm economic footing. During the past eleven and a half years, we have achieved desired advancement in every sector. Bangladesh is now a 'role model' of socio-economic development in the world. Bangladesh has attained the status of a developing nation.

Amidst present deadly Corona virus pandemic, our government has relentlessly been working to turn Bangladesh into a middle-income country by 2021 and a developed one by 2041.

We have already executed the verdict of the Bangabandhu murder case. The trial of the killers of Four National Leaders has been completed. The verdicts of the cases against war criminals of 1971 are being executed. Our government has been following 'zero tolerance' policy to uproot militancy terrorism. The path of grabbing state power unconstitutionally has been stopped through the 15th amendment to the Constitution.

Unitedly, we have to remain prepared to resist any evil-attempt by the anti-liberation communal group, and anti-development and anti-democracy forces. The killers were able to assassinate Bangabandhu but they could not kill his dreams and ideals. Let the glory and ideals of the Father of the Nation's sacrifice be reflected through our actions in the Mujib Year.

Let's turn the grief of the loss of Bangabandhu into strength and build a non-communal, hunger-poverty free prosperous Golden Bangladesh as dreamt by the Father of the Nation. This should be our solemn pledge on this National Mourning Day.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

Sheikh Hasina

Where the Head is Held High

A A M S Arefin Siddique

Today is the 15th of August. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated along with his family 45 years ago at dawn of 15 August 1975. We remember the Father of the Nation with deep reverence on the occasion of this National Mourning Day and pray for the salvation of his departed soul. We also extend our deepest respect to all those including the family-members of Bangabandhu, who were martyred on that accursed day.

We are observing the National Mourning Day this year amid a calamitous time owing to the deadly outbreak of a disease spread by novel coronavirus. Just as we are observing the birth centenary of Mujib by shelving all formalities, similarly we shall recall the Father of the Nation gently after adhering to all health-related regulations. Because of his farsighted leadership, we are today proud citizens of an independent country.

The lines of the poem 'Where the Mind is without Fear' composed by the Nobel Laureate Poet Rabindranath Tagore about 120 years ago appeared to be a reflection of Bangabandhu's life. He could embrace death with fearless and silent sophistication even during the accursed dawn of 15 August 1975; while staying at his own residence on Dhamondi's road-32 during the terrifying night of 25 March 1971, he could declare the independence of Bangladesh resolutely without any fear in the first hours of 26 March, "This may be my last message,



Bangabandhu at a Press Conference in London after being released from jail : 8 January 1972

Bangladesh is independent from today"; he could proclaim in a thunderous voice at Dhaka's the then Racecourse Maidan (now Suhrawardy Udyan) in the afternoon of 7 March 1971, while helicopters of the Pakistani forces hovered above, "The struggle this time is a struggle for our freedom, the struggle this time is for our independence"; he could start a hunger strike while in jail on 16 February 1952 with the demand for making Bangla the principal state language of Pakistan.

Therefore, no Bangalis need to repeat what Rabindranath had hinted by saying "The great man is coming", as that was fully synonymous with the brief but colourful life and mesmerising personality of Bangabandhu, which was full of struggles, suspense, and empathy for the liberation of humans. Bangabandhu is today recognized globally as the greatest Bangali of a thousand years due to his founding of an independent nation-state for the Bangalis and endowing them with a cohesive national identity.

The renowned British journalist David Frost had taken a long interview of Bangabandhu after coming to Dhaka in January 1972. At one stage, he asked the question, "[In the first hours of 26 March 1971] As you left your home at 32, Dhamondi, did you think you would ever see it again?" In reply, Bangabandhu had said, "I didn't, I thought this was the last, but if I die as a leader with my head up, at least they will not be ashamed; but if I surrender to them, my nation, the people of my country could not show their face to the world. It is better that I die keeping the prestige of my people".

In reply to another question of David Frost, Bangabandhu had said, "A man who is ready to die, nobody can kill him. You can kill a man physically, but can you kill a man's soul? You can't. It's my faith".

Bangabandhu was similarly calm, tranquil, bereft of worries and fear before the killers of 15 August 1975. He embraced death by holding his head high. Bangabandhu's memoirs written in jail have now been published. His books 'Unfinished Memoirs', 'Prison Diaries' and 'The New China as I Saw' should be essential reads for the children of our new generation. I discern many unknown facts of history from these valuable books. We are forever grateful for the tireless effort and inspiration extended by Bangabandhu's wife Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib for her supportive role in the writing of these books as well as her important contributions toward our national life. Begum Mujib has indebted the whole nation forever through her timely and sagacious advices to Mujib during various critical junctures of the nation.

The book 'Unfinished Memoirs' was written by Bangabandhu while in jail. Its preface was written by his daughter Sheikh Hasina on the 7th day of the grief-stricken month of August 2007, while sitting in the dark room of a sub-jail set up in Dhaka. His daughter Sheikh Hasina has been providing leadership to this country's 160 million people by upholding the ideals of his father. In the preface to the book 'Unfinished Memoirs', Sheikh Hasina has written, "My father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's most precious times were spent as a prisoner. Those intolerable and secluded prison-days came up when he waged movements for realizing the rights of the masses. But he never compromised. Neither did he fear the gallows. The people were the inner driving-force of his life. The joys and sorrows of the masses made him cry. His lone vow in life was to bring smiles to the sad faces of Bangla's inhabitants by building a Golden Bangla. For that reason, he had continued his lifelong struggles as an idealistic and self-sacrificing leader in order to realize people's rights by shunning all happiness, comforts and luxuries in his own life, ultimately bestowing the Bangali nation with independence".

Bangabandhu was always in favour of justice, truth and the fundamental rights of the common people throughout his life. What can be more powerful than the strengths of truth and justice?

(Continued to the next page)

Special Supplement

The National Mourning Day Saturday 15 August 2020

Bangali’s Dream of... (Continued from previous page)

Pakistan Language Action Council'. At that time, he was in jail for five days. His prison-life had started with these five days of captivity in the first half of 1948 for 'realizing the rights of the Bangalis'. It became three year-long by 1953. He had to repeatedly go to jail during these years. As he had never compromised or displayed softness on the question of rights of the Bangalis, therefore the ruling class of Pakistan and the civil-military bureaucracy had always considered him as a 'terror against the rulers' of Pakistan. They viewed that keeping him in jail was crucial for upholding their class-interests. As Bangabandhu had made the interests of the masses his principal goal in political life, therefore he was even termed as a communist. After watching the state dedicatedly working for the welfare of the people while visiting China in 1953, he had written: 'I myself am not a communist. But I believe in socialism and do not have faith in capitalist economy. I consider that to be a tool of exploitation. As long as this economy of creating capitalists remains in the world, exploitation of the masses cannot be halted' (Unfinished Memoirs).

Although a believer in socialism, he wanted to realize the rights of the people through the masses themselves. The type of socialism he wanted resembled the Scandinavian countries, especially in the shape of socialism established in Sweden over three decades under the leadership of Olaf Palme. While presenting the constitution in the constituent assembly of the newly independent Bangladesh on 4 November 1972, a framework of socialism took shape for the welfare of the mass people. He had described that socialism, and that was incorporated in the constitution.

When the state of Pakistan was created in 1947, 56 percent people of that state were Bangalis. The West Pakistanis accounted for the remaining 44 percent, including the Punjabis, Sindhis, Baluchis and Pashtuns. Despite the Bangalis being the majority population in Pakistan, the capital of Pakistan was at first Karachi, later Rawalpindi, and lastly Islamabad. As a result, the centre of central rule remained in West Pakistan, and the rulers were West Pakistanis. In spite of having the majority population, East Pakistan or Bangladesh was merely a province (like Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan, and the Frontier Province) and its capital Dhaka was a provincial capital; although it deserved the honour of becoming the central capital. About 50-60 percent



of Pakistan's central budget was spent for the military, and around 90 percent of this expenditure was incurred in West Pakistan. About 90 percent of the military officers of Pakistan including Generals, Lieutenant Generals, Major Generals, Brigadier Generals, Colonels, Lieutenant Colonels, Majors, Captains etc. were from West Pakistan, mostly Punjabis. The number of Bangali officers was negligible. There was only one Brigadier, one Colonel, a handful of Majors and Captains from East Pakistan. About 75-85 percent of secretaries, additional secretaries, joint secretaries, deputy secretaries in the civil bureaucracy were from West Pakistan. The handful of Bangali secretaries who were sent to East Pakistan or Bangladesh had no power.

