

Bangladesh

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Quarterly

Ekushey February and
the New Bangladesh

Independence Day 2025 :
A Different Kind of Feeling



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After paying tributes to the martyrs of the Liberation War Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus signed the visitors book at National Martyrs Memorial at Savar on March 26, 2025



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Editorial



The Bengali people are one of those in history who had to fight for the honor of their language and also for independence consecutively. In the same light 05th August 2024 is another milestone for the Bengali people when the students and mass people stood against autocracy and injustice with an aim to free the people again. If we reevaluate our status in 2025, we can see that hope, love and aspiration have rejuvenated us. With having love for language, people and state, we also have to realise that no language is pure or impure. Language entails mixing and that mixing is a natural outcome for any language. Despite concerns about the status and effectiveness of Bangla language in our country, especially in higher education and professional fields, proper initiatives and necessary instructions from the State can resolve the issue, as the relationship between state and its citizens matters greatly.

Bangladesh is undergoing reforms in concerned sectors to improve and obviate the problems and obstacles to have another new dawn. In this case along with having proper implementation, all our cooperation is also a dire need.

Ramadan is a month of purity and sanctity for all the Muslims of the world. Every year, this holy month is observed by the Muslims with due solemnance. And a festive look appears when cultural aspects get added with. Bangladeshi Muslims are no exception to that.

Every year International Women's Day conveys a reminder that women of the world should be respected appropriately. The slogan for International Women's Day 2025 is "For All Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment."

Articles on the above-mentioned aspects are incorporated in this issue along with other write-ups and our regular events.

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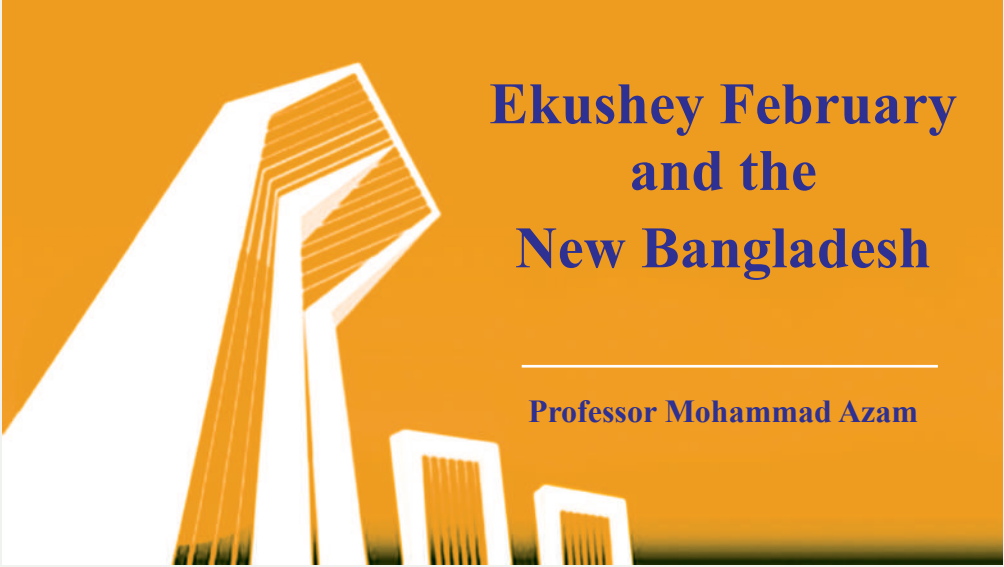
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Ekushey February and the New Bangladesh

Professor Mohammad Azam

1

The politico-cultural activities of at least five previous years had a role behind the historic incidents that took place in Dhaka on 21 February 1952. Detailed documents could be obtained about the participation of the country's regions in the central programme of 21 February. Undoubtedly, this movement could take place due to the large-scale activism and support of the mass-people of Bangladesh, especially the huge segment of middle-class citizens. Badruddin Umar has presented detailed background of this movement based on adequate information and data in his 3-volume book titled 'Language Movement and the then Politics'. Based on that, it can be said that the incidents of Ekushey (twenty-first) February were in fact a consolidated expression of the varied political spirits and realities of the people living in this land.

The language movement achieved swift results. The Bangla language became the key ingredient of political demands during the 1954 election. Bangla was recognized as the principal state language of Pakistan in the first constitution of that country. Later, the language movement was reborn in a new shape during the movement for autonomy. Bangla became the most important symbol during the cultural and political developments during the 1960s. Therefore, the constitutional recognition of Bangla as the state-language after the independence of Bangladesh was not a matter of fresh decision-making. This decision was inevitable as a continuation of the events that occurred during the previous two decades.

2

Many people are found to express concerns about the state of Bangla language in the month of February. This is not bad. This anxiety is necessary. The sorry

state of Bangla language in Bangladesh cannot be visualised through the naked eye. It is also not comprehended through listening. This is because, the population overwhelmingly speaks a single language. As a result, Bangla is heard everywhere. But one cannot but become apprehensive when the terrible state of Bangla language is observed at aristocratic spots like the educational institutes, legal domain, offices and courts. As a consequence, those who become conscious about Bangla language at least in the month of February deserve commendation.

Usually, two types of concerns are heard nowadays on the question of Bangla language. First, the practice of ‘correct’ Bangla has gone down drastically; especially those who write in the social media appear to be less conscious about language. Second, people prefer to use English; they randomly mix English words even while speaking or writing in Bangla. I am proposing in this write-up that this particular concern is a ‘fake’ one. At least, it is not a practical concern.

The main reason for using the term ‘fake’ is because, our use of language is merely the result of many other activities. Consequently, if we speak about ‘language-pollution’ and ‘language-mixing’ without paying attention to those activities, and consider it as our duty, then there is no other option but to term it as ‘fake’.

The language that one becomes habituated with depends on the linguistic medium that one uses in education. Initially, people learn language unconsciously, later it becomes part of their upbringing. It can be said that people start to consciously practice language by means of writing. When the medium of instruction is not Bangla, then it is foolhardy to expect that someone would become an expert in that written language. Besides, there is an established view in society that the Bangla language is good for nothing, especially with regard to higher education. In this situation, none should be blamed if he tries to learn English and attempts to speak in that language. Under these circumstances, mixing of languages would naturally occur – the linguists have shown this repeatedly based on facts and statistics. Therefore, the anxieties expressed by the genteel segment of our society about the two problems with regard to our language have been a natural outcome of a varying state of affair. If their concerns were genuine, then they would have spoken about the language of instruction, as well as the reality and result of language usage in various institutional tasks. As they do not do that, there is no option but to become worried about their worries.

Now the question is: Why do people express these impractical concerns? The first reason is ignorance. Languages undergo change, and the new forms gradually get absorbed in the standard language; but most people do not keep track of these. They consider the language that they got habituated with during their childhood as the eternal form of that language. Consequently, they become worried. This can be termed as a kind of ignorance. On the other hand, people consider mixing of language as bad from the standpoint that language has a ‘pure’ form, and mixing harms that purity. This concept of a pure language is also a superstition. In reality,



Students preparing for procession in front of old Arts Faculty Building during Language Movement on 21 February 1952

no language is either pure or impure. Language entails mixing. As a result, mixing of languages is a natural outcome – like the languages themselves. English is getting more mixed with the Bangla language because of the specific language scenario in Bangladesh, which has been pointed out earlier. Concerns about the spoken language is both baseless and meaningless. This is applicable for all languages of the world – more in some and less in others. These are undoubtedly fake concerns.

Now the question arises, what are the genuine concerns? This is related to the state itself, which in turn is linked to the relationship between the state and its citizens; it is related to the long-term plans for erecting the future of the people. The reason why practical discussions on the Bangla language of Bangladesh have not started yet is because, we could not yet raise the discussion to the level of state-building. Let me explain with an example. Whatever the reasons behind the intense emotion we feel in Bangladesh concerning English usage, its visible and prime logic is related to development. But with the exception of a few countries like Singapore, there are only scant examples where development could be attained by using a second language. The use of own language in education is not deterring their development; neither is it hindering their emigration on a large scale with dignity and honour. Whether English or any other language, the language needs to be learned in a systematic way. Therefore, why has this view become so popular that is not felt anywhere else?

Becoming concerned about this should in fact be the real worry about Bangla language. If a state is to be built, if the people are to be turned into human resources through education – then all citizens, instead of only those who have the money to

learn English language, should be brought under its fold. The dialogue on Bangla language will start when education becomes the ultimate goal of life – not settling in foreign lands by sending children abroad. We would realize then that the issue of preserving language-purity and the discussion on language-mixing are not only mere foams at the upper layer, they are also entertainment-oriented funny dialogues.

3

The language of any nation-state faces a deep crisis when it does not get a place in the formal or foundational spaces of the state. These areas are of three categories: official use, legal use, and educational use. The use of Bangla in the aristocratic offices of Bangladesh is very limited; The use of Bangla in the elitist courts is so rare that if one writes a verdict in Bangla, then it becomes a publishable news. As for education, it can be said that even the solvent middle-class children do not study in Bangla language anymore. This last aspect is more disastrous; because, through this, a generation is being groomed who would not even consider using Bangla language in those two domains.

