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BANGLADESH ARMED FORCES DEDICATED TO THE COUNTRY

Bangladesh Armed Forces is Ever Ready to Safeguard the Sovereignty

ARMY: 'In war and peace, we are everywhere for the country' - this motto underscores the paramount duty of Bangladesh Army for safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation. Soon after the independence, construction of new infrastructures, training and modernisation of Bangladesh Army started despite limitations. As part of this, various Arms, Services and more than 100 units have been established in the Army. Besides, new cantonments have been established at Bogura, Savar, Mirpur, Mymensingh, Dighinala, Ruma and Alikadam. In the onward progression of Bangladesh Army, 17 Infantry Divisions in Sylhet, 10 Infantry Divisions in Ramu, 98 Composite Brigade in Tangail and 7 Infantry Divisions in Lebukhali, Barisal have been raised. To supervise the construction and security of Padma Bridge 99 Composite Brigade has been established. In addition, Special Works Organisation, National Defence College, Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations Training (BIPSOT), Bangladesh Infantry Regimental Centre (BIRC), various Arms/Services Centers and Schools and Para Commando Brigade have been formed. With the aim of building a modern and advanced Army, this force has been equipped with modern weapons and equipment. With the passage of time, Bangladesh Army, today, has become a well-disciplined, efficient, experienced and exemplary force which is always ready to face any external enemy and protect the country's sovereignty and geographical integrity.

NAVY: 'In War and Peace, Invincible at Sea' - this motto embodies the immense role of the Bangladesh Navy in safeguarding the country's sovereignty and maritime boundaries. Considering the protection of marine resources and economic security of the Bay of Bengal after the independence, a capable, powerful and modern navy was envisioned. Over the time, Bangladesh Navy has evolved into a highly professional and formidable three-dimensional force. Submarines have been added to Navy fleet which have drawn the attention of military forces worldwide. Given the geographical location and to enhance naval capabilities, modern technologically advanced warships, including Frigates, Corvettes, Large Patrol Craft, OPVs, patrol craft and survey vessels have been incorporated into the fleet. BN special force namely SWADS is comprised of brave and daring Naval Commandos and Divers. Moreover, maritime patrol aircraft and helicopters have been included as part of the naval aviation wing. Shipyards and dockyards under the management of Bangladesh Navy are now equipped with indigenous technology which have transformed the navy from a 'Buyer Navy' into a 'Builder Navy' by constructing warships in Bangladesh. To ensure advanced training, simulator-based programmes, modern curricula, and training technologies have been integrated by establishing the Navy Training and Doctrine Command (NTDC). BN is in the course of progression with modern technology to guard the sovereignty of the country.

AIR FORCE: 'Free shall we keep the sky of Bangladesh' - being inspired by this motto, BAF has been performing her duties as the defender of our sky since inception. Right after the independence, BAF started its steadfast journey of modernisation by inducting modern supersonic fighter aircraft, transport aircraft, helicopters and air defence radars. Beside the reorganisation of the air force within a very short period, various reform activities were undertaken including the infrastructure of various bases, reorganisation of skilled manpower and improved training system. Within a very short time for a strong, skilled and modern Air Force, fourth generation fighter aircraft MiG-29, F-7 BGI, Grob-120 basic trainer, PT-6 basic trainer, modern C-130 transport aircraft, L-410 transport trainer, K-8W jet trainer, YAK-130 combat trainer, Mi-171SH helicopter, AW-139 maritime search and rescue helicopter, AW-119KX helicopter trainer, various types of radars, simulators, missiles and modern military equipment have been inducted in BAF. Considering the nature and scope of Bangladesh's geopolitical, strategic and air defence and above all natural disaster management and other functions, Air Force Base Cox's Bazar started its journey on 03 April 2011 as a full-fledged base. Very recently, Bangladesh Air Force has developed basic trainer aircraft for the first time using its own manpower and technical technology. Every member of BAF is determined to sacrifice his/her lives to uphold the hard-earned independence and country's sovereignty.