During the 23 year-long colonial rule of Pakistan, its main foreign exchange earning sector was (like today's readymade garments industry) jute and jute goods. But this foreign currency earned by the jute sector was utilised for the industrialisation, agricultural development and services sector growth of West Pakistan. During the same period, all sectors of East Pakistan or Bangladesh including agriculture, industries and services sectors were hugely neglected. Immediately after the creation of Pakistan, the GDPs of East and West Pakistan in 1949-50 were Rupees 1237.4 crore and Rupees 1209.1 crore respectively. That is to say, the GDP of East Pakistan or Bangladesh was slightly more than that of West Pakistan. But due to the two decade-long exploitation by West Pakistan, the GDPs of East and West Pakistan stood at Rupees 2271.3 crore and Rupees 3156.3 crores respectively in 1969-70. It can be understood from the foregoing what ruthless exploitations East Pakistan endured over a period of two decades.

Bangabandhu put forward the 6-points in 1966 with the goal of freeing Bangladesh from the bondage of this inhuman exploitation. These six-points were the manuscript for an exploitation-free Bangladesh, and the charter of freedom for the Bangalis. The West Pakistani ruling coterie could never accept in any way that Bangladesh would escape from their exploitative net. Therefore, despite the Awami League winning a huge majority in the National Assembly elections of 1970, its session was never summoned. A non-cooperation movement then ensued all over Bangladesh at the call of Bangabandhu. Bangabandhu declared during his address at Suhrawardy Udyan on 7 March that he did not seek to become the prime minister of Pakistan in exchange for the rights of the Bangalis. He also called for building up fortresses at homes to carry forward

Where the Head... (Continued from previous page)

before and after the oath-taking ceremony. When Bangabandhu shouted, 'Build up fortresses in all your homes', then the people took all preparations for frontal combats and the liberation war. Bangabandhu had mentioned about the frontal combats at one stage after the announcement of the 6-points – the charter of freedom for the Bangalis.

The 7 March speech of Bangabandhu was the guiding light of the battlefield freedom fighters and the mystical mantra of the countrymen during the nine months of the liberation war. Whenever the 7 March speech delivered by Bangabandhu's thunderous, hypnotising and emotional voice was broadcast by the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra (radio station of independent Bangla), the hairs on the bodies of the Bangalis used to stand erect in a literal sense. The people of Bangla were not born to accept the unjust lordship of others, or to become their colony and market'.

When the Pakistani invading forces carried out barbaric genocides and mass-rapes, perpetrated various crimes against humanity like indiscriminate burnings of villages and ridding those of males at the behest of the Pakistani rulers, our guerrilla fighters then stood their grounds and achieved victory by fighting with all their might. The architect of this victory Bangabandhu had prepared his followers including these valiant heroes in this way over a long stretch of time. This can be articulated in the words of the poet Sukanta, "Bravo Bangladesh, this world/ Watches in amazement/ Razed and burnt to ashes and death/ Even then would not bow down her head." Bangabandhu has left us the enduring legacy of a political philosophy that makes us hold our head high. Even by tolerating everything including jails, tortures, injustices and unfairness, the teaching of Bangabandhu's uncompromising leadership had been to embrace self-sacrifice.

We can feel the patriotism, the intense rhythm of human love, and the euphoria of liberation from all chains whenever we utter the name of Bangabandhu. The liberator of the Bangalis – Bangabandhu will forever remain luminous as a symbol of inspiration, faith, belief and sanctuary among the Bangali nation. The philosophy of life of Bangabandhu will remain forever as the ever-vigilant sentinel of our independence and sovereignty.

The relationship between Bangabandhu, Bangladesh and its people is an everlasting one, because Bangabandhu is immortal in the real sense. Even though the person Mujib could be killed, the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu cannot be assassinated. He will remain forever alive in the midst of the Bangali nation.

The main objective of Bangabandhu's politics was the freedom of all exploited people of the world including the Bangalis, and overall progress of the world. He gave up his life after waging a struggle for freedom of the people, their mother-language, and the liberation of world-humanity. The universal nature of Bangabandhu found expression through his many speeches-addresses delivered at various international conferences.

While attending the 20th Commonwealth Summit a few months before his death in Kingston of Jamaica on 2 May 1975, Bangabandhu expressed the optimism during his speech, "The Commonwealth states will work for a new international economic order based on justice and inter-dependence before it is too late." While addressing the general assembly of the United Nations on 25 September 1974, Bangabandhu presented the then global reality in this manner, "Our humanistic sense of unity and the reawakening of our brotherhood can change this situation. The present challenge is to utilise the power of logic for building a just international economic order. This should entail the assurance of sovereign rights for all countries over their own natural resources".

The late president of the United States John F. Kennedy had termed the younger generation of that country as the most valuable asset. Bangabandhu used to love the youths, held them in great affection, and had faith in them. During the first national

the struggle for realizing the rights of the Bangalis. Considered to be the greatest speech for independence in world history, he declared in its last sentence: 'The struggle this time is for our freedom, the struggle this time is for independence'. This sentence carried the connotation of an epic, because these extraordinary words gave expression to the thousand year-old dream for freedom and national aspiration of the Bangalis.

We achieved victory on 16 December 1971 through a nine-month long bloody struggle in exchange for 3 million lives and the honour of 200 thousand mothers and sisters.

In the Feelings of Millions Kamal Chowdhury

You have unfurled the sky of red Palash flowers
You have presented a flag of earth and green
You have given us an address, a victory-slogan at birth
Head held high, you are like a trumpet on eternity's shore.

I see you in all the pages of our history
Standing tall in sun, rain, memory and ethos
On the monument of Mujib, in luminous light
The stars have arrived to tell your tales.

There in the memories of my adolescence
A thousand years arrive walking on feet
The soil below turns crimson with blood
A dream of erect heads after so many deaths.

People are coming, the processions follow
Humans are coming, at the clarion call of Mujib
Seeking freedom, building resistance atop unity
You are the awakening, the friend of a nation.

I have seen your humanity, the revolt and bravery
You are the finger-raising glory of Bangla
The country became a mass of people at your call
The people woke up, joined the fight against darkness.

You are the torch-bearer of freedom from shackles
The sail of a future pulled by the wind of Bhatiali song
Floating from the Modhumoti to Padma's water
You remain awake in the riverine rhyme.

I also dedicate my poem to you
We do not see your demise anywhere
Crossing the tears, grief, and flow of blood
You are still alive in the feelings of millions.

Author : Poet
Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

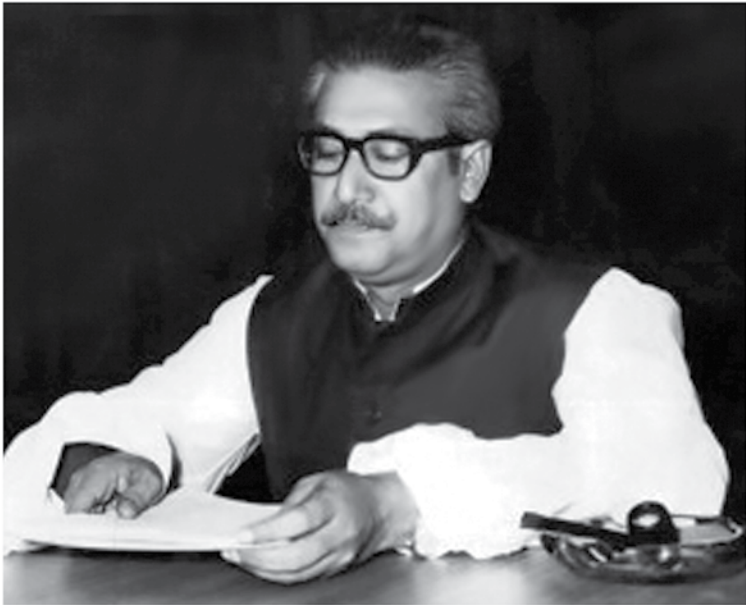
industry in Bangladesh then. Bangladesh was previously a market for various consumer industries set up in West Pakistan, in fact a captive market. It was Bangabandhu who had started the real industrialisation in Bangladesh. As a result, the industries sector could achieve a 7 percent growth during 1973-74, which could not be achieved even after eight years of his death. He also attached priority to the agriculture sector in the Five Year Plan. For this reason, Bangladesh could achieve near self-sufficiency in agriculture soon after his death.

Bangabandhu was not only the great hero of Bangladesh's creation, he was also the builder of the basic structures of the Bangladesh state, as well as the great artist of its advancement. But many great people like Lenin, Bangabandhu and Abraham Lincoln became victims of hatred of the tyrannical war-criminals.

The pro-Pakistani war-criminal tyrants not only assassinated Bangabandhu on 15 August, seventeen members of his family including women and children were brutally killed by them. They were such despicable cowards. Two of Bangabandhu's daughters who were abroad could survive the massacre. The elder among them Sheikh Hasina returned to the country in May 1981 and took up the mantle of Awami League's leadership. The country once again found a new path. Twenty-one years after Bangabandhu's death, the Awami League was once again returned to the chariot of power under Sheikh Hasina's leadership in 1996. Today, Bangladesh has become an extraordinary development model for the entire world since 2009 under her stewardship.