The status of Bangla in higher education is in fact an appropriate reflection of the state of Bangladesh. You may claim that Bangla exists in the realm of higher education in Bangladesh – at least partially. It can even be said by relying on available figures that a majority of children are pursuing education in Bangla



International Mother Language Institute was established for the purpose of upholding honour and preservation of the developing and endangered languages of the world

do we feel that it serves our purpose? What I want to emphasize is that, such a country in the world is very rare that could develop through education in a foreign language. The only example may be India, but the linguistic scenario in India is quite different from that of Bangladesh. Those who allude to this comparison or example resort to an erroneous assessment. But India is usually cited during discussions on this topic in Bangladesh because other examples are not readily available. Therefore, although not being run in an efficient manner, why does this practice of English continue in Bangladesh? In straightforward language, the reason is – we are not really imparting genuine education.

But what does that imply? What does the dearth of education actually mean? Then what do we do in schools- colleges-universities? We actually supply skills in the name of education. We perform exactly those tasks that can be done through specific skills. The 20-year strategy paper of the University Grants Commission (UGC) speaks about this objective. But the medium of instruction was not considered in that strategy paper. This is because, they assumed that the medium of instruction was already English. And, supplying skilled labour to the international market has been mentioned as the principal objective of higher education in Bangladesh in that paper.

Therefore, the main reason why we feel that higher education is being run well here is because we are supplying trained workers to the international market; or we have at least considered it as the principal objective. However, the task is not being performed efficiently. Usually, our students have to be made qualified for entering the global market by obtaining another degree from the developed countries. And the higher educational institutions inside our country are grooming pupils mainly for our service sector. To simplify: the task is mainly that of selling commodities. Education through the English medium is considered fruitful due to these two factors – supplying workers for the service sector and the international market. It cannot be termed ‘education’; it can at best be called ‘instruction’.

It should be mentioned here that our state does not run on knowledge. Bangladesh lacks an education system that can generate knowledge for running the statecraft. We borrow all technologies for running the state from abroad. Consequently, we do not need to realize the reality that we lack ‘education’. Another truth is that, a majority of our children belonging to the middle and upper classes feel that Bangladesh does not have any future. They, therefore, have to travel overseas. Consequently, English medium education helps them in advancing their cause.

Because of all these factors, it may appear to us that our English medium education is being run well. But we are actually learning ‘medium’ instead of ‘education’. That is, English is being taught, but not any ‘subject’ by means of English. Therefore, work is progressing well overseas as well as in the service sector of the country. But in reality, this situation cannot be sustained. Our circumstances are changing, the financial condition is improving. But we need education. In fact, the

skilled manpower required for running corporate offices is not being groomed by our education system.

If we need quality education, if we require knowledge-generating education, then we need such an education that will result in our system producing graduates who can manage the statecraft of Bangladesh effectively. In that case, we need to overhaul our education system. Many big changes will have to be brought about. The first in the sequence will probably be establishment of Bangla as the medium of instruction. For imparting education in Bangla, slow advances have to be made towards it in the light of present reality. That is because, as I said before, Bangla is not really present in our education system. However, there is no possibility of getting acquiescence at the consumers' level if any revolutionary decision is taken. Social acceptance will have to be obtained through a gradual process. At the same time, the task of preparing Bangla for application in higher education should also continue in full gear.

Now, what initiatives should be taken? There is a strong presence of an entrenched superstition in our society – where Bangla and English are portrayed as rivals; removing this should be the principal priority. In fact, all of our able parents view this to be the case. It is a social fallacy, and dispelling this cannot be the job of an individual. An individual can hold any view, but the state is bound to respect that in a democratic manner. The state has to take effective measures for convincing people through practical initiatives by underscoring that two languages can function side by side in our working life. The reality has to be brought to the fore that people of the world learn second or third languages, which are applied for even creative or knowledge-oriented work. This should be the first task in the backdrop of the psychological reality prevalent in Bangladesh.

Secondly, the use of Bangla should be started right away in higher education without waiting a single day for preparation of text-books and vocabularies in Bangla. It should be particularly reminded that vocabulary or terminology is not an issue for Bangla or English. This realization is rare even among the academics. Actually, terminology is a matter to be addressed by relevant subjects or disciplines. And terminologies should be prepared by the practitioners of relevant disciplines based on their direct experiences as well as practices. Therefore, the work should commence right away without wasting any time for vocabulary or language, at least partially, as it is not possible to introduce the whole thing in Bangla overnight or all of a sudden.

By expanding through a gradual process, the situation will have to be brought to such a state when students of higher education in both private and public institutions are able to read, write, and answer examination questions in both Bangla and English. The students who are born outside the country and those who are not Bangalis or Bangladeshis can be kept outside this initiative. Higher education in Bangla and English should be compulsorily and effectively established for the



The month of February and Ekushey Book Fair; a good occasion of discussing about the concerns regarding Bangla Language

children of Bangali parents who were born and brought up in Bangladesh, which should continue for a long time until we have the capacity to accept Bangla as the lone medium of education. Therefore, our goal for the moment should be the attainment of bilingual capacity by our children after receiving higher education.

We shall have to advance quite far in the third stage. If we really want to enter the realm of higher education, we shall have to deal with the research level, and that research has to be done in Bangla. Another thing should be reminded here: it is often said that people like Satyen Bose had practiced science in Bangla. It is not true. What they did was presenting the flavour or essence of science in Bangla. It is only another kind of literature. Practicing science in one particular language and presenting the flavour of science are not the same thing. The practice of science in Bangla in truly academic sense has never happened. The scientists have occasionally publicised their own or other people's research among the public in simple language. We have mistakenly termed this as practice of science in Bangla. For real practice of science, use of Bangla in writing dissertations for higher degrees should be made compulsory. Writing of dissertations in Bangla alongside those in English should be ensured. This is possible only through sufficient financial allocations. If this is not done, then it is impossible to ensure the aristocracy and effectiveness of Bangla language. Through the weight of this aristocracy, the bogus discourses observed from the highest to the lowest echelons of education could be eliminated forever.

The people of Bangladesh from the upper to the lower classes are obsessed with an intense love for English because of their infatuation for ‘development’. This is, however, the reality all over the world. But there is a basic difference between us and the countries whose education systems appear to be acceptable and who have truly achieved progress. In those countries, the infatuations of individuals, families, or parties do not become the driving force for national education policies or systems. The national language becomes the carriers of education there. The state also makes sufficient arrangements for the learning of second or third languages. The situation is opposite in our case. Here, arrangements are made for forgetting the first language simply for facilitating the learning of English. The students are learning second or third languages abundantly across the globe alongside receiving education in their first language. But we are sacrificing our education only to learn the English language.

It is in this context that the history of state-language movement has become a necessary excuse for us. That could materialise due to the all-pervasive cultural voyage emanating from Ekushey February. The whole month of February has become important because of this day; and its practicality has assumed a different shape over the past few decades centring on the holding of Ekushey Book Fair. The love for Ekushey in the collective mindset of middleclass people appear to have played a major role behind this popularity of the book fair. February has become the month of language in our public discourse as well as bookish language. This language is Bangla. Consequently, a culture and tradition has evolved for discussing about the Bangla language centring on Ekushey February in the larger domain of mass media. A culture of presenting theoretical cum applied discourses on building a ‘democratic’ and ‘developed’ Bangladesh has also been built over a long period centring on February.

The first stage in building a democratic country is the use of people’s language in all public domains including education. A huge segment of citizenry become victims of being viewed differently through the use of a language that has been learned by a few people. The culture that has been built for reviewing the language and the state in the month of February has generated huge opportunities for holding discussions on urgent issues of state-building.

The excuse of 21 February for introducing Bangla in all strata of society is not at all sufficient. But it is possible to advance the effective discourses for building a democratic and developed Bangladesh by utilising the culture of urgent and appropriate discussions centring on our language. That may be an essential step for the flourishing of our democracy and advancement.

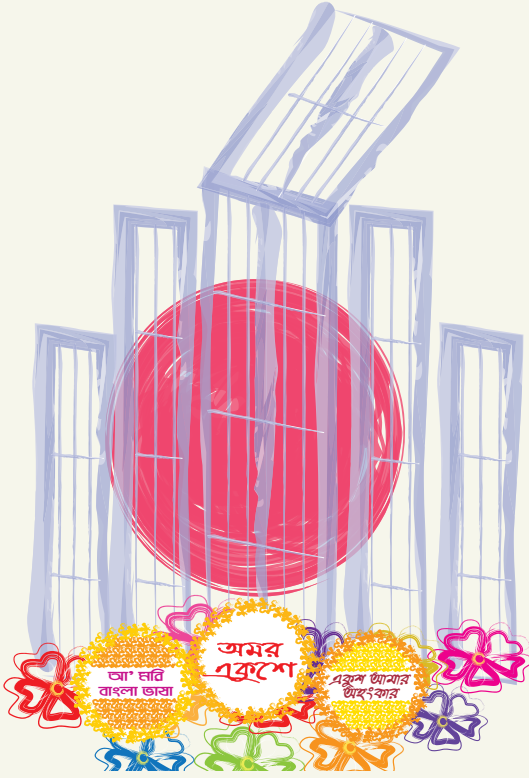
Translation: Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

Writer : Director General of Bangla Academy

Reference and Courtesy : Special supplement on 21 February 2025, Press Information Department.

Bangla – My Tongue

Abdul Hye Sikder



Who teaches the bird to fly?
The river on how to tread a path?
The thorns of wood remain awake
For guarding the flowers!