Bangladesh Armed Forces in Nation-Building and Development Activities

ARMY: Bangladesh Army plays a pivotal role in disaster response and recovery. It consistently demonstrates efficiency in tasks like emergency evacuations, rescue operations, distribution of relief supplies, medical services, and accommodation during natural calamities. Bangladesh Army is providing overall security and support to the people living in the Hill Areas. As a part of this, the Army used to seize arms, ammunition, drugs and illegal goods in Chattogram Hill Tracts as well as provide free medical services, medicines, financial assistance for medical treatment, sewing machines, solar panels and house building materials among helpless poor people. Recently, under the In-Aid-to-Civil Power, Bangladesh Army is playing a leading role in maintaining law and order, recovering illegal weapons, ammunition and drugs, rescuing flood-affected people, providing relief and medical services and ensuring the safety of people's lives, property and important state installations. Furthermore, Bangladesh Army is contributing remarkably to education sector through the reputed schools, colleges, universities, and specialised institutions operating under its guidance. Bangladesh Army is also involved in various nation-building activities and development projects. Notable projects include the protection of the Ruppur Nuclear Power Plant, maintaining security of Key Point Installations (KPIs), and participation in projects related to national voter list, national identity card, machine readable passports and e-passports. According to the needs of the country and people, the scope of work of Bangladesh Army has expanded. Implementation of Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project, Padma Bridge Rail Link Project, Border Road Construction Project and other multidisciplinary infrastructural development projects are notable. In addition to the service and development activities, Bangladesh Army has expanded its scope of operations outside the country. In continuation of this, Bangladesh Army has played an unforgettable role in brightening the image of Bangladesh in front of the world through rescue, medical treatment, food distribution, distribution of emergency life-saving materials in the earthquake-affected areas at the request of the Turkish government. In addition, Bangladesh Army has played an important role in post-cyclone rescue operations in Myanmar and Libya. Moreover, Bangladesh Army's role in UN peacekeeping missions is globally appreciated. Currently, Bangladesh is playing a very important and leading role as one of the highest troops contributing countries in the world. The symbol of the nation's pride, Bangladesh Army is determined to protect the country's independence and sovereignty as well as continue the trend of peace, harmony and development in the country beside the development activities.

NAVY: Bangladesh Navy (BN) ever stands strong in ensuring any and every interest of the country. BN plays a vital role in safeguarding the country's sovereignty and supporting national development and interests in both peacetime and wartime. One of the essential functions of BN is to ensure the safety of maritime trade, which is crucial for our economy. The nation's economic lifeline heavily relies on uninterrupted shipping routes, making maritime security paramount. BN's efforts in propelling the 'Blue Economy' of the country start with maintaining 'Good Order at Sea'. To protect the blue economic infrastructures, activities and safeguard valuable resources like minerals, gas, oil and fisheries, naval personnel are ever prevalent at sea. BN ships operate continuously in the Bay of Bengal to prevent maritime crimes, drug and human trafficking, illegal fishing, marine pollution and protect maritime communities. Besides, BN conducts workshops, seminars and training activities with various maritime agencies and stakeholders to foster Maritime Domain Awareness for sustainable maritime development. Maritime University promotes a culture of maritime education leading to economic development with utilisation of maritime resources and skilled human resources. Moreover, BN is committed to assisting country's industrial growth through developing robust infrastructures, research and development facilities and achieving industrial excellence. BN has taken ample initiatives to maximise material and fiscal outputs from shipyards run by the Navy and transformed the shipyards into highly profitable enterprises since taking over the shipyards from the government. These shipyards have constructed many ships and craft for the Navy and other maritime organisations. BN is also striving to develop indigenous technology by establishing the Centre for Naval Research and Development (CNRD). During natural disaster like floods, cyclones, etc BN gives support and provide shelter, essential supplies, and medical assistance. Since 1997, Navy has constructed numerous resettlement centers to homeless families, notably with over 4,411 barracks built under the Asharyan-2 project and facilitates infrastructure development in Bhasan Char for the Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals. BN also upholds the nation's interest in the international arena by enhancing diplomatic relations with the outside world. Under the UN, BN peacekeepers are deployed worldwide to ensure peace and stability. BN participates in and organises various international engagements to enhance cooperation with other countries' navies and countries. BN has carried out multiple Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Operations, Search and Rescue operations in the Philippines, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Myanmar which brightened the image of BN and Bangladesh to the whole world.