Food-grain production in the country was only 10 million tons when the country achieved independence in 1971. Today, food-grain production has now risen to 38.50 million tons under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina. Besides, almost all industrial commodities are being produced in Bangladesh for meeting the country's needs. Not only readymade garments, many industrial products like medicines, tin, glass, ceramic, small ships, plastic products etc. are being exported outside. There has also been notable progress in the services sector. The seeds of self-reliance, the victory march that we are witnessing today through the economic progress of Bangladesh were planted by the Bangali nation's greatest hero of all times – the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. His death anniversary is a memorable day for all freedom-seeking people of the world. He gave the Bangalis their abode of freedom. He is therefore everlasting, immortal in the lives of the Bangalis. □

Author : Eductionist
Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed



Bangabandhu Addressing on radio and television during 1970 elections

conference of Bangladesh Awami Jubo League held on 4 February 1974 at Dhaka's Paltan Maidan, Bangabandhu placed emphasis on the emergence and flourishing of an enthusiastic and self-confident youth community based on self-cleansing, self-belief, self-restraint and self-criticism. For ridding the independent country of corruption, Bangabandhu asserted with his characteristic sincerity, "Make a pledge, you shall fight against corruption." Bangabandhu had spoken about honesty, patriotism, love for the people in all his speeches. Not only during the mournful month of August, it is our responsibility to show our respect and reverence for Bangabandhu during all the days of the year.

It is expected that people who are dedicated to the study of Bangabandhu would continuously cleanse themselves. Bangabandhu had himself said, "It is not possible to cleanse oneself without self-criticism. I shall surely make mistakes, I am not an angel, neither am I a devil. I am a human being, I shall make errors. If I make any mistake, I should remember that and rectify myself. If I can rectify myself, that will be an accomplishment". (19 June 1975)

To Bangabandhu, the men of gold were those who were refined, polished, pure, benevolent, averse to jealousy, and having a sense of proportion. Bangabandhu had also given a formula for building the Golden Bangla. He had repeated many times in his life, "I need golden people for building a golden Bangla." Bangabandhu's lifelong conviction and aspiration was to see all citizens become people of gold in a republic whose national anthem started with the sentence "My Bangla of gold, I love you".

On the occasion of this National Mourning Day during the birth centenary of Mujib, come, let us make a pledge to change ourselves into men and women of gold by becoming united in order to transform the grief of the assassination of Bangabandhu along with his family-members into strength. Let the ideals of Bangabandhu and the spirit of the liberation war remain as our guide. Glory to Bangabandhu. □

Author : Former Vice Chancellor, University of Dhaka
Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

Bangabandhu—An Unpublished Interview Nirmalendu Goon

Bangabandhu—Hoping to meet you, like many others I went to your house on the evening of March 25. But you didn't come out that day since you were inside a room, busy talking to journalists from home and abroad, as well as to your own party workers. You were busy too talking in secret to Awami League leaders about extremely important issues in some other room inside the house. And that was why on that ill-fated evening I wasn't able to meet you.

Yes, Mr. Yahya had left Dhaka secretly without declaring publicly that the ongoing talks with me had come to an end, and without telling me anything. To have left in the middle of the talks abruptly was for us all a signal of imminent danger. I thought now that Mr. Yahya and Mr. Bhutto would no longer be talking to us, either in Urdu, Punjabi or in English, and of course not in Bangla—they would now be talking to us only with their weapons. That was the language Yahya Khan's predecessor Field Marshal Ayub Khan also used to talk against the Six Point Movement!

Exactly! A little after I had left your house and around 11 that night, "Operation Searchlight", an assault launched with heavy weaponry began. I was standing in front of Eden Girls College in Azimpur at that time, observing youths felling trees to set up barricades. Just then, the skies of Dhaka were lit up by a thundershower of bullets. The indiscriminate massacre of people by the Pakistani army had begun. "Operation Searchlight!" They launched an assault on Pilkhana and Rajarbagh. From Jagannath Hall and Sergeant Zahirul Huq Hall, terrifying, bone-chilling words drifted towards us, words unheard by us before that time. Pitching a tent in front of TSC, Pakistan soldiers also entered nearby Rokeya and Shamsunnahar Hall.

I knew that instead of being able to persuade me to move away even a hair's length from the "Six Point Demand", and instead of handing over power to the Awami League, the party that had won the national elections, Pakistan's thick-headed army junta and its allies Zulfikar Ali Bhutto would pounce on my unarmed people like fierce hyenas. What I wanted was for the people of the world to view and know what they were up to. I declared Bangladesh's independence soon after the army crackdown began. To broadcast my declaration of independence, I had kept a few E.P.R. soldiers ready. Transmitters in hand, they had waited for the green signal from me. In the declaration I said, "From this day Bangladesh is an independent country." To my people I said as well, "Continue to wage war till the very last Pakistani soldier occupying our land is driven away from Bengal's soil; do so till we attain victory decisively." Soon afterwards, Pakistani soldiers surrounded my house and arrested me. I knew they had me in the sight of their weapons all the time. They really didn't want to arrest me; what they intended to do is murder me. They thought I would try to flee, and while I was escaping they would murder me somewhere around my Road 32 house, informing the world afterwards that Sheikh Mujib had been murdered in a feud between Awami League factions by extremist elements of his own party. That would have duped the world totally. My own people would be fooled too. I didn't let the Pakistani strategy succeed. I was the leader of the majority party in Pakistan; the people of East Bengal loved me with all their heart and soul. Why then would I be the one to flee?

I supported your sensible decision. Nawab Sirajuddaula got caught in Bhagban Gola while trying to escape through a riverine exit. Did you have that that fateful occasion in mind?

You are a poet—a far-sighted person. You are absolutely right! Yes, I learnt from the mistakes Bengal's last Nawab had made in his lifetime.

Bangabandhu—you still hadn't become Bangabandhu then—but this is how I love to address you and this is what gives me joy. After "The Six Point Demand", the charter of independence for Bengalis was announced in 1966, in 1967 I wrote a long poem dedicated to you ("For a Cover").

Are you talking about the poem you published in the Daily Sangbad?

Yes, this poem was published on 12 November, 1967 in the literary pages of the Daily Sangbad. At that time, you were imprisoned in Dhaka Central Jail for coming up with our charter of independence—"The Six Point Program", the charter of independence for all Bengalis. Including you, nearly 30,000 leaders and workers of the Awami League were in prison at that time. I came to know that the poem had attracted your attention at this time. Did you really get to read my poem?

Yes, I did. I had read it quite a few times. It was a very provocative poem indeed. But it delighted me. I could understand that the dream-seed I had sown in East Bengal's people had flowered in a far-sighted young poet's consciousness. I especially liked the rhythmic qualities of your poem.

Thank you very much Bangabandhu! Having written the first poem of its kind with you in mind,

I was delighted as well as proud of myself. What I would like to ask you now is how you could sense that the "Six Point Demand" would inevitably become "The One Point Demand" for freedom at one point?

I knew this would be the case! My "Six Point Demand" was such that the autocratic Pakistani rulers would neither be able to swallow nor vomit it out. I had given a wily fox, milk to lap up from a pitcher. If it had taken the bait, a constitution based on the "6 Point Demand" would not only have made East Pakistan but also the four provinces of Pakistan autonomous, near-independent states. It was out of fear of such an option that the Pakistanis did not take a bait they would be unable to swallow. I knew that after we had won the election, they would not be transferring power over to us. They would speak only in the language of bullets. They would have to! They would attack the unarmed people of our country with the arms they had. They would construct a tomb for the "Six Point Demand", while we would build on the grave of Pakistan the foundation of an independent world—on which we would be able to raise the green-colored, red sun-centered flag of independent Bangladesh.

Thank you very much dear Bangabandhu! I had that kind of expectation from your "6 Point Demand". That demand had at its core the seminal element of East Bengal's independence. It was imperative to achieve an absolute majority in the national elections that took place in 1970 if we were to move along the path that would make the dream you had nurtured for so long come true. Did you realize that you would win 167 seats in the 1970 national election?

Yes, I did. I attended nearly 60 public meetings in different parts of the country on behalf of the "6 Point Demand". I was able to make people understand that the "6 Point Demand" was the charter of freedom for Bengalis. There was no better political agenda that the unfortunate people of East Bengal had in front of them at that time. Mr. Bhasani had said then, "We want food before ballots". I had said, "We want votes precisely because we want food." The people of Bengal accepted my contention and made me their leader by voting for me in the election. I had declared in the "Oath-taking Ceremony" for elected members of the National Assembly held in the Race Course Ground, "If anyone compromises on the issue of the 'Six Point Demand', even me, make sure to bury that person alive in this very Race Course Ground. "

I remember everything, Bangabandhu, I was present in that oath-taking ceremony.