Who taught the kitten
To find the milk?
Why do the birds sing forever
At daytime and nightly hours?
Why does the moon bloat and shrink?
The foams fall on the sea?
The pitcher of the blue hue
Tilts in a lake of the sky!

Procession of stars at night,
Light all around at daytime,
Whenever the sun shakes or frets
Colours change from white to black.
The path of good and bad
Are not always smooth –
The days are only made
By spilling the blood from heart.

Please call injustice an injustice
Tell oppression to go away
Please march in a procession
To bring smile to mother's face.
Light up the lamp of freedom
Grow the garden of flowers,
Giving up life for one's country
Can bring true contentment.

Who taught the embroidered quilt?
The display of gentle affection?
Who fills up the open field
With the song of human love?

Returning to this empty heart
Who has brought back hope?
The answer in one word –
Bangla – my tongue.

My tongue is Lalon Fakir
My tongue is river
My tongue is sorrow and mirth
The flow of life forever.
Harmony and affection
Fill my heart,
The world's conqueror –
My tongue– a sun-draped home.

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed

*Reference and Courtesy : Special supplement on
21 February 2025, Press Information Department.*



Independence Day 2025 : A Different Kind of Feeling

Farida Akhter

Flags of various sizes are seen flying atop the rickshaws, motor vehicles, and buildings. The flag is a symbol of our independence; therefore, the people harbour a different kind of love towards it.

I have a different kind of feeling this year on the occasion of Independence Day-2025. The July-2024 upsurge of the students and masses has freed the country again. The people of Bangladesh became independent once again on 5 August 2024 after 36 days of blood-drenched movement, because of the self-sacrifices of about 1,500 martyrs and over 23,000 injured activists. This is the view of almost all with the exception of members of ousted regime and its collaborators. Known as the 36-day movement, it was extended up to 5 August after crossing the month of July. It succeeded in bringing down a fascist regime that became entrenched over a period of 15 years. That was not an easy task. Young women and men were at

Bangladesh is an independent country. The people of this country have never condoned wrongs, injustices, and repression. Following the declaration of independence on 26 March 1971, the country achieved victory on 16 December after waging a 9-month-long blood-drenched liberation war. A long path has been traversed after that; the country has survived in the global arena after crossing half a century despite numerous obstacles. The people of the country have always sought a country that upholds justice and human dignity. Innumerable people have sacrificed their lives during different movements and struggles. However, the citizens celebrate the Independence Day together every year irrespective of their party or opinion with joy and festivity. They wear the red and green dresses.

the forefront of this mass upsurge. People were amazed when they saw that a new generation of citizens were spilling blood while protesting against discriminations; many chose a life of suffering when they lost their limbs or eyes while fighting for the country. When we listen to their stories now, we find that they went out of their homes despite the firing of bullets outside. They did not join the struggle out of any whim. Before going out, they said, “Mother, If I don’t return...”. Through their sacrifices, they saw a new dream – the dream of building a new Bangladesh. They, therefore, had no fear. People were oppressed by the fascist rulers for long 15 years, from which they have now been freed. The youths who belong to the age-group of 20-25 years, have witnessed only fascist rule since their adolescence. They could not see anything else except a particular profile and a specific narrative regarding the history of Bangladesh. We now want to see Bangladesh in a new shape on the occasion of ‘Independence Day’-26 March 2025, in the light of the dreams of those youths.

Those of us who witnessed the liberation war in 1971 are getting the taste of becoming independent twice. But for those who have freed themselves on 5 August by waging a relentless movement, it is their first independence. They were the citizens of a country called Bangladesh, but they were not independent. Let us have a look at their age. According to the Population and Housing Census 2024, the projected population of Bangladesh in January 2024 was over 170 million. The number of females was found to be higher than males by 3.19 million during this



In 1971, youths fought for Liberation and achieved victory



In 2024, students also fought against discrimination and achieved victory

count. This was not observed during the previous censuses. Therefore, the share of females in the population is now more than half. Females were lagging behind quantitatively in the past, but that is no more the case now.

And another important feature is that, 60 percent of the 170 million population belong to the age-group of 0-25 years. Of them, 27 percent are below 15 years. Therefore, the remaining 33 percent are the youths belonging to the age-group of 16-25 years. What an amazing demographic attribute. The youths of this age can cause explosion. Those who were on the roads during the July upsurge had a similar age-tag. Most of them belonged to this very age-group. A large segment of those who embraced martyrdom and those who are still in hospitals with injuries were of this age. If we look back at history, those who went to the liberation war in 1971 were mostly youths of this age. Those who fought against the British colonial rule were also youths of this age. What was the age of Khudiram? He was only 18 years 7 months 11 days old at the time of his hanging. Preetilata was 21 years old during her martyrdom. We can see them if we look at old pictures. The youths have always brought about changes and transformations. They made the impossible possible. This is happening even now. History is bound to repeat itself.

Neither them, nor their parents had witnessed the liberation war of 1971. They learnt about the war of liberation and independence from the one-sided narratives in text-books and television channels. And they saw that the people did not have the right of free speech in real life. They could not demand the realization of their rights despite passing their days in agony. They were arrested, imprisoned, murdered, and subjected to enforced disappearances. The lives of those who did not support the Awami League were in peril. They have witnessed these injustices

since their childhood. Those who became eligible for voting after crossing 18 years wanted to vote. But they could not cast their votes during the farcical elections of 2014, 2018, and 2024. They could never see democracy except in the pages of their text-books. Many had hoped that a fair election would be realized through rigorous movement of opposition parties. But that hope never materialized.

Many of these youths were not previously seen much in social movements. They were not visible in women's movement, or health-rights movement – no, they were not seen. The number of older people were more in those movements. Many people then lamented: where is the new generation? The society could not progress without their awareness. However, when these youths become decisive about something, then the situation becomes different. When they descend on the streets, they come down in groups. Now they have mobile phones in their hands, and they have Facebook. They can come whenever called. It is also very easy to pass on news to each other. We observed that during the movement for quota reforms and the safe road movement waged by students in 2018; they spread in all directions after swarming the city of Dhaka. All eyes were on them. They demonstrated exceptional courage and intelligence. As the fascist regime became fearful, they not only suppressed the movement with the help of police, they also deployed the Chhatra League cadres and the Helmet Bahini terrorists to remove the children from the roads by applying brute force. We were silenced. We protested, but nothing came out of that.



In 2024 quota movement, females played a pioneer role to reform this illogical system

The reason why this Independence Day is all the more important to me is because the womenfolk were at the forefront of the July-movement. Not only were they present, they led the movement. The independence that I am speaking about has been an achievement of the womenfolk. When the university students waged the anti-quota movement in 2018, the females participated in that and the leadership was in the hands of the students. The participation of female students in anti-quota movement was significant, because the women were also getting the benefit of 5 percent quota reserved for women. It could be said that they were the beneficiaries of quota system. No doubt, maintaining this quota for women in government jobs was advantageous for many females. However, even then the womenfolk chanted the slogan: “Not quota, but talent, talent”. They said, “We seek jobs on merit, not mercy of anyone”. This firm stand of the womenfolk geared up the movement. When Sheikh Hasina called the protesters ‘Razakar’, it was the female students of Dhaka University and Eden Girls’ College who started the protests at midnight. The male students later joined them. They stood like shields when the police tried to swoop on their male comrades.

It is almost eight months now. A new situation, a new condition prevails now. An interim government ‘selected’ by the students and masses after the upsurge has been constituted, of which they are also a part. This is a new experience. The common people have accepted this, and they are hoping that improvements would be made to the vulnerable economic condition of the country. They would get some relief. But this task has become very difficult due to economic devastations caused by corruption and lootings of the deposed regime. Besides, although the fascist regime was ousted, much of their system still remains. Many of its collaborators also remain, who are still bent on creating problems. However, opportunities have been created for many jobs under the changed circumstances, attention to which was not paid by the ousted regime. The regime raised slogans of ‘development’, but those were mostly confined to constructing huge buildings, roads, bridges, etc. But they did not pay attention to improving the living standard of the people. All humans seek honour and prestige in their lives. Taka in billions need not be spent for that. Proper planning and reaching its fruits to the marginalised population can bring about a different kind of development. That is, development of human beings. They live in remote places, hills, or char-lands (shoals) of rivers; where development does not trickle down automatically. But now, that effort has to be made, so that people live in joyous and healthy circumstances.

Whether male or female, rich or poor, people belonging to all religions shall live together harmoniously in this new Bangladesh. The honour of all citizens will be protected; this is our little expectation.

Translation: Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed

Author: Adviser, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

Reference and Courtesy : Special supplement on 26 March 2025, Press Information Department.



International Women's Day

Zaidul Alam

On 8th March every year, people around the globe come together to celebrate International Women's Day (IWD), a day dedicated to recognize the achievements of women and promoting gender equality. This global event serves as a reminder of the ongoing struggle for women's rights and the importance of creating a more inclusive and equitable world.

For the women of the world, this Day of 8th March is an occasion to review how far they have come in their struggle for equality, peace and development. Even though about half of the world population is women and they have a significant contribution in the rise of civilization, but unfortunately, decade after decade women of the world are oppressed, suppressed and their contribution in different stages of life is under enumerated. Actually for a sound and sustainable development it is pertinent to ensure the equal justice towards women.

Realizing the importance of the fact, the United Nations General Assembly in 1977 formally proclaimed the celebration of International Women's Day to recognize that for peace and social progress and security, active participation and establishing equality of women is must along with acknowledging the contribution of women world wide.