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AIR FORCE: Transport aircraft and helicopters of Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) are kept ready 24 hours a day and 365 days a year to deal with any disaster, search and rescue and relief operations including medical evacuation, casualty evacuation. Recently, in the severely flood affected areas of Sylhet, Comilla, Chattogram, Feni and Noakhali, members of the Bangladesh Air Force carried out rescue operations for the helpless people. In continuation to this, out of the 9 sectors of Dhaka city, Air Force is entrusted with the responsibility of 2 important sectors in post-earthquake rescue work. The Air Force regularly provides full cooperation to the civil administration of the country in fire fighting and rescue operations. Recently, BAF participated in the rescue operations of those trapped in terrible fire at Amurbunia Chhila area of Chandpai range of East Sundarbans, in the residential building near Cox's Bazar airport and in a Hotel in Jashore city. Again after the strong earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, cyclones and severe floods in Libya, rescue teams with humanitarian aid were sent to the affected countries through transport aircraft of Bangladesh Air Force. Besides, the members of the Air Force representing Bangladesh in various UN missions have brought an enviable achievement of glory and appreciation to the country. Apart from protecting the sovereignty, BAF is also playing a vital role in nation building process through producing good citizens. A total of 30898 students are taught at seven BAF Shaheen Colleges and one BAF Shaheen English Medium College. Aviation and Aerospace University has been established to enrich BAF and aviation sector of the country in the field of aerospace technology. BAF is providing all-out cooperation to Bangladesh Army, BGB and civil organisations since long for maintaining peace and harmony in the inaccessible CHT area. In order to provide well-controlled guidance to the patrolling aircraft in the country's vast sea area and the Mahisoppan area, the latest technology YLC-6 Air Defence Radar was commissioned at Bangladesh Air Force Base Cox's Bazar on November 11, 2015. Moreover, two GM-403 model radars made by France have been installed in Bogura Radar Unit and 71 Squadron of Bangladesh Air Force to further strengthen air defence surveillance of the country. Besides, Mobile Gap Filler radar has been deployed in Bangladesh Air Force to detect high-flying targets from the surface. 'Air Defence Notification Centre' has been established which plays a significant role in country's air defence, security management and economic development. Recently, Bangladesh Air Force has been performing the security duties of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and other airports of the country with efficiency and speed which is appreciated by the entire nation.

EVOLUTION AND SPIRIT OF THE ARMED FORCES DAY
Major Khandokar Mostak Ahmed, AEC

The War of Liberation in 1971 is the most important event in the history of Bangladesh. The war began when the Pakistani occupation forces launched 'Operation Searchlight' against the innocent and unarmed people of Bangladesh on the night of 25 March 1971, initiating the unprecedented genocide. The 'Declaration of Independence' on 26 March 1971 was instrumental to unite the people of Bangladesh to fight the war against Pakistani military forces.