The noose that the Pakistani Military junta wanted to hang around my neck by bringing allegations of treason against me was the noose that I put on the neck of barbarous Pakistan. But let's not talk anymore this day, O poet. A lot of important tasks have to do. You poets weave dreams for the nation. Beautiful dreams. Dreams about independence. We politicians transform the beautiful dreams dreamt by poets into reality. We have got independence now. Till we have been able to deliver the benefits of independence to every Bengali home, the freedom achieved at the expense of so much blood will be meaningless.

Thank you so much Bangabandhu! You have given a lot of time to a trivial poet like me. I am much obliged. I am so proud too!

No, no, please don't say such things. You may be young, but you are no trivial poet. Keats and Sukanto died when they were very young, but as poets they are important. You are a poet of comparable stature. In your "Hulia" (Arrest Warrant) poem you had expressed your doubts about my leadership, wondering, "Has Sheikh Mujib blundered?" If you were a really trivial poet, you would neither have composed a poem dedicated to me, nor express such doubts in your poem!

Don't embarrass me Bangabandhu! I have no reservations about you anymore. You have transcended all doubts now.

Bangabandhu burst out laughing. He lit up his pipe and stood up from the sofa. I too got up from my seat. Hoping to touch him, I extended my hand out. He took my hand, and as he moved towards the door with my hand in his hand, he said to me—O poet, you composed your first poem about me when I was still alive. At that time writing a poem supporting "secessionist" Sheikh Mujibur Rahman could have been dangerous for you. And yet you wrote that poem. I commend the divinely bestowed courage you demonstrated then. I have no idea how and when I will meet my death. Nevertheless, I know, regardless of how and when I die, you will be the first person to write a poem about me after my death! □

Author: Poet
Translated by Fakrul Alam, UGC Professor, Department of English, University of Dhaka



BOUNTY OF GUAVA, BLESSING OF NATURE

AROUND 2,100 hectares of guava orchards and several floating guava bazaars are spread across 43 villages in Pirojpur, Jhalokati and Barisal. These floating markets receive thousands of boats with fresh guava every morning. Many from other parts of the country also flock here to see the unique trading and the orchards. People in these areas have been growing “Purna Mandali” variety of the subtropical fruit -- chemical free, delicious and fragrant -- for more than a hundred years. Its peak season is from July to mid-August. Around 20 thousand tonnes of guava from this region goes to metropolitan cities including Dhaka, Narayanganj and Chittagong. Guava is usually sold here at Tk 10-15 per kg but in the peak season, the price goes down from Tk 5 to Tk 2. Growers demand an agro-based industry based on guava.



Photo: Titu Das



TIMELINE

FROM PAGE 1

Bangabandhu phones army chief General KM Shafiullah and says, “Shafiullah, your forces have attacked my house. Perhaps they have already killed Kamal. Send forces quickly.” Shafiullah rings his deputy General Ziaur Rahman and chiefs of two other services to mobilise troops to help the president. It is to no avail.

After killing Kamal, army officer Mohiuddin and his accomplices go around the house hunting for Bangabandhu and they find him standing calmly with his pipe in hand on the front veranda. Seeing him, even killer Mohiuddin is taken aback. He cannot shoot Bangabandhu. He merely utters, “Sir, please come with us.”

As they bring him down the staircase, Bangabandhu shouts, “Where are you taking me?” At this point, Bazul Huda asks Mohiuddin to move away and Noor opens fire at the president. Along with him, most members of his family are killed.

Two other groups of army personnel launch simultaneous attacks on the residences of Sheikh Fazlul Haque Moni and Abdur Rab Serniabat and kill them along with their family members.

Later in the morning, Major Dalim announces on the radio, “Sheikh Mujib has been killed.”

Masterminds of the coup, Major Faruk and Major Rashid, as per their plan, prepare to install Awami League leader Khondokar Moshtaque in the presidency.

Moshtaque is sworn in as the new president in the afternoon. He addresses the nation and describes the killing and coup as a “historic necessity”. Martial law is declared countrywide for an indefinite period and curfew imposed in the capital.

Chiefs of three services are forced to express loyalty to the new regime.

Moshtaque appoints 10 ministers and six state ministers, most of whom are AL leaders, to form his cabinet.

Pakistan becomes the first country to recognise the Moshtaque regime, only a few hours after the coup.

AUG 16 Bangabandhu is buried at Tungipara in Gopalganj. Other victims are laid to rest at Banani graveyard amid an unprecedented tense situation. The situation in Dhaka cantonment remains tense. Saudi Arabia and Sudan recognise Bangladesh as an

independent country and the Moshtaque government as well.

AUG 18 Britain, Jordan, Japan and Myanmar recognise the Moshtaque government.

AUG 19 Army chief Gen Shafiullah convenes a meeting of brigade commanders at the army headquarters. The meeting ends in chaos.

AUG 20 President Moshtaque through a declaration announces that the constitution remains in force subject to the president’s orders and martial law regulations. He also announces that he has assumed all powers of the state.

AUG 22 Chief Justice ASM Sayem and Speaker Abdul Malek Ukil call on Moshtaque at Bangabhaban. US recognises Moshtaque government.

AUG 23 Four national leaders -- Syed Nazrul Islam, M Mansur Ali, Tajuddin Ahmed and AHM Kamaruzzaman -- and 22 others are detained under martial law regulations on charges of corruption, anti-social activities, nepotism and abuse of state powers.

AUG 24 In a surprise move, General Ziaur Rahman is made army chief, replacing General Shafiullah. Major Rashid and Major Faruk, staying at Bangabhaban since the changeover, force Moshtaque to make the sudden change at the top in the Bangladesh Army. General MAG Osmani is appointed defence adviser to the president. Brigadier General Ershad is promoted to the rank of major general and made deputy chief of army staff.

AUG 26 President Moshtaque sends message to Pakistan’s prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, expressing his desire to strengthen ties with Pakistan.

AUG 27 India, Oman and Hungary recognise Moshtaque government.

AUG 30 President Moshtaque issues ordinance imposing a ban on political activities and formation of political parties.

AUG 31 China recognises Bangladesh.

Many students upset

FROM PAGE 16

A number of students from Scholastica, Sunnydale, SFX Green Herald International School and others expressed dissatisfaction over their A level results.

Sunnydale student Dipro Nishanto said he got an A star in mathematics, an A in chemistry and physics in his Advanced Supplementary (AS) exam under Cambridge International last year. This year, his result was downgraded in maths and physics to an A and B grade respectively.

“They could have given similar grades to the AS exams as a benefit of doubt because the exams did not take place due to the pandemic. What kind of justice is this?” he asked.

Normally, students get better grades in the A2 exams than their AS exams, he added.

Teachers have also said that many O level students, under the Cambridge International board, were also unhappy with the results they have gotten.

A student of Green Herald International School said he got a B in physics and chemistry while his AS grades were A for both subjects last year, under the Cambridge International board.

He said results of 64 out of 128 students were downgraded this year.

A student of Willes Little Flower School and College who took part in the exams under Pearson Edexcel said he achieved A grades in biology units 1 and 2 and B grades in units 3 and 4 last year.

This year he was awarded an E grade and a U in biology units 5 and 6 respectively.

He said he got a C in chemistry unit 5 this year against an A achieved last year in units 1,2,3 and 4.

“I had the country-highest score in economics for AS, and got downgraded to B now. The process to challenge these results is proving to be notoriously difficult because the authorities aren’t cooperating right now and different teachers are saying different things about how evidence was provided for these grades,” an A Level student from Green Herald said.

“Sitting for retakes seems like the only option for students who didn’t already get into colleges, and there’s the question of whether retakes are even possible under the current circumstances as schools are closed,” he added.

“Downgrading of results without any exams was an unfair decision. These students should have been given grades similar to their previous year’s exams,” Dhaka University English department Associate

Professor Ashim Dutta said.

He said this will hamper the students’ chances of getting scholarships if they want to go to abroad for higher education. “They will not be able to sit for the admission test of Buet as they will not be able to fulfil the academic criteria for the test,” he added.

All students said that they have contacted their respective school authorities and are trying to find ways of appealing against these results.

Sunnydale Vice Principal Yasmeen Habib said many students, who are capable of getting A* or A, have not got the desired results.

English Medium School Association General Secretary GM Nizam Uddin, also principal of Green Gems International School, said results of many students were downgraded and all school authorities are in the process of contacting the relevant authorities.

Cambridge International in a statement on Thursday said their awarding process combined teacher insights -- predicted grades and rank orders -- with a rigorous standardisation process, keeping teacher judgments consistent across different schools.