Background of the Day

Though the International Women's Day has been observed since 1975 in an organized way, there is a long history behind observing this day. History says, the International Women's Day has been observed since early 1900's, a time of great

expansion and turbulence in the industrialized world, that saw booming population growth and the rise of radical ideologies.

In 1869, British MP John Stuart Mill was the first person in Parliament to call for women's right to vote. On 19 September, 1893 New Zealand became the first country in the world to give women the right to vote. Women in other countries did not enjoy this equality and campaigned for justice for many years.

In 1910, a second International Conference of Working Women was held in Copenhagen, Denmark. A woman named Clara Zetkin (Leader of the 'Women's Office' for the Social Democratic Party in Germany) tabled the idea of an International Women's Day. She proposed that every year in every country there should be a celebration on the same day - a Women's Day - to press for their demands. The conference of over 100 women from 17 countries, representing unions, socialist parties, working women's clubs, and including the first three women, elected to the Finnish parliament, greeted Zetkin's suggestion with unanimous approval and thus International Women's Day was the result.

The very first International Women's Day was launched the following year by Clara Zetkin on 19 March, not 8 March. The date was chosen because on 19 March in the year of the 1848 revolution, the Prussian king recognized for the first time the strength of the armed people and gave way before the threat of a proletarian uprising, among the many promises, he made which he later failed to keep, was the introduction of votes for women. Gradually Plans for the first International Women's Day demonstration were spread through words and press. During the week before International Women's Day, different articles were published. And all articles emphasized the same point that it was absolutely necessary to make parliament more democratic by extending the franchise to women.

In 1913, International Women's Day was transferred to 8 March and this day become the global date for International Women's Day ever since. During International Women's Year in 1975, International Women's Day was given official recognition by the United Nations and was taken up by many governments. International Women's Day is marked by a national holiday in many countries like China, Armenia, Russia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Vietnam etc.

Importance of the Day

Undoubtedly, the origin of a child is a mother, a woman - she shows what loving, caring and sharing is all about. Indeed a woman's essence lies in her innate ability to care, love and sacrifice for others. She plays an all-enveloping character of a mother, daughter, wife and sister as a friend, nurturer, guide and partner at different phases. Emotional and vulnerable, sometimes serene, she displays a wonderful range of emotions from being patient to being extremely courageous in times of crisis.



Save the Children, in collaboration with various stakeholders, celebrated International Women's Day 2025, organizing the Empowering Women for a brighter future

Tormented and subjugated throughout all times and ages, women have fought even after facing exploitation, harassment, and have managed to secure their rights in the public domain. In spite of continuing exploitation and injustice against women both in the domestic and work sector today, several milestones have been achieved in terms of education, freedom of choice and liberty, equality etc. With growing literacy and financial independence women feel more empowered today to assert their right, to a life of dignity and self worth. The International Women's Day, celebrated on 8th March, is a universal day for all women around the world. It endows them with a sense of honour, dignity and self respect for being the person that they are.

This day marks a celebration of the economic, social, cultural and political achievements, made by women over the years.

Every year hundreds of events are held throughout the world to mark International Women's Day on 8 March. The occasion provides an opportunity to think about the persisting gender inequalities that prevail in most societies and also draw inspiration from innovative efforts underway to address these injustices. Some might think that women's equality benefits mostly women, but every one-percentile growth in female secondary schooling results in a 0.3 percent growth in the economy. Until men and women work together to secure the rights and full potential of women, lasting solutions to the world's most serious social, economic and political problems are unlikely to be found.

Women and Development World

Today's world is changing at a startling pace. Political and economic transformations seem to be occurring everywhere as countries convert from command to demand

economies, dictatorships move toward democracy, and monarchies build new civil institutions. These changes have created economic opportunities for women who want to own and operate businesses. Despite women's participation in the socio-economic and political development, women have less access to manage their money. Demographic factors such as education, household income, age and marital status influence how a woman manages her money. Women do two-thirds of the world's work but receive only 10% of the world's income. Besides, the majority of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor are women. On average, women receive between 30 and 40 per cent less pay than men earn for the same work. Furthermore, everywhere women continue to be victims of violence, with rape and domestic violence listed as significant causes of disability and death among women of reproductive age worldwide.

Though the political participation of women has significantly increased in the recent era throughout world, women occupy 13.8% of parliament seats around the globe. Regional averages of percentage of women in parliament vary greatly. The Nordic countries have the highest percentage with and the Arab states have the lowest with women occupying. The other regions fall somewhere in between with the Americas at 15.6%, Europe at 13.8%, Asia at 14.9%, Sub-Saharan Africa at 12.5% and the Pacific at 13.6%. From 1945 to 1995, the percentage of women MPs worldwide increased four-fold.

Devoid of success in some areas, there are some issues which should be considered with great attention and extensive task should be done on these, as women are significantly under-represented in some areas and still 80% of the world's 27 million refugees are women, 530,000 women die in pregnancy or during childbirth each year.

International Instruments/Declarations/Treaties

As a member state of the United Nations, Bangladesh Government has signed and ratified several International treaties and agreements. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1953, the Convention on Consent to Marriage Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, 1962, the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1984, the International convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990, the International Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1966, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, Amendment to Article 43 (2) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1995 are the most remarkable among them.

International Women's Day and Bangladesh

International Women's Day is being observed in Bangladesh amidst renewed pledge to protect women's rights and with assurance to make women's participation in all spheres of national life in Bangladesh. Articles 10, 27, 28 (1) (2) (4), 29 (2),



Chief Adviser Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus honoured outstanding women with “Indomitable Women’s Award-2025” for their significant contributions to various fields as part of government initiative to pay due respect and inspire them through recognising their contributions on March 8, 2025

29(3) (C), 65 (3) of the Constitution of Bangladesh, 1972 emphasize on the rights of women. Besides, there are some special laws and provisions which protect and promote the rights of women. Unlike other member states of the United Nations, Bangladesh Government has formulated a Women’s Development Policy on the basis of PFA (Platform for Action) and work accordingly for its implementation. Different line Ministries of the Government has taken some positive initiatives to promote gender equality and to integrate women with the mainstream of development. Actually to promote gender equality, economic and political empowerment are the prime area to emphasize.

Along with Government, some nongovernment organizations of Bangladesh have been working on this issue and trying to accelerate the position of women from the root level to policy level.

In recent decades, much progress has been made. Over all women’s access to education and proper health care has been increased; their participation in the paid labor force has grown; and legislation that promises equal opportunities for women and respect for their human rights has been adopted even in many developing countries like Bangladesh. The world now has an ever - growing number of women participating in the society as policy-makers. It is a matter of hope that in the near future nowhere in the world women can claim to have equal rights and opportunities as men.

Celebrating Women’s Day

International Women’s Day is celebrated in many ways around the world from marches and rallies to conferences and cultural events. The day often features keynote speeches, panel discussions, and workshops on topics related to gender equality and women’ empowerment.

Many organizations including the United Nations focus on International Women's Day to launch new initiatives and campaigns, aimed at advancing women's rights and promoting gender equality. These initiatives may focus on issues such as ending violence against women, increasing women's political participation, or supporting women entrepreneurs

On an individual level, people can celebrate International Women's Day by:

- ❑ Educating themselves about women's issues and the ongoing fight for gender equality
- ❑ Supporting women-owned businesses and organizations that empower women
- ❑ Advocating gender equality in their workplaces and communities
- ❑ Challenging gender stereotypes and bias in their daily lives
- ❑ Celebrating and acknowledging women in their lives and contributions.

Theme for International Women's Day in 2025

International Women's Day (8 March, 2025) is a day for us to join voices with people around the world and shout our message for equal rights loud and clear: "Women's rights are human rights!"

We celebrate womanhood in all their diversities. We embrace their facets and intersections of faith, race, ethnicity, gender or sexual identity, or disability. We celebrate those who came before us, those who stand beside us now, and those who will come on wards.

It's a time to celebrate the achievements of women, whether social, political, economic or cultural.

So we should try to make every day International Women's Day, do our bit to ensure the future of the girls bright, equal, safe, and rewarding.

Conclusion

International Women's Day is a powerful reminder of the ongoing struggle for gender equality and the importance of creating a world where women have equal rights, opportunities, and representation. By celebrating the achievements of women, raising awareness about the challenges they face, and advocating for change, we can work towards to have a more just and equitable future for all.

As we commemorate International Women's Day, let us renew our commitment to empowering women worldwide and creating a society where every individual, regardless of gender, can thrive and reach their full potential.

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Reform Commissions for Curbing Corruption

Dr. Helal Uddin Ahmed

to corruption. It was linked to the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1947 and the Penal Code of 1860 with regard to offences. The former defined corruption as: (i) dishonest or fraudulent misappropriation or otherwise converting for one's own use any property entrusted to him or under his control as a public servant, or allowing any other person to do so; (ii) obtaining valuable things or pecuniary advantage by corrupt or illegal means, or by otherwise abusing his position as public servant; (iii) amassing wealth beyond known source of income. Subsequently, the then caretaker government framed the ACC Rules in 2007 to infuse fresh impetus to its anti-corruption drive.

In the above backdrop, soon after assuming office, the current interim government of Bangladesh led by the Nobel Laureate Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus constituted a commission headed by the eminent corruption-fighter and TIB-chief Dr Iftekharuzzaman to recommend measures for reforming the ACC. The commission has already submitted its recommendations, which are now being considered for implementation by the government.