On 17 April 1971, Colonel M. A. G Osmani, later promoted as General, took oath as the Commander-in-Chief of Mukti Bahini. While the war raged on, the necessity of well-trained and unified Armed Forces was felt. During the first Bangladesh Sector Commanders Conference, held from 11 to 17 July 1971, the Bangladesh Forces comprised of Army, Navy and Air Force began its journey but the forces started to fight separately at various corners of the battlefield. On 21st November 1971, General M.A.G. Osmani called for the united attack by Bangladesh Forces to completely annihilate the Pakistani occupation forces which was broadcast in 'Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra'. On this historic day in 1971, the valiant members of Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force along with the freedom fighters from all walks of life launched an all-out offensive on the occupation forces from land, sea and air. Members of Bangladesh Army and East Pakistan Rifles (EPR) were organised under three Brigade Groups i.e. 'K' Force, 'S' Force and 'Z' Force. As the land force, they played the pivotal role during the War of Liberation and had significant contributions for the independence of Bangladesh. Commandos of Bangladesh Navy conducted the dauntless 'Operation Jackpot' and more than 45 operations in the rivers and channels to block the ports and stop the logistics supply for occupation forces. Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) started its journey on 28 September 1971 in Dimapur, India. Since 3rd December 1971, Bangladesh Air Force conducted 'Kilo Flight' and more than 50 successful air raids on Pakistani targets including bombing on the Eastern Oil Refinery at Patenga in Chattogram and oil depot at Godanail in Narayanganj. The simultaneous joint operations of the Bangladesh Forces proved decisive and were considered as a turning point of the 9-month long Liberation War. Recently, within three weeks or so from 21st November 1971 there was a total collapse of the combat effectiveness of the occupation forces. All these paved the way for achieving final victory on 16th December 1971 after a full-scale joint offensive of the Allied Forces which was formed by the Indian and the Bangladesh military forces. Thus, 21st November bears special significance in the history of Bangladesh Liberation War.

At present, 21st November is marked as the Armed Forces Day of Bangladesh and the Day is observed every year with due solemnity and importance to honour the sacrifices made by the valiant members of Bangladesh Armed Forces. Earlier, the three forces i.e. Army, Navy and Air Force used to celebrate the Day differently at their own which conveyed the message that there was lack of cohesion, jointness and bonding among the defence services. So, the necessity of jointness was felt and consequently in 1986 for the first time Armed Forces Day was observed collectively by the three services through various events. Since then, every year Armed Forces Day is celebrated jointly on 21st November by the Armed Forces personnel under the auspices of Armed Forces Division.

Bangladesh Armed Forces has been transformed into a capable, credible and modern force which is a symbol of unity, strength and pride of our nation. Besides the primary role of safeguarding the sovereignty and integrity of the country, members of Bangladesh Armed Forces are performing a wide variety of responsibilities including disaster management, nation building activities and assisting distressed people. Bangladesh Armed Forces is entrusted with various national responsibilities like maintaining peace and stable security environment in Chattogram Hill Tracts, providing security to the Key Point Installations (KPIs), construction of mega development projects, infrastructure development and implementation of many other large scale socio-economic projects which have greater impact in building and developing our nation.

21st November is one of the most glorious and significant days in the history of Bangladesh which symbolises the patriotism, indomitable spirit, courage and supreme sacrifices of Bengali Nation. Every year the very sacred Armed Forces Day brings forth and focuses the spirit of the Liberation War. The Day also revives the esprit-de-corps between the members of the three services and cements their ties with the civil services personnel. The spirit of the Armed Forces Day gives us a deep sense of pride and honour and helps to strengthen trust and confidence among the members of the Armed Forces. This day specially marks an enduring bond of inter-service solidarity and amity.

It is worth mentioning that the members of the Armed Forces have earned the credentials both at home and abroad by sheer professionalism, devotion, sincerity and integrity. The significant contribution of Armed Forces serves as the catalyst in upholding the image of Bangladesh in international arena. As the Armed Forces Day is being observed with due solemnity and fervour, it is the high time for every member of the defence services to take a fresh vow to work together as a unified force for maintaining the sovereignty and integrity of our dear motherland.

NAVAL DIPLOMACY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF BANGLADESH
Captain Mohammed Masudur Rahman Zahid, (N), BCGMS, afwc, psc, BN

Naval diplomacy is a subset of national power that guides a nation's domestic leadership in the context of national security and maritime strategy by using naval forces. It is the tool for achieving the objectives of naval strategy within the framework of security strategies. Furthermore, it also encompasses the idea of sourcing naval forces to secure and ensure the deliberate use of the sea to achieve national interest. Hence, Bangladesh Navy (BN) plays a significant part in the national security and nation-building. Ever since the birth of the BN in 1971, at the time of the Liberation War (LW), BN has been attempting to consolidate its power in the Bay of Bengal. However, with its small resources and number of men, it could only operate successfully near harbour mouths and in the rivers to disrupt sea lines of communication of the enemy forces by restricting merchant ships' entry to the ports of Bangladesh. Such bravery efforts of the BN at that

time took out of the operation of the sea and the river ports and disrupted the supply chain of the Pakistani forces substantially during the LW, which made way for the earliest possible emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state.