“This ensured grades issued for June 2020 would be fair and reliable and accepted by universities and employers globally, in the same way as any other year,” it added.

“We have been listening to schools and students as they’ve received their results. While many students are happy with their grades, we know some are disappointed. Schools can make different sorts of appeals to us, and we will consider each appeal carefully and make changes where needed,” a spokesperson for Cambridge International said Thursday night, while replying to queries of The Daily Star through email.

“Students can also take part in exams in October and November with extra subjects available and alternative arrangements to support schools with distancing and safe reopening.”

The spokesperson for Cambridge International, working with its South Asia office, said they don’t have the number of grades changed for Bangladeshi students.

“But what I can tell you is that globally, just over half the grades awarded to students are the same as those predicted by their teachers,” said the spokesperson.

Over 8,000 students in Bangladesh received results across the year’s exams,” Dhaka University English department Associate



Farmers harvest their onion crops as Mount Sinabung spews volcanic ash during an eruption seen from Sukandebi village in Karo, Indonesia yesterday. Indonesia is home to about 130 active volcanoes due to its position on the “Ring of Fire”, a belt of tectonic plate boundaries encircling the Pacific Ocean where frequent seismic activity occurs.

PHOTO: AFP

Seven taken into Rab custody

FROM PAGE 1

Rab officers have also not interrogated the three top accused -- suspended officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station Pradeep Kumar Das, Inspector Liaquat Ali and Sub-Inspector Nandadulal Rakshit.

“Changing an IO of a case is absolutely routine work,” said Ashique Billah, legal and media wing director of Rab.

He added that the authorities decided to employ a much more experienced officer who has vast experience in solving sensitive and critical cases.

Asked whether the interrogation was delayed for the appointment of a new IO, he said no.

“The previous officer took the time because he thoroughly studied the case, talked to the witnesses, visited the place of occurrence, and talked with Sefat and Shipra. He was taking meticulous notes for a neutral

investigation,” Ashique said.

A team of Rab-15 took the seven accused from Cox’s Bazar prison around 10:00am, reports our correspondent in the district.

Besides the four policemen, the three other accused are Nurul Amin, Nijam Uddin and Ayachh Uddin. They were named as witnesses in the two cases filed by police after the killing.

The accused were taken to Cox’s Bazar Sadar Hospital for check-ups around 10:35am, said resident physician Saheen Abdur Rahman.

No health issues were found during the examination, he added.

PROBE COMMITTEE VISITS SITE

A four-member committee formed by the home ministry yesterday visited Marishbunia village in Teknaf and talked to several villagers.

Shahidul Islam, a nine-year-old boy, who helped Sinha on July

31 find the trail to climb a hill, and his grandfather Zahir Ahmed accompanied the officials as they visited the hill.

They also visited Baitun Nur mosque from where it was announced that there were robbers on the hill when Sinha was there.

Sinha used to make travel documentaries for a YouTube channel called Just Go. On the fateful night, he was returning to Cox’s Bazar from Teknaf with Sefat.

His car was stopped at Shaplapur on Marine Drive road.

Police claimed they were about to search the vehicle when Sinha aimed his pistol at them, prompting the officers to open fire. They also claimed they seized drugs from the vehicle.

However, witnesses said Sinha stepped out of his car, put his hands over his head, and then a police officer shot him.

More than 12,000

FROM PAGE 16

“Most of the Bangladeshi migrants applied to the domestic work sector as caregivers,” he said over a WhatsApp call.

Asked whether all will be regularised, the mission official said there is a condition for the domestic work sector that workers have to apply under the specific employer, which the authorities will verify afterwards.

So, it cannot be said at this stage how many have fulfilled the condition, he added.

He added that the Bangladesh mission was trying to help the undocumented workers process their papers properly.

The Italian government declared amnesty for undocumented migrants from June 1 amid the coronavirus pandemic. The last time it announced a similar amnesty was in 2012, said the mission official.

Under the latest amnesty, the authorities also gave workers scope to be regularised in the agriculture sector. Besides, those who are currently unemployed are also getting the opportunity.

Like the domestic work sector, workers in the agriculture sector have to apply under the specific employer, while the unemployed have the scope to get work permits at a fee of 130

euros each.

As of July 16, the Italian interior ministry received 123,429 requests for the regularisation programme, according to ANSA, a well-reputed wire service in Italy.

Cleaners and caregivers made up the bulk of the requests, ANSA said in a report.

Alongside Bangladeshis, Ukrainians and Moroccans mostly requested permits as cleaners or carers. Besides, Albanians, Moroccans, and Indians mostly requested permits as agricultural workers, it added.

The number of Bangladeshi workers seeking regularisation was 12,746 until July 31, said Bangladesh mission official Arfanul, adding that it was made available by the Italian interior ministry.

Italy is home to about 1.45 lakh Bangladeshi migrants with valid documents, he said, citing the data of the Italian ministry of labour and social policies.

Besides, an estimated 20,000 more Bangladeshis live and work in that country without valid documents.

According to a mission official, the Bangladeshi community in Italy said the number could be 50,000.

Arfanul said following the coronavirus outbreak, the Italian government announced different

stimulus packages, including that for low-paid workers with work permits.

Such workers, including foreign nationals, had the opportunity to receive financial support from the Italian government, he said.

He added that many restrictions imposed by the Italian government to contain the spread of coronavirus had recently been lifted.

As a result, the low-paid workers and self-employed vendors, who were affected severely, get the scope for earnings, he said.

WHO downplays

FROM PAGE 16

of food. There is no evidence that food or the food chain is participating in the transmission of this virus.

“Our food, from a Covid perspective, is safe.”

Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO’s Covid-19 technical lead, said the United Nations health agency was aware of the reports and understood that China was looking for the virus on food packaging.

“They’ve tested a few hundred thousand samples of looking at packaging and have found very, very few, less than 10 positive in doing that,” she said.

Bhutto’s statement

FROM PAGE 16

Pakistan President ZA Bhutto’s statement to the National Assembly recently that he tried hard to have talks with “Dacca authority” without success. A Bangladesh spokesman says today, “If there has to be any talk with Pakistan it would have to be on equal terms. Mr Bhutto has spoken of ‘authorities of Dacca’. He cannot just deal with ‘authorities’ in Bangladesh. He must talk with the prime minister of Bangladesh. To refuse to do that is to ignore hard facts and realities.

“When he talks of ‘authorities of Dacca’ does Mr Bhutto still think Bangladesh as a part of his own domain? As he still seems to be unwilling to recognise the sovereignty of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has no alternative but to refuse to meet him. Once the condition is accepted, Sheikh Mujib is willing to talk on all problems of mutual interest,” adds the spokesman.

YUGOSLAVIA’S SUPPORT TO BANGLADESH UN MEMBERSHIP

Yugoslavia fully supports Bangladesh’s application for membership of the United Nations, reports PTI. Official circles in Belgrade emphasises that UN membership for Bangladesh is not only logical in view of the hard fact of the existence of the new state and its recognition by many countries, but also necessary as a contribution to peaceful development in that vital part of the world.

SOURCES: August 16, 1972 issues of Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla and Dainik Ittefaq.

Doraiswami

FROM PAGE 16

Dhaka at a time when India and Bangladesh have lined-up a series of high-profile bilateral projects in the field of connectivity and infrastructure in the coming months, particularly during the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Despite recent rough edges in bilateral ties due to the Citizenship Amendment Act passed by Indian parliament in December last year, Bangladesh is considered one of India’s closest allies in South Asia.

OC withdrawn

FROM PAGE 16

some people to record the case.

He was also seen keeping the money in his pocket and asking more money. The police officer then gave them directives on how to harass their opponents through the case.

Sources said Shahana Begum, a railway employee, took loans from Sukhi Begum of Baltipatti area of Lalmonirhat town.

There was a conflict between Shahana and Sukhi, who gives people loans and takes interest on them, over repaying the loans.

Following this, Sukhi and her men vandalised Shahana’s house in Baltipatti area and injured her on July 21.

Shahana alleged that valuables were also looted from her house.

The next day, she filed a case against seven people, including Sukhi, with the Sadar Police Station.

After the case was lodged, Sukhi and her men asked for help from OC Mahfuz to get away with the case. The OC recorded a false case against Shahana in exchange for bribes on July 27.

The video clip of taking the bribe and sanitising his hands went viral on August 11.

SP Abida said a three-member committee was formed to look into the incident. The higher authorities would take departmental actions on the basis of the investigation report, she added.