The PARC was constituted by the then government back in January 1997 to recommend policies, programmes and activities for improving the level of efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, and transparency in public sector organizations of

One of the long-term recommendations of the Public Administration Reform Commission (PARC) that submitted its report in 2000 was to establish an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). Subsequently, the Government of Bangladesh did establish an Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) in 2004 by doing away with the Bureau of Anti Corruption. But the ACC has proved to be 'same wine in a new bottle', as it is no more independent than its previous incarnation, and the executive branch continues to wield similar direct and indirect control over it.

The ACC came into being under the Anti Corruption Commission Act, 2004, which provided a framework to prevent corruption and other corrupt practices in the country, conduct investigation, file cases for specific offences, and deal with other relevant matters related



Bribing is always an unwelcomed issue

Bangladesh. There was a global movement then towards adoption of the concept of New Public Management (NPM), i.e. performance-based and result-oriented administration – by upholding the rights of citizens for better and cheaper services. The Commission was headed by a distinguished retired civil servant and former DG of CIRDAP Dr. ATM Shamsul Haque as the chairman and included many luminaries in the field as members. The Commission submitted a comprehensive 3-volume report to the government in June 2000, covering many areas like improvement of public service delivery, civil service reforms, reorganization of institutions and rationalisation of manpower, restructuring and decentralising the field administration, combating corruption, reducing wastage, promoting value for money, strengthening parliamentary oversight, facilitating private investment, and devising a mechanism for implementing PARC recommendations.

It was a world-class report which synthesised many previous reports on public sector reorganization and reform since independence and incorporated the latest trends in public management all over the world including Bangladesh. But unfortunately, it was not implemented by the then government as it colluded with the vested interests; and thus ended a bold attempt to overhaul and reform the country's age-old administrative system.

The present article focuses specifically on the assessment and recommendations of PARC on combating corruption in the public services of Bangladesh. The recommendations were divided into interim, short, and long-term ones. The following is an abridged version of the situation analysis and prescriptions put forward by PARC on curbing corruption in the country.

Background: The word ‘corruption’ extends over a vast area of human activities and can be of many types. Corruption in the public sector has been defined as the abuse of official power for serving personal interests. Misuse of official power for personal gain takes place when an official seeks, takes, or forcibly elicits bribe or unfair benefits. Corruption is widespread in public life and public administration in the countries of South Asia including Bangladesh. It takes place at both political and bureaucratic levels – either separately or jointly. Outside the country, it can

happen in international business transactions as well. Secret transactions of money for personal interests or gains have become somewhat routine in both public and private sectors. And these transactions often take place in such a planned way that they are known as ‘speed money’, ‘grease money’ or ‘kickback’.

Corruption in the Private Sector: Corruption is not confined to the public sector alone. In fact, the private sector is also closely involved in corruption and these two sectors play a complementary role to each other. Whether institutional or individual, corruption in the public sector seldom happens without the involvement of the private sector. The citizens may consider the public offices as the sources of corruption, but the private sector is largely responsible for making the government offices corrupt while attempting to extract benefits for themselves.

While interacting with the government or during commercial transactions, the private sector gets involved in corruption in many ways. For example, the privately-owned companies often do not declare their real assets or real incomes to the tax authorities, and resort to tax evasion by paying less tax. For avoiding payment of dividends to shareholders, they often do not show the real picture of their business profits, and take recourse to unfair practices while issuing stocks.

There are allegations that the private corporate sector resorts to illegal means for advancing their business interests and rewards the relevant officials for the purpose. It is said that the private companies are pressurised to pay bribes for award of large contracts. The practice of over-invoicing and under-invoicing hampers revenue collection from import and export activities. Quantitative and qualitative fraudulence in domestic and international trade jeopardises the expansion of commodity markets within and outside the country.

Like other organizations, political parties in Bangladesh also need funds for running their activities. Receipt of subscriptions or grants from vested quarters for the purpose has become a common practice, and these quarters profit manifold when their party goes to power. If the fund collection process of the political parties is not made transparent and if publication of details about their sources of fund as well as expenditure is not made compulsory, it is natural that the election process would be harmed and party nominations would become a matter of auction to the highest bidders. The administrative system also becomes a patron of corrupt people then. Although the declaration of actual election expenditure is mandatory, the rival political candidates usually do not abide by that rule.

Causes of Corruption: The major causes of corruption are generally considered to be socioeconomic backwardness, weak enforcement of law, and inadequate punishment. Besides, excessive numbers of laws, rules and regulations as well as discretionary power of public officials also give rise to corruption. Monopolistic and discretionary powers help corruption spread its roots in many areas.

Other causes of corruption include lack of initiative for motivating government employees, inadequate salary, and insufficient scope for career progression. There may occur moral degeneration as well as preponderance of frustration among the public employees if merit and rule-based promotion is not honoured. In that case, the public officials may be forced to take recourse to lobbying and influence-peddling for advancing their careers.

When the employees observe that the higher officials and top functionaries are using their positions for advancing personal interests, then it becomes difficult for them to find motivation for remaining honest. Those who are staunchly against corruption remain silent in such circumstances due to a sense of insecurity.

Corruption may also take place when there is lack of openness and transparency in activities of the government, like tender evaluation in government organizations, tax fixation and financial transactions. Ambiguities in rules and methods for carrying out activities or rendering services may also provide scope for corruption. The dishonest officials often take advantage of such ambiguities.

Consequences of Corruption: Many weak decisions are taken due to corruption, which give rise to wastages in public expenditure. It adversely affects investments in development programs and foreign investments as well as slows economic growth. Macroeconomic stability may be hampered due to losses in revenue collection and excess expenditures owing to corruption. Socio-economic inequality may exacerbate and social problems may increase due to corruption. The debt burden of nations becomes excessive because of white elephant projects undertaken through bribery. The people have to pay high prices for goods or services due to addition of bribes to the production or transaction processes.

Existing Arrangements for Curbing Corruption: Side by side with administrative corruption, political corruption also exists in the country. The existing conduct rules for public officials are weak and often fail to provide directions to government servants for discharging their official responsibilities with honesty and integrity. The Bureau of Anti-Corruption (now called Anti-Corruption Commission) also needs to be streamlined and strengthened further.

According to the discipline rules, corruption is a punishable offence. Misappropriation and embezzlement of official funds is punishable under the services and treasury rules. Misappropriation of funds and public assets could have been effectively curbed through proper auditing by the office of Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), but this office has unfortunately not proved to be very robust or capable. Besides, auditing is often not done soon enough after actual transactions, and by then this accountability tool loses much of its relevance.

Causes of Failure in Curbing Corruption: Different institutions, rules, procedures, and codes of conduct dealing with corruption have been in vogue in Bangladesh since the pre-independence era. These have also undergone some changes over time. But one of the principal causes of corruption in the country continues to be lack of accountability. Another major cause is dearth of transparency. Deterioration of discipline in offices and courts, lack of commitment towards public services, and degeneration of ethical and moral values have all led to cumulative inefficiency and pervasive corruption.

In many developed countries like the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, the office of Ombudsman serves as an effective control mechanism.



Anti Corruption Commission was established for curbing corruption

Article 77(1) of Bangladesh Constitution provides for establishment of the office of an Ombudsman, whose powers and jurisdiction are to be specified by the parliament through passage of law. These include the power to investigate any action or work carried out by a government official or any statutory body. Establishment of the office of Ombudsman for investigating complaints lodged by the citizens is now very urgent. This office holds enormous promise for improving public service delivery as well as for curbing corruption.

PARC Prescriptions for Curbing Corruption: Administrative reforms are required for curbing corruption. There is a general consensus that apart from punishing the transgressor, a procedure should be put in place that curbs and discourages unfair practices. Corruption should be nipped at its very bud, because interconnected issues between the public and private sectors often give rise to misdeeds and corruption. Mere laws are not enough to eradicate corruption or irregularities. This can be achieved only by bringing about desired behavioural changes among the relevant individuals working in both public and private sectors.

Besides, preventive arrangements for curbing corruption must be integrated in the public administration structure. Supportive measures for the purpose may include enhancing the effectiveness of supervision and internal control, declaration of assets by government servants each year, mechanism for verification of assets by the general masses (as in Sri Lanka), and institutionalisation of rules prohibiting receipt of gifts and undue facilities by public officials and elected representatives.

The following interim, short, and medium-terms measures can be helpful in preventing and curbing corruption:

- a) Promoting interactive relationships with the civil society; instituting a mechanism for lodging complaints against objectionable conduct of government employees; ensuring swift response on the subject and establishing the right of people to get swift remedies.
- b) Emphasizing transparent decisions based on integrity and accountability.
- c) Promoting a procedure for unified or undivided responsibility, and a culture of acknowledging failures.
- d) Providing unfettered access to information for the citizens and the news media.
- e) Establishing a mechanism for citizens' audit of all service delivery organizations. The tasks performed by all officials should be audited and they should be judged against predetermined performance targets during these audits.
- f) Citizens should have options for getting public services from alternative spots and sources, as this may cut down monopoly power of bureaucracy. Similarly, discretionary powers of officials should be reduced to the minimum, and principles governing discretion should be stated clearly.
- g) Anti-corruption laws should be consolidated with incorporation of new provisions for punishing both the corrupt as well as those who instigate or aid corruption. The redress mechanism for grievances should be made time-bound, specific, and open.