Since the independence of Bangladesh, BN has increased in size a great deal, and it has placed more emphasis on naval diplomacy to expand its influence and foster ties with regional states. The current effectiveness of BN in projecting and utilising sea power towards achieving strategic national goals actually dictates how much it is able to influence destiny in the context of Bangladesh. BN consistently participates in various joint exercises, maritime security agreements, counter-piracy operations, disaster response initiatives, etc., as part of a naval diplomacy role, which in turn also contributes the socio-economic development of the country.

BN regularly operates with regional and extra-regional navies both at home and abroad to build relationships and mutual trust. It promotes diplomatic relations through international naval exercises and conferences. In terms of interoperability and best practices, BN has also engaged in regional security mechanisms such as multinational exercises and training programmes, International Fleet Reviews (IFR), and exchange visits of hierarchical delegations. In 2022, BN hosted the inaugural IFR involving 28 countries' navies and coast guards to promote goodwill and strengthen cooperation whilst displaying the organisational competence of BN. This IFR of BN could connect naval diplomacy and tourism with other navies in Bangladeshi waters, which significantly influences the socio-economic and infrastructural development of the coastal areas of Bangladesh, specially, in Cox's Bazar region. The development of ports and maritime facilities are essential elements for the trade and economic growth of Bangladesh and BN plays a crucial role in supporting coastal infrastructure expansions by providing security and other supports.

Furthermore, BN's role in securing maritime boundaries is crucial for the sovereignty of Bangladesh, and it also maintains watch against other threats like IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) fishing, piracy, smuggling and trafficking. In addition to its regular activities at sea, BN protects the sea lines of communication in Bangladesh to ensure uninterrupted trade and commerce, which directly ensures the national economic growth. To curb the IUU fishing and other illegal activities at sea, BN conducts Coordinated Patrols (CORPAT) with its neighbours and participates in other regional security efforts. Recently, Bangladesh joined the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) just to make the Bay of Bengal safer for seafarers and add more prospects for the economic development of the country by ensuring collective security measures against piracy and other criminal activities.

In the present day context, the buzzword 'Blue Economy' is a concept that involves the sustainable use of the sea resources for the economic growth and job creation while preserving the ecosystem. BN's active involvement in ensuring the sustainable use of marine resources, protection of marine biodiversity, providing technical training to the people and creating job opportunities in maritime domain, contributes significantly to the overall progress of Bangladesh. Besides, with such support in the fisheries sector, maritime security, and infrastructure developments, BN promotes tourism quite significantly, hence contributing much to the national economy of Bangladesh.

Apart from all the issues discussed above, BN's involvement in disaster management and in rehabilitation of the people both domestically and internationally, in addition to its classical role, has immense impact on national diplomacy. BN's such effort showcases not only its capabilities but also its commitment to regional stability. The image of Bangladesh as a responsible regional player also got boosted internationally through the BN's contribution to developing 'Bashan Char', where concrete housing structures, flood defence embankments, cyclone shelters, prefabricated food and storage warehouses, roads and solar power grid have been constructed for the use of Rohingya people in Bangladesh. Such a mega project also helped in infrastructural development of the coastal areas and may be utilised for the socio-economic development of the country in future.

Therefore, it will not be unjust to claim that the naval diplomacy of BN is linked hand in glove with socio-economic initiatives. In promoting regional security and cooperation, the navy not only bolsters national security but also opens up avenues for economic growth and development that will go a long way in the overall development of Bangladesh.