Advanced Chemical Industries Limited
ACI Centre, 245 Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208

Price Sensitive Information

This is for information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Advanced Chemical Industries Limited (ACI Limited) on Thursday, 13 August 2020 has approved foreign investment of BDT 1,260,000,360/- (One Billion Two Hundred Sixty Million Three Hundred and sixty only) for 2,333,334 Convertible Non-cumulative Preference Shares of BDT 100/- each at a premium of BDT 440/- in the share capital of ACI Motors Limited, one of its Subsidiaries and approved the draft Shareholders' Agreement and Share Subscription Agreement for execution. The said shares will be issued to Bangladesh Managed Account C.V, a limited partnership of FMO (NETHERLANDSE FINANCIERINGS-MATTSCHAPPIJ VOOR ONTWIKKELINGSLANDEN N.V.), a limited company incorporated under the Laws of the Netherlands and SDI Pte. Limited, a company established under the laws of Singapore. The proceeds will be used for business growth and expansion of existing manufacturing facilities of ACI Motors. This arrangement will reduce the Company's shareholding in ACI Motors Limited from 65.00% to 52.70%.

By Order of the Board



Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman
Company Secretary

13 August 2020, Dhaka

POETRY

Poetry of Nirmalendu Goon

TRANSLATED BY FAKRUL ALAM

(Swadhinata, Ei Shobodota Kibhabe Amader Holo)

How Freedom Became Our Own Word

A poem is about to be written;
Millions of excited, rebellious, impatient listeners
Waited for the happening
From dawn in the park's open field a sea of people
has been wondering—
“When will the Poet show up?”

This Children's Park didn't exist that day
This garden beautified with flowers and trees
didn't exist that day
This languid drab evening didn't exist that day
So how was that particular evening?
How were the Children's Park, benches, its trees,
flowers and garden
In this park that is at the heart of Dhaka city that
day?

I know dark hands strove to erase all memories of
that day
Thus it is I can see in this adverse poet-less
expanse today
A poet set up against a poet
A field set up against a field
An evening set up against an evening
A park set up against a park
A March set up against amarch....

“O child of the coming age”, O poet of the future
Swaying on the Children's Park colorful swings
You'll come to know all one day
It's with you in mind I leave behind this tale of
that greatest of evenings!
On that day this park looked completely different
It neither had this park nor this garden full of
flowers—nothing of the kind!
Only, as a slice of an unbroken sky can be, the
horizon was flooded that day
The vast grass-covered field wasthen lush green, so
very lush green!
The lush green dear to our hearts and our beloved
freedom had melded
With a vast grass-covered green field that day!

Wrapping foreheads and wrists in red-cotton cloth
To this field had come rushing workers from
metal foundries
Ploughs and yokes on shouldershad come
swarming bare-bodied farmers
With weapons snatched from policemen had
come radiant youths!
With death in their fists and dreams in their eyes

had come middle, lower middle-class people
Andsad-eyed clerks, women, old people, whores,
vagrants as well
And children like you who had assembled to
gather fallen leaves
A poem was to be recited—people waited eagerly
for him—
“When will the poet show up?” “When will he be
here?”

“After centuries, centuries of struggles,
With the resolute gait of a Rabindranath
The poet came next and stood on the people's
stage
In the twinkling of an eye and in sparkling light
water buoyed a vessel
As the heart began to sway a sea of people felt a
tide coming their way
All doors had opened; who could suppress that
thunderous voice?
Making the sun-lit people's stage tremble, the poet
read out his immortal poem—
“The struggle this timeis for our freedom
The struggle this time is for independence!”

From then on “freedom” became our own word!



Now that It's August Cry Out in Sorrow

Now that it's August, cry out in sorrow Bengalis!

I know you weren't allowed to mourn for a long,
long time
I know, hapless Bengalis, you weren't able to cry
at all
For twenty-one long years, but you can do so now!
Cry your hearts out now for the time to mourn
has come
Clear the debt of sorrow you've piled up for over
two decades
In tears that can flow completely freely now!

With the tears of pent-up passion released from
your hearts
Let Bengal's delta be flooded and swept away.
Most people have no idea how striking shared
tears
Can look on them. Let everyone know that truth
now.
Like crickets chirping soulfully across earth
Let your clamorous cries pervade and overwhelm
it.
Cry out soulfully, making earth quiver with your
cries!

Citizens of an ill-fated country's horn of happiness
Cry out now like a hungry baby deprived of milk
Cry out now like a lonely sister grieving for a lost
brother
Cry out now like a dear daughter wailing for her
dead father
Cry out now like poor people who've lost all in
ruinous floods
Cry out now like a mother who has just birthed a
still-born child
Cry out now like a wailing old man who has just
buried his own son,
Returned home, and is flailing helplessly on his
courtyard floor.
You couldn't mourn when you wanted to but cry
out now
And let go of your pent up and till now impotent
anger and pain!

After twenty-one years the sun called Mujib has
burst through
Clouds and now blazes in Bengal's skies again.
Not in celebration
But with funeral cries greet him now. Cry,
Bengalis, cry!

Like the immaculate juice oozing out of an
uprooted baat tree
Let tears ooze out of your eyes and flow down
your face
Like the warm juice of a date palm tree that has
been tapped
Let the tears pent up in your bosom trickle down
to its earthly urn.

Twenty-one years have gone by and August has
come again
August is the cruelest month
August is the month of mourning, soaked in sin,
harsh, cruel
Free it from its sins with overflowing tears!

Fakrul Alam is UGC Professor, Department of English,
University of Dhaka.

I'm Not Here to Shed Blood this Day

TRANSLATED BY HOSSAIN AHMED ARIF ELAHI

Like everyone else present here, I, too am so fond of roses,
Yesterday while passing by the Racecourse ground, a rose from the bushes
Entreated me to speak of Sheikh Mujib in my poems.
I'm here to speak of him.

A blood-spattered brick dislodged from the Shahid Minar
Implored me yesterday to speak of Sheikh Mujib in my poems.
I'm here to speak of him.

Like everyone else present here, I'm also fond of the palash flowers.
While passing by the Samakal office, a newly-bloomed palash
Yesterday whispered in my ear,
Telling me to speak of Sheikh Mujib in my poems.
I'm here to speak of him.

The interactive fountain at the ShabbaghAvenueurged me
To speak of Sheikh Mujib in my poems.
I'm here to speak of him.

Like everyone else gathered here, I'm partial to dreams;
A dauntless dream that I encounteredat theend of last night
Pleaded with me to speak of Sheikh Mujib in my poems.
I'm here to speak of him.

Let the mourners crowding in this spring at the foot of the Banyan tree be
witness,
Let the tender krishnachurabuds that dried before blooming
Be the keen audience, the black cuckoo of approaching dusk shall know;
The sacred soil under my feet, my witness
This day I commit myself to theappeals of the rose,
This day I respond to the palash's solicitation,
This day I stand by that dream's desire.

I'm not here to shed blood this day
I'm here to speak of my love for him.

Hossain Ahmed Arif Elahi is a Professor of English at Cox's Bazar Government
College.



Star

REVIEWS

A Burning: Good Books Are Hard to Read

Megha Majumdar. ISBN:9780525658696. Penguin Hamish Hamilton, 2020.

REVIEWED BY SHAKIL RABBI

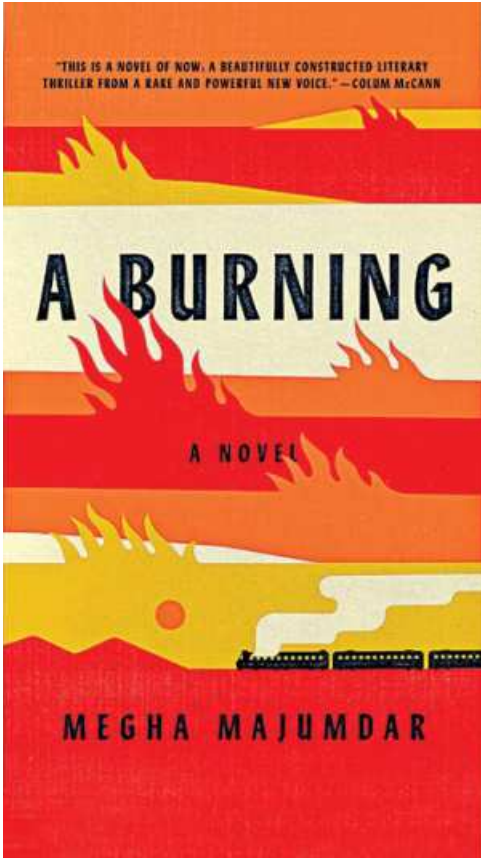
Good books – even as they are arresting – are often hard to read. This is not because they are difficult in themselves so much because oftheir content. Human societies are callous and viscous; cruelty, greed, and selfishnessaremanifest across the world, and one purpose of stories is topicture this layout. This makes for hard truths, often, and this is what I mean when I say good books are hard to read. It is also in such terms I read *A Burning* (Alfred A Knopf, 2020, p. 293), the debut novel by Megha Majumdar, a thoroughly good book.It is hard to readprecisely because it accurately delineates with bleakness and compassion contemporary India. It is a story of prejudice and selfishness, as they are tied to everyday aspirations, and the ghosts such acts of calculations let loose in India today.