Long-term Recommendations by PARC:

- (i) A modern code of conduct for civil servants should be put into operation in place of the outdated Government Servants (Conduct) Rules; a similar code should also be framed for the elected officials.
- (ii) The business community should be persuaded to adopt a code of conduct with provisions for denial of certain facilities in case of breach of the code.
- (iii) An Act may be framed by the government for regulating contributions to and subscriptions for political parties.
- (iv) An Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) should be set up with full powers for instituting inquiries against all officers and citizens of the country irrespective of their ranks and positions.
- (v) A Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) should be set up to deal with police corruption and misuse of power.
- (vi) The government should provide all needed information to citizens electronically in order to deliver services efficiently and transparently.
- (vii) The government should deregulate its non-core activities/functions and abolish or simplify archaic laws, rules, forms, and functions in order to curtail unnecessary harassment of citizens.

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Festivity and Sanctity of Ramadan in Bangladesh

Md. Shiplu Zaman



Melodious voice in chorus at mid-night around 3.30 am in a divine atmosphere at the old-Dhaka streets, urging people to have their mid-night meal to start the sacred period of fasting, gives a serene feeling - one can only experience this during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. The chorus is called “Kashida”, a kind of Gajal or Islamic song that gives a festive vibe in the holy month of Ramadan especially in old part of Dhaka.

Ramadan has been observed by Muslims worldwide for more than 14 centuries. Stemming from the Arabic root “ar-ramad”, Ramadan means scorching heat; Just like the blazing sun evaporates water from the surface of the ground, Ramadan burns away one’s sins (Dhaka Tribune, 2022). Ramadan is the month to purify the mind and edify the ways of life by prioritizing modesty and humbleness in every sphere of life; It is the month of Barakah and Rahmat (Financial Express, 2025). Ramadan reflects the holiness and devotion for Muslims across the world. In Bangladesh, this holy month reverberates religious observance to have spiritual rejuvenation, communal harmony, and cultural richness. The essence of Ramadan



Ramadan, a month of purity, sanctity and festivity

is deeply ingrained in the culture of Bangladeshi society, where tradition meets faith in a beautiful symphony of prayer, charity, and festivity. Bangladeshi Muslims eagerly wait for the season of prayer and purity, where they can gain maximum religious benefits to purify their hearts. Ramadan is the month of blessings, as Abu Hurayrah (RA) reported the Prophet (pbuh) as saying: “When Ramadan enters, the gates of Paradise are opened, the gates of Hellfire are closed and the devils are chained.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

As soon as the crescent moon heralds the arrival of Ramadan, a spontaneous energy sweeps through the country. The bustling streets take on a new rhythm,



Date is an indispensable and popular iftar item

mosques glow with the light of devotion, and homes become havens of prayer and togetherness. In Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk refraining from food, drink, and worldly distractions in a quest for having spiritual purity. It's a test of patience and religious commitment where none but oneself on one's own restrains one from eating, drinking and from worldly distractions until the evening prayer (adhan), in a quest of

having spiritual purity. Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam that to fast during the month of Ramadan is mandatory for all able Muslims. In the Quran, verse no 2:183, Allah says “O believers! Fasting is prescribed for you - as it was for those before you- so perhaps you will become mindful [of Allah].”

Devotion and dedication of the people in Bangladesh during Ramadan is heartwarming; young children are thrilled to keep their first fast where the elderly spend nights in deep prayer and tunes the entire nation moves in unison towards spiritual enlightenment.

Each day of Ramadan starts with Sehri and ends with Iftar (breaking of the fast at sunset). The word ‘Sehri’ is originated from an arabic word ‘sahur’ which means ‘of the dawn’ or pre-dawn meal. In Bangladesh the stillness of the night is punctuated by the siren calls from the distant mosque which is the announcements that urges people to wake up for the pre-dawn meal. Some traditional areas still preserve the age-old custom of night watchmen drumming through the streets to wake up the families for Sehri. Whereas, in old Dhaka, Kashida singers spend sleepless nights. In few areas competitions are arranged among kashida groups.

Long history tells us that parents and adults use to take their sehri as calmly as possible so that children remain a sleep and holiness stay intact. Now-a-days, ritual of Sehri takes a festive mood - people of different ages come out of home, arrange parties or go for eating out at restaurants. Menus at Sehri also switches from traditional rice-curry to various modern foods.



The biggest and famous Iftar market is in Chawkbazar, Old Dhaka city



Traditional and delicious Iftar items are always found in Chawkbazar

As the sun sets, calm and heavenly atmosphere of eager anticipation grips mood of silence prevails everywhere. Everyone gather around laden tables waits with utmost patience and waits for the maghrib adhan (call to pray) to break their fast with the first sip of water or a bite of a juicy date. People at the streets or shops share their Iftar with passers-by or customers, no matter they are Muslims or not. This is the lesson and beauty of Ramadan sharing and caring for each other. Classic items like piyaju (lentil fritters), beguni (battered eggplant), chhola (spiced chickpeas), muri (puffed rice), and jilapi (sweet spiraled fried dough) are kept in the menus of almost every home. Beyond homes, the country's streets and markets transform into vibrant Iftar hubs, where vendors sell a variety of delicacies and unique items with a festive vibes.

The biggest Iftar market of Dhaka is old city's Chawkbazar. It has been offering iftar to the Dhaka dwellers for over 400 years (Daily Sun, 2016). Hundreds of people throng the market to buy delicious Iftar treats, some of which have been part of the city's Ramadan tradition for centuries. Though, food choice in Iftar varies with generations.

Mosques become vibrant centers of prayer, hosting large congregations daily for five times. In addition, Taraweeh - a special prayer during Ramadan night after the isha prayer takes place in every mosque of the country. Tarweeh is an excellent opportunity to complete the whole Quran in prayers with the congregations. Though it takes about 1.30 hours, almost all the mosques remain full and a solemn atmosphere prevails during taraweeh.

Ramadan is not just about fasting-it is also about practicing generosity and empathy. We should feel the pain of the destitute and starved people of the society. The act of giving, known as Zakat and Sadaqah, holds special importance during this holy month. In Bangladesh, the spirit of charity reaches its peak with individuals and organizations stepping forward to stand beside the less fortunate in Ramadan. Zakat is an important pillar of Islam and it is mandatory to give Zakat properly. According to Sharia rule, one should donate 2.5% of one's surplus wealth above a minimum threshold (nisab). The 'nisab' is the minimum amount of wealth a Muslim must possess to be eligible to pay zakat. Gold and silver are the two values, used to calculate the nisab threshold. For 2025, the nisab is the value of 87.48 grams of gold or 612.36 grams of silver. Zakat purifies the wealth and helps reduce inequality in the society by sharing the wealth from rich to poor.

Moreover, wealthier families distribute food packages to underprivileged communities, mosques organize free mass Iftar meals, and businessmen allocate special funds for charitable causes. The streets of Dhaka and other cities witness countless acts of kindness, as volunteers hand out food and water to fasting rickshaw pullers, daily laborers and the homeless. This communal spirit of sharing and compassion solidifies the social fabric of the nation making Ramadan a time when social disparities momentarily fade away which gets replaced by unity and mutual care.

In recent years, Bangladesh's Ramadan traditions have evolved with advancements in media and technology. Television channels and online platforms broadcast special Ramadan programs including Quranic recitations, Islamic lectures and



Zakat is a way of purifying wealth and reducing inequality in society

cooking shows, dedicated to Iftar recipes. The digital revolution has also made accessing religious knowledge more convenient. However, mobile applications provide prayer times, daily supplications, and guidance on Zakat calculation.

Social media also plays a significant role in connecting people during Ramadan, with families sharing virtual Iftar gatherings, businesses promoting special Ramadan deals, and encouraging acts of kindness and positivism. Online fundraising campaigns gain momentum during this month, allowing people to donate to charitable organizations with just a few clicks.

As Ramadan nears its end, Muslims experience a most important night of Ramadan called the Lailatul Qadr (The Night of Power). This blessed night is believed to be when the Quran was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). With unparalleled spiritual fervor, the Lailatul Qadr is observed countrywide especially on the night of 27th Ramadan. Muslims across the country spend this night in deep supplication reciting the Quran and seeking forgiveness from the Almighty. Mosques overflow with devotees, many of whom stay engaged in prayer until dawn. In rural areas, groups of people gather for collective prayers, while in urban settings, Islamic scholars deliver sermons highlighting the significance of this sacred night. Allah said in Sura Al-Qadr verse 3, one night of prayer on the Lailatul Qadr is better than the prayers of a thousand months.

As the Ramadan approaches to an end, people become busy in celebrating Eid- the grand finale. When the crescent moon of Shawwal appears on the horizon, the air is thick with excitement. Ramadan culminates in the joyous festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, a day of thanksgiving and celebration. In the days leading up to Eid, Bangladeshi markets burst into life as families shop for new clothes, sweets, and gifts. Shopping malls experience an influx of eager customers looking for the perfect Eid outfit. Women adorn their hands with intricate henna designs, while children eagerly await their Eidi (monetary gift, given to younger family members). The night before Eid, known as Chand Raat, is a spectacle of festivity, where streets are illuminated, and the aroma of delicious home-cooked sweets fills the air.