FLIGHT OF PROGRESS: A CHRONICLE OF BANGLADESH AIR FORCE SINCE INDEPENDENCE
Squadron Leader Md Mahmudul Haque

Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) has a storied history that reflects the resilience and aspirations of a nation born out of struggle. Since its inception in 1971, BAF has evolved into a formidable force, continually expanding its capabilities and commitment to national and international peacekeeping efforts. The essence of establishing a competent, robust and modern Air Force was earnestly felt immediately after the Liberation War (LW) as a part of founding a self-reliant and robust military force for independent Bangladesh. The urge was not only about defence but also about establishing an institution that would symbolise national pride and technological prowess. This vision laid the foundation for BAF, guiding its growth and development in the subsequent decades.

The genesis of BAF is deeply rooted in the LW of 1971. Despite its nascent stage, BAF as Kilo Flight played a crucial role in the LW. Valiant pilots and ground crews; operating with limited resources and training, executed daring missions that disrupted enemy supply lines and provided vital aerial support to ground forces. Their indomitable courage and ingenuity were instrumental in the eventual victory and the birth of Bangladesh as an independent nation.

From its humble beginnings, BAF has continually expanded its capabilities. The post-independence era saw significant efforts to modernise the force, enhancing its operational readiness and strategic reach. Investments in training, infrastructure and technology have transformed BAF into a modern air force, capable of executing a wide range of missions, both within and beyond national borders.

One of the pivotal aspects of the BAF's evolution has been the continuous induction of new armaments and aircraft which have been proved time convenient. Over the years, BAF has inducted advanced fighter jets, transport aircraft, helicopters, training aircraft for ab-initio pilots, air defence RADARs and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). These acquisitions have not only boosted the force's combat capability but also enhanced its humanitarian and disaster response operations. Modern aircraft like MiG-29, F-7 BGI, Yak-130, C-130J, L-410, Mi-17, K-8W and Grob G-120 TP have significantly and genuinely upgraded BAF aviators' aerial warfare capabilities and training efficiency. In recent years, BAF has made remarkable strides towards self-sufficiency in aircraft production. Initiatives to develop self-manufactured training aircraft and other aviation components within the country have been undertaken which reduce the dependency on foreign suppliers and most remarkably save our currency. This move towards self-reliance is a testament to the technological advancements and skilled workforce within the nation, aligning with the vision of a self-sufficient military.

As one of the primary roles, BAF has consistently contributed to both national and international peace efforts. Domestically, BAF has been at the forefront of disaster relief operations, providing crucial aid and support during natural calamities like cyclones and floods. The personnel of BAF are trained not only as air warriors but also as ambassador of peace. Their commitment to upholding peace and security is evident in their conduct and the successful execution of various peacekeeping missions around the world. Their professionalism and dedication in conflict zones across the globe have brought honour to the nation and demonstrated Bangladesh's commitment to global peace and security.

The motto of BAF, 'Free shall we keep the sky of Bangladesh' underscores its unwavering readiness to defend the country and support its citizens. Whether it is safeguarding airspace, responding to emergencies or participating in national development projects, BAF remains perpetually prepared to serve. This readiness is a cornerstone of its operational philosophy, ensuring that BAF can respond swiftly and effectively to any contingency. In doing so, the history of BAF is manifested by the supreme sacrifice of its personnel. Many have laid down their lives in the line of duty, whether in combat operations, peacekeeping missions or in disaster response efforts. These martyrs are remembered with profound respect and gratitude, their sacrifices serving as a poignant reminder of the cost of freedom and the enduring spirit of BAF.

The evolution of BAF since 1971 is a testament to the relentless dedication of its personnel. From its pivotal role in the LW to its current status as a modern and self-reliant force, BAF has continually adapted and grown to meet the challenges of the times with the sole guidance of the government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. BAF's contributions to national defence, disaster response and national security and international peacekeeping emphasise its commitment to service and excellence. As BAF looks to the horizon of progressive future, it remains as a symbol of national pride and a beacon of hope for continued peace and progress.