The novel centers around the stories of three people in a city in West Bengal, clearly Kolkata even though the city is not named. The first protagonist is Jivan, a Muslim girl, charged with terrorism in connection to an attack on a train at the Kolabagan Station, close to the slum where she lives with her parents. The second is Lovely, a hijra, dreaming of being an actress, and whom Jivan sometimes tutors in English. The third is PT Sir, a physical education instructor at the all-girls school Jivan attended,an ancillary teaching staff who becomes involved with the rising Hindu nationalist party in the state. Each of the threecharacters represents a different thread in the tapestry of India – the idea of rising to the middle class, the idea of becoming a star, and the idea of becoming a political leader. Their storiesplay out in

the complex context of current-day Indian life, widespread anti-Muslim violence and inequality, the undeniable cult and power of celebrity, and the victimization of all those who are notHindu men.

It begins with Jivan posting a comment on Facebook calling the government “terrorists” – late at night when most of our most careless mistakes are made. She is arrested the next day and charged with being part of the terrorist attack on the train, with the government using details of her Facebook conversations with someone they claim is a terrorist recruiter as evidence against her. Because she is poor and Muslim, Jivanis afforded no leeway and is quickly sucked into the opaque legal system that she cannot afford to navigate. Her hopes of freedom rest on her telling her lifstory to a news reporter, which she believes will accrue public support, and the facts of the day in question, provided by Lovely, whom she was taking books to at the time of the attack.

As the book barrels forward through Jivan's story, it also narrativizes the lives of Lovely and PT Sir at the same time. Each of the two, one could read, as characterizing certain figurations of appeal in the ideological spectrum: the liberal and the conservative. Lovely navigates the cruel life of a hijra in Kolkata, trying to make money through blessings and begging, and paying most of it to go to acting lessons. She hopes that she will become a famous film actress, and in that way give voice to the loss she lives with because of who she is, a hijra who is poor and cannot ever have children and a family. PT Sir, aligning with the rising status quo of



Hindu nationalism, rises quickly within the new political party. He hopes to make more of himself in life and believes in making society better, especially in improving the apathetic circumstances of schooling. He comes to be represented as a politician who provides an authentic voice of the people;

written as particularly effective because he can delude himself about the cynical nature of political parties, wrapping themselves in high-minded rhetoric of nationalism and social responsibility. How these figures end up impacting Jivan's story is the immediate thread of the novel, but Majumdar's art as a writer is to flesh out all three characters' trajectories in evocate thematic significance to contemporary India.

Stylistically speaking, *A Burning* is compulsively readable. It is told in short chapters, written in economic prose, alternating perspectives and foci on characters. Majumdar seems to be a skilled writer who knows our short attention spansintimately and recognizes the needto move briskly to appeal to our constraints. This compositional approachhas become increasingly popular in recent years, with accomplished practitioners not necessarily losing out on the craft of storytelling in the process. In my college writing classes, for example, I often assign Trevor Noah's memoir, *Born a Crime*, precisely because it communicates complex issues inconcise,terse chapters.I have found that my students can read the book more effectively because the chapters are so short, which helps them get through sections in one sitting and so actually helps them read better. I believe this is to be the same for *A Burning*. I read it quickly, within a few days, largely because I was able to get through individual chapters in one sittingsince each ran four to five pages at their longest. *A Burning* unfurls so much of itself in showing the moments making up its story precisely and incisively, enabling the

subtlety of the meaning and consequencesof events toonlybecome fully apparent as the narrative progresses and the events accumulate. It reads, in some ways, like a mystery-thriller, but this genre-identity belies its real significance as a great piece of fiction by a tremendous new writer.

In its bleakness and pathos, *A Burning* is evocative of *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. There are clear parallels with this book and the Roy classic; both are powerful debut novels highlighting how badly Indian society treats its least. Whereas in Roy's novel, violence upon the Dalit community is highlighted, in *A Burning*, the scapegoats *du jour* are shown to be the Muslims, the “beef-eaters.” Both can be read as fatalistic (a hallmark of Indian fiction), but both also flesh out how others' choices over their own lives act upon ourselves—even as their consequences remain largely unknown and hidden from ourdirect perception. Majumdar, like Roy, can humanize our vulnerabilities as they are connected to our corruptions, and this makes her novel resonate beyond the political to what makes the essence of our personhood. Fostering empathyis often provided as a rationalizedfunction of all goodbooks and Majumdar, in *Burning*, makes a powerful new claim on this terrain. It is a story of urgency, told urgently, and that needs to be read urgently.

Shakil Rabbi is an Assistant Professor, Department of Language, Literature, and Cultural Studies, Bowie State University, Maryland, USA.



The Leipzig bench explodes in joy at the final whistle of their pulsating 2-1 win over Spanish giants Atletico Madrid in the quarterfinals of the Champions League in Lisbon on Thursday. (Bottom) Atletico's Slovenian goalkeeper Jan Oblak reflects on another failure for Diego Simeone's men in Europe. PHOTO: LEIPZIG FC/REUTERS

Leipzig rise to new heights

Beat Simeone's Atletico to reach semis

REUTERS, Lisbon



There is little in modern football that can truly be described as a fairytale romance but RB Leipzig's

journey from Germany's regional league system to the last four of the Champions League in just 11 years gets close.

The 2-1 victory over Atletico Madrid at the Estadio Jose Alvalade on Thursday sent Leipzig, from the former East Germany, into the semifinals where they will face Paris Saint Germain.

Not even the most ambitious of those involved in the creation of the club in 2009 could have imagined their team being 90 minutes away from the biggest game in European club football.

The fact that the rapid rise has been bankrolled by Austrian energy drink company Red Bull, after its billionaire owner Dietrich Mateschitz controversially found a way to get around the Bundesliga's restrictions on companies owning a majority stake in clubs, has left Leipzig unlabeled by many in German football.

But their success is about much more than the finances of Mateschitz, who took over amateur club SSV Markranstaedt in 2009 and turned them into RasenBallSport Leipzig -- literally Lawn Ball Leipzig. The name allowed them to use the company's RB initials.

The 88th minute winning goal came from American substitute Tyler Adams, a player who started out in the Red Bull academy in New York as a 12-year-old. He played for MLS's New York Red Bulls before joining Leipzig last year.

Red Bull also own Austrian club RB Salzburg and have a presence in



Brazil. Through all their clubs, the focus is on finding and developing talent. While the critics may scoff at the idea that Leipzig are an underdog taking on the powerhouses in the sport, it is worth noting that their most expensive purchase on the field against Atletico was midfielder Kevin Kampl, who cost 20 million euros.

That is a fraction of the 126 million euros their Spanish opponents paid Benfica for Portuguese forward Joao Felix last year -- the 20-year-old started on the bench before getting the 71st minute equaliser on Thursday.

Red Bull's strategy is essentially to find talent, develop it and sell it on -- making them an attractive club for young players.

Naby Keita, now with Liverpool, is a perfect example -- discovered in the French second division by RB Salzburg, he moved to Leipzig for around 20 million euros before being sold to the English champions for a reported 50 million pound fee two years later.

Defender Dayot Upamecano, outstanding against Atletico, was discovered in French football by RB Salzburg, quickly moved on to the German club and is now on the radar of many of the continent's top sides.

Thursday's victory was the result of another superb tactical display by Leipzig's 33-year-old coach Julian Nagelsmann.

The youngest coach to reach the last four of the Champions League, Nagelsmann is already being watched closely by leading clubs across the continent.

All of which makes Leipzig's success one of shrewd strategy and quality recruitment and development.

Leipzig's traditional two clubs, like many teams from the former communist East, had struggled to adjust in the post-communist reality of a united Germany, leaving a generation of fans across the region with little to cheer for. Now, in Saxony at least, they finally have a team they can be proud of.

Burgeoning with belief

AFP, London



Manchester City finally have a marquee victory in the knockout stages of the Champions League after seeing off Real Madrid to reach the last eight, but they want much more in Lisbon over the next week with Pep Guardiola insisting they cannot be satisfied by beating the 13-time winners.

"We're here to try and win the Champions League," Guardiola said in a markedly different tone to the one he has struck in previous seasons when claiming City were not ready to be crowned champions of Europe despite dominating the Premier League.

"If we think that [beating Real] is enough we will show how small we are. If you want to win you have to beat the big clubs."

It took City eight seasons to beat a former winner over two legs, but disposing of Madrid both home and away, pre and post football's shutdown for coronavirus showed a maturity and ability to handle pressure situations that Guardiola's men have lacked in previous campaigns.