Ramadan in Bangladesh is more than just a month of fasting; it is a time of transformation, spirituality, and unity. The spirit of this sacred month brings people together, strengthening familial bonds, fostering kindness and elevating faith. We all should try to follow the rules of Islam and Ramadan and thus try to keep the purity and sanctity of Ramadan intact all through our life.

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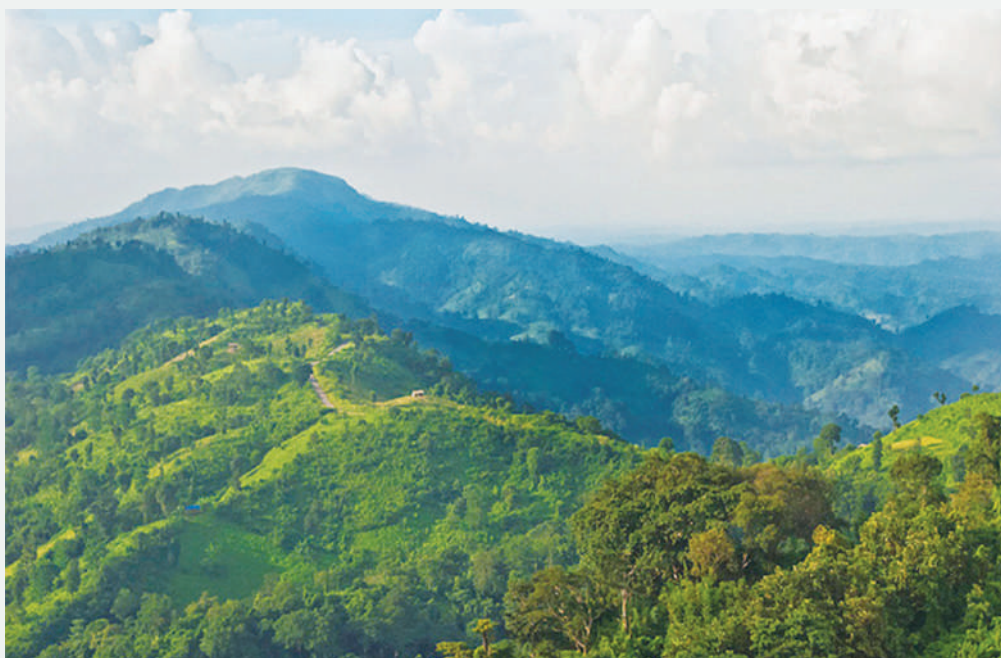


Bandarban Hill Tracts- Epitome of Tourist Attraction

Md. Ziaul Haque Howlader

Located in south-eastern part of Bangladesh, Bandarban is regarded as one of the most attractive travel places in the country. Bandarban is a district of Chittagong Hill Tracts region, and a part of the Chittagong Division. It is 92 km away from Chittagong. Among the three hill districts, Bandarban is the richest tourism destination having with multifarious tourist attractions. From the top of hill here, if a tourist looks at the ground, I am sure, he or she would not be able to differentiate whether it is Bangladesh or New Zealand.

Here one can find the highest peak of the country, spectacular water fall and gorgeous Buddhist temple, jovial and



A cloudly shade over the hill and greenary beauty surrounded through the Chimbuk-Hill gives amazing experience



Boga Lake : one of the most beautiful natural sweet water lake of Bangladesh

carefree ethnic people, many hill top markets and peak with lush green vegetation etc. A tourist can simply pass more than 2 weeks in Bandarban without being bored, because of its many of the tourist attractions. A tourist would not be able to conclude all the items to visit just in a week. Bandarban is also an ideal place for trekking and hiking.

Boga lake, Nilgiri, Nilachal, Chimbuk hill and Tribal village are the most attractive spots for Bandarban Hill Tracts. Other worth-visiting spots of this place are Prantik Lake, Jibannagar and Kyachlong Lake etc.

Bandarban is proud to have the highest Peak of the country along with many other mid-range hills. The three highest peak of Bangladesh are Tahjindong (1280 meters, also known as Bijoy). Mowdok Mual (1052 meters), and Keokradong (883 metres).

The eye-catching tourist attraction is Raikhiang Lake - the biggest lake in Bangladesh. Chimbuk peak and Boga Lake are the two more highly noted features of the district. Though most Bangladesh sources cite Keokradong as the highest peak in the country, Tazing Dong, (sometimes spelled as Tahjingdong, and also known as Bijoy), lying further east, is recognized both by government and expert sources as a taller peak. Measurements taken by English adventurer Ginge Fullen shows that an officially unnamed peak near the Myanmar border (locally known as Mowdok Mual) is the highest point in Bangladesh.

The River Sangu, also known as Sangpo or Shankha, the lone river born inside Bangladesh territory, runs through Bandarban is another beauty of the district.



Shoilaprapat

Tourist can make boat trip by a sampan (a double oared boat with a blunt aft and a flat bottom) or a regular boat down the River Sangu. The trip can vary from an hour trip, including a stop-over for tea, to a whole day cruise including stop-overs for food. Tourists will find people working in the river with bamboos, though this



Nilachal



Golden Temple or Swarna Mandir : The largest Buddhist Temple in Bangladesh

river is not very deep that many times the tourist boat might get stuck in the river bud.

Bandarban is famous for its Buddhist temple, one of the most eye-catching tourist spots. This temple is locally known as ‘Swarna Mandir’. It is also called ‘Buddha Dhatu Jadi’. It is the largest Buddhist temple in Bangladesh. It is located in Balaghata, 4 km from the town, one excellent places to visit. This Theravada Buddhist temple set atop a 60 meter hill, is made completely in the style of South-East Asian structure where houses a sacred relic, which is the second largest statue of Buddha in Bangladesh.

This touristically important district is also rich in many cultural festivals like Sangrai, Raj Punnyah, etc. The religious festivals that tourists can enjoy during his visit in Bandarban are -

Raj Punnyah : It is ceremonial rite of paying tribute and taxes (khazna) to the king of Bohmang circle happening in mid-February since 1885. The three-day festival at the royal palace features the king meeting his subjects in full regalia, accompanied by a ceremonial guard, and receiving tributes.

Sangrai : The biggest festival of the Marma tribesmen, siimilar to Boisabi of the Tripura and Bijou of the Chakmas. In mid-April, this celebration of the new year falls around the same time as Bengali Naba Barsha and Assamese Bihu. Apart from the songs and dances, Sangrai is marked by the water festival and magic charm competitions. Water festival is a game of splashing water from two sides of a marked arena by unmarried boys and girls on each other. It is said that splashing water is a way of declaring love interest for each other. Non-Marma people can't usually take part in the game.

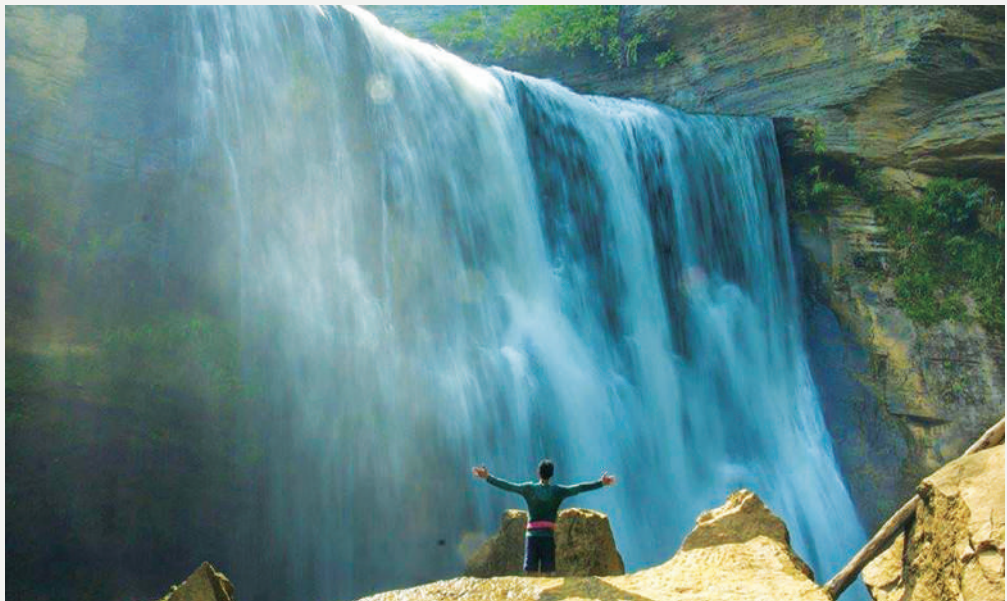
The other must-visit places for the tourists are:

Shoilopropat, Meghla and Nilachal. The waterfall named Shoilopropat at Milanchari, 4 km from the town on the road to Thanchi, is an excellent site. The other site, maintained by the District Administration is Meghla, 4 km from the town on the road to Keranihat, which features a mini-safari-park, a zoo, and a hanging bridge. The District Administration has also developed the Nilachal tourist site near Meghla in Tigerpara.

Raj Vihar and UjaniparaVihar : The numerous Buddhist temples, known as kyang in local tongue, and vihars in the town include the highly notable the Rajvihar (royal Monastery) at Jadipara. The monastery at Ujanipara, known as UjaniparaVihar, is also a major place of interest.

Chimbuk Hill and Tribal Villages : Chimbuk is one of the tallest peaks in Bangladesh that lies some 14 km from the town. Bawm villages around Chimbuk and Mru villages, a little further off, are also situated within a day's journey from the town.