A clash with Lyon, who finished seventh in the curtailed 2019/20 Ligue 1 season, offers further reason for City to be optimistic. But in the three seasons since Guardiola arrived in Manchester, City have contrived to crash out despite being heavily favoured against Monaco, Liverpool and Tottenham.

"I just spoke with the scouting department about Lyon and they told me to be alert," warned Guardiola after Lyon shocked Juventus in the last 16. The French side also showed what they are capable of in taking four points from a possible six against City in the group stages of in last season's Champions League.

However, the enormous financial gap between the clubs is highlighted by the fact that Lyon have to routinely sell their prized assets with Nabil Fekir, Tanguy Ndombele and Ferland Mendy all departing last summer, while City have the resources to keep throwing money at the dream of winning the Champions League.

Arsenal sign Willian

REUTERS, London

Arsenal have signed Brazil winger Willian on a three-year deal, the Premier League club said on Friday.

The 32-year-old joins Arsenal on a free transfer after failing to agree on a new long-term contract with Chelsea.

Willian scored 63 goals in 339 appearances for Chelsea after his arrival from Russian club Anzhi Makhachkala in 2013.

Twice a Premier League winner with the Blues, he will add experience to an Arsenal side full of talented youngsters in Bukayo Saka, Joe Willock, Gabriel Martinelli and Reiss Nelson.

"I believe he's a player that can really make a difference for us," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said in a statement on the club's website.

Stomach pain nothing serious: Tamim

SPORTS REPORTER

After an anxious wait, Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal was assured that the severe stomach pain he experienced was nothing serious when he received his medical reports from London on Thursday.

Tamim had gone to London on July 25 for diagnosis and treatment after several check-ups in Dhaka failed to reveal the reason behind the pain. Before leaving, he had said he was barely able to stand straight due to the excruciating pain.

The left-handed opener returned to the country on August 1 and got the results on August 13 and, according to Tamim, there was nothing to worry about. However, doctors advised that he do one more blood test.

The 31-year-old is expected to send the test report to London again, after which he will start treatment.

Since returning from London, Tamim has been in quarantine at home and is set to join Bangladesh's individual training session in Mirpur from August 16.

"At the moment I am doing fine and after completing my quarantine I will start individual training from August 16," Tamim told The Daily Star yesterday.



Fawad Alam's return to Test cricket did not prove to be a happy one. The 34-year-old waited more than 10 years for another chance, but only lasted four deliveries and did not trouble the scorers as Pakistan slumped to 126 for five at the end of the first day of the Southampton Test. Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan saw them through to lunch on the second day yesterday, adding 29 runs.

PHOTO: REUTERS

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আগস্ট

জাতীয় শোক দিবস

জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু

শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান এর

শাহাদাৎ বার্ষিকীতে আমাদের শ্রদ্ধাঞ্জলি

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ন্যাশনাল ব্যাংক লিমিটেড

প্রতিশ্রুতিশীল কর্মতৎপর একটি ব্যাংক

Maxwell in for England tour

REUTERS, Melbourne



Australia confirmed on Friday next month's limited-overs tour of England, boosting the England and Wales Cricket Board's (ECB) bid to navigate past a financial crisis brought by the novel coronavirus.

Beginning on September 4, Australia will play three T20Is in Southampton before moving to another bio-secure venue in Manchester for an equal number of one-dayers, all of which were scheduled to take place in July.

"We owe a significant debt of gratitude to the players, staff and administrators of Cricket Australia for their efforts in getting this tour underway," ECB chief executive Tom Harrison said in a statement. "It will also provide much-needed financial aid at all levels of cricket in England and Wales as we work through the challenges in front of us."

The tour would allow the ECB to complete all 18 international fixtures it had scheduled before the pandemic struck. The Australian government on Wednesday granted travel exemptions for Aaron Finch and his men, CA said while announcing a 21-member squad for the team's first tour since the outbreak began.

"It's vital for cricket that we do everything we can to keep the game going in these tough times," Australia coach Justin Langer said. "I am delighted with how the players have returned to their states from the break back in March. The whole squad has come back fitter and stronger, which is great testament to each of them."

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell, who took a break last year to address mental health issues, returned to the side having recovered from an elbow injury.

AUSTRALIA SQUAD: Finch (C), Abbott, Agar, Carey, Cummins, Hazlewood, Labuschagne, Lyon, M Marsh, Maxwell, Meredith, Philippe, Sams, Richardson, Smith, Starc, Stoinis, Tye, Wade, Warner, Zampa.

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আগস্ট জাতীয় শোক দিবস

জাতির জনক বঙ্গবন্ধু

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স্মৃতির প্রতি আমাদের

গভীর শ্রদ্ধাঞ্জলি

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সফতাই আমাদের শক্তি



Fish farm owner Shahidul Islam Bapary and his mother surveying the tragic sight of a 40-bigha pond full of dead fish in Ashulia on the outskirts of the capital yesterday. Shahidul said miscreants had poured poison into the pond, causing the death of fish worth Tk 5 crore.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

LALMONIRHAT SADAR OC withdrawn after video clip of taking bribe goes viral

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The officer-in-charge of Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station, whose video clip of taking bribes to record a false case went viral, was withdrawn on Thursday afternoon.

OC Mahfuz Alam has been transferred to Dhaka Tourist Police as per the instructions of the Police Headquarters, said Abida Sultana, superintendent of Lalmonirhat police.

In the video clip, the OC was seen rubbing his hands with sanitiser and then accepting Tk 10,000 from

SEE PAGE 13 COL 6

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Bhutto's statement lambasted

August 15, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU TO LEAVE FOR GENEVA ON AUGUST 21

Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman will leave London for Geneva on August 21 to recuperate from his gallbladder surgery. The prime minister is likely to stay in Geneva for 10 days.

According to a health bulletin issued today by the prime minister's personal physician Dr Nurul Islam, Bangabandhu is gradually regaining his strength. His health condition is normal. He was examined by Sir Edward Muir this morning.

NO TALK BEFORE RECOGNITION

Bangabandhu's entourage has strongly reacted to

SEE PAGE 13 COL 6



Doraiswami new Indian envoy to Bangladesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Senior diplomat Vikram Kumar Doraiswami will be the next Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, succeeding Riva Ganguly Das.

Doraiswami, currently an additional secretary at India's External Affairs Ministry, is expected to take up his new assignment soon, an official announcement said on Thursday night.

He earlier served as India's Ambassador to South Korea and also joint secretary of the Americas division in the External Affairs Ministry from 2012-2014.

Outgoing Ambassador Riva Ganguly Das, who has been posted in Dhaka for a little over a year, is returning to New Delhi to be the secretary (East) in the External Affairs Ministry.

Doraiswami comes to

SEE PAGE 13 COL 6



PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 15

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:25 12:45 4:45 6:38 8:00
JAMAAT 5:00 1:15 5:00 6:41 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

A LEVEL EXAM RESULTS

Many students upset by downgrading

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Students were "stunned and aggrieved" and demanded a revision after their O and A level results were downgraded by Cambridge International board, which marked students based on a formula in the absence of the usual exams due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

A level results under Pearson Edexcel have seen the same fate. The O level exam results will likely come out in the third week of this month.

This year, all boards responsible for arranging O level and A level exams across the globe decided not to hold exams for its June 2020 series due to the coronavirus outbreak. Instead, they prepared results based on predicted grades and previous academic records submitted by schoolteachers, English medium schoolteachers said.

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AMNESTY FOR MIGRANTS IN ITALY

More than 12,000 Bangladeshis apply for regularisation

JAMIL MAHMUD

At least 12,746 undocumented Bangladeshi migrants in Italy have applied for regularisation under an Italian government-declared amnesty programme which is scheduled to end today.

Their papers will now be verified and they will be interviewed by the authorities concerned before they get their work permits, Arfanul Haque, labour welfare counsellor at the Bangladesh Embassy in Rome, told The Daily Star yesterday.

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CORONAVIRUS IN FROZEN FOOD

WHO downplays infection risk

Urges people not to panic

AGENCIES

The World Health Organization (WHO) has urged people not to fear catching the novel coronavirus from food, after Chinese testers found traces on food and food packaging.

Two cities in China on Thursday found the virus in frozen chicken wings imported from Brazil and shrimp from Ecuador, raising public concern.

Chinese shoppers yesterday expressed dismay at the news, with some saying they would avoid the products.

The Philippines imposed a temporary

ban on poultry meat imports from Brazil yesterday, including chicken wings from the South American country.

However, the WHO said there was no need to panic -- and there were no examples of the respiratory disease being transmitted through food.

"People are already scared enough and fearful enough in the Covid pandemic," WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan told a virtual press conference in Geneva on Thursday.

"People should not fear food or food packaging or the processing or delivery

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