Nil Giri : Nilgiri is one of the tallest peaks and beautiful places in Bangladesh and situated some 46 km from the town. There is beautiful resort at the top of the mountain.



Paindu Saitar Waterfall



Nilgiri : a wonderful chemistry of blue sky and green hill which is 2000 ft high from the sea

Boga Lake: A beautiful lake, surrounded by high hills and a small village just beside the lake. Boga Lake is one of the most beautiful natural lakes in Bangladesh. It is also known as Bagakain Lake. Boga Lake is 18 kilometer away from Ruma Sadar Upazila in Bandarban. The area of this lake is about 15 acres. It is situated about



Tajingdong, also known as Bijoy (1280 metres), is the highest peak of Bangladesh



Sangrai festival of the Marma indigenous community

3000 feet above sea level. The color of water of this lake is a beautiful blue. There are many mythological stories behind the creation of this lake. Tribal communities like Bawm, Khumi are located besides the Boga Lake. Many tourists make their way to Boga Lake every year, especially during winter. During the rainy season, it is quite difficult to visit Boga Lake, yet the beauty of the lake is breathtaking.

There are also many other places of interest in Bandarban for tourists, such as -

Tourist can also make hiking in the hills of Bandarban. A hike to either Keokaradong (883 m) or Tajingdong (967 m), is an exhilarating experience. On the side of both the peaks, reside the remotest tribes-people of Bangladesh - the Khumi and the Kuki. Boga Lake, one of the two highest lakes in Bangladesh lie directly on the trek, while the other, the Raikhiang Lake lies only a little off the way.

Tourists can also buy many unique souvenir and handicraft items here. There is an abundance of Burmese, Thai and Chinese trinkets, textile and other stuff in the town. But, the best buy is definitely the products of local handloom - cloth fabric, shawls, blankets and more - as well as products of bamboo, cane and wood - baskets, flutes, hats, mask and more. Therefore, we can say these unique tourist attractions altogether make Bandarban an ideal place for the travellers. A visit to Bandarban is always enjoyable and unforgettable, which makes Bandarban an epitome of all the tourist attractions in Bangladesh.

The author is GM (Planning) of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (Govt. Tourism Organization)



Wild Pigeons of Bangladesh

Professor Dr. A N M Aminoor Rahman

been released, giving rise to wild pigeons all over the world. They are, therefore, neither domesticated nor wild and referred to as feral pigeons. The scarcity of the pure wild species is partly due to interbreeding with these feral pigeons.

Pigeons belong to the bird order Columbiformes. Their size ranges from small to medium, with a somewhat substantial body, a small head, a small beak, and short legs. Flight muscles are fairly strong. As a result, they are capable of flying extremely quickly and at vast distances. The tail is as large as a fan. Pigeon species in this country are classified into a single family, Columbidae. This family includes both pigeons and doves. Pigeons, whether male or female, nurture their hatchling, which is known as squab, by feeding semi-liquid milk-like food produced in their crop, known as 'crop milk, pigeon milk, or dove milk'. There are 365 species in this order and family globally, but only 18 live in this country. Of these 18 species, 10 are pigeons and 8 are doves. All pigeon species that inhabit this country, are resident birds, which means they live in this country permanently. Of these species, seven belongs to the green pigeon group. These five new species of birds of Bangladesh are described in the present article.

01. Blue Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*): The species is also known as Common Pigeon or Rock Dove. People frequently refer to this species as "pigeon". Blue Rock Pigeon is the ancestor of domestic pigeons. Its Bangla name includes 'Jalali Kobutor', 'Jongla Kobutor', 'Buno Kobutor', 'Kopot or Gola Paira' (West Bengal). The species is widely distributed and quite common in Bangladesh. Wild

Pigeon is a symbol of peace. According to legend, the Romans were the first to recognize pigeon as a 'symbol of peace'. Human-pigeon interaction is very old. Biologists believe humans first encountered pigeons approximately five to six thousand years ago. About two thousand years ago, wild pigeons were tamed and domesticated. However, there are differing opinions about this. Furthermore, opinions differ on where pigeons were first tamed. Some claim in Libya, while others claim in Babylon or Egypt. Hazrat Shahjalal (RA), a Muslim Sufi saint and preacher of Islam, brought pigeons with him when he arrived in this country; their descendants are now known as 'Jalali Pigeons'. As a result, issues may arise, such as whether Bangladesh has an original lineage of wild pigeon species. Over the years, a large number of domestic pigeons have escaped or



A pair of Blue Rock Pigeons at Curzon Hall, Dhaka University

Rock pigeons are native to Europe, North Africa, and Southwestern Asia. But the feral pigeons are found worldwide. An adult bird's dimensions are 29 to 37 centimeters in length, 62 to 72 centimeters in wingspan, and 238 to 380 grams in weight. It can be found in warehouses, large structures, ledges, old ruins, and steep cliffs. It consumes shoots and spilled grains during the day.

02. Pale-capped Pigeon (*Columba punicea*): The other name of the species is Purple Wood Pigeon. The rarest and most endangered species of pigeon of the country is patchily distributed in parts of the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. Globally, it is listed as vulnerable to extinction by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Its Bangla name is 'Golapi Kobutor'. With a body length of



A female Pale-capped Pigeons at Jurong Bird Park, Singapore

36 to 40 centimeters, it is a huge pigeon and weighs 370 to 510 grams. Sources state that the species was sighted in Lawachhara National Park (LNP), Komolgonj, Moulvibazar, between 1988 and 1989. Despite my repeated visits to LNP, I have never seen the pigeon. However, in 2008, when visiting

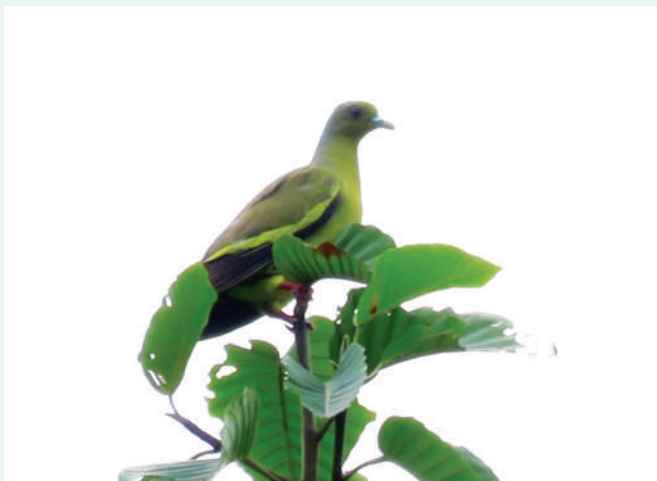


A pair of Orange-breasted Green Pigeon at Andharmanik, Sundarbans

Jurong Bird Park in Singapore, I was able to capture photograph of a female bird. It often resides in riverine forests on the plains, where it flies slowly and spends a lot of time perched in the leaves of huge fruit trees. It is a frugivore that forages in small groups beneath tree canopy, occasionally coming to the ground to collect fallen fruit and seeds.

03. Orange-breasted Green Pigeon (*Treron bicinctus*): It is a common resident bird of Bangladesh, which is known as ‘Horikol’ or ‘Komolabuk Harial’ in Bangla. Gola Paira is the term used in West Bengal. The species is found in tropical Asia, including Southeast Asia and the Indian Subcontinent, south of the Himalaya, aside from Bangladesh. Similar to other green pigeons, its primary food source is tiny fruit. They move slowly and silently while foraging on trees in pairs or small flocks. An adult bird’s length is 29 to 33 centimeters, and its weight ranges from 155 to 194 grams.

04. Ashy-headed Green Pigeon (*Treron phayrei*): This common resident pigeon of the country is also called Pompadour Green Pigeon. ‘Harel’, ‘Lona Harel’, or ‘Dhushor-matha Harial’ (West Bengal) are some of its Bangla names. In addition to Bangladesh, it can be found in several South and Southeast Asian countries. This fast-moving, gregarious bird typically flies alone or in small groups. It is 25 to 30 centimeters long and weigh 130 grams on average.



05. Thick-billed Green Pigeon (*Treron curvirostra*): It is also known as Thick-billed Pigeon, which is a common resident bird of Bangladesh. The species is called ‘Thoth Mota

A Grey-headed Green Pigeon at the top canopy of a tree at Kalenga Wildlife Sanctuary, Habiganj



Thick-Billed Green Pigeon at Satchari National Park, Habiganj

Harial' because of its somewhat broader beak compared to other wild pigeons. It is distributed throughout Southeast Asia and the eastern portions of the Subcontinent, extending from the Eastern Himalayas to Borneo and Sumatra. The pigeon measures 25 to 30 centimeters in length and weighs between 170 and 190 grams.

06. Yellow-footed Green Pigeon (*Treron phoenicoptera*):

The species is also known as the Yellow-legged Green Pigeon, which is the most conspicuous and very common green pigeon of Bangladesh. Its Bangla name includes 'Botkol', 'Harital', 'Boro Harial', 'Holde-pa Harial', or 'Holde-pa Shobuj Kopot'. It is referred to as Harial in West Bengal. It encompasses not only Bangladesh but also the entirety of India, Nepal, Bhutan, South China, Thailand, and Vietnam, as well as eastern Pakistan. The birds feed in groups and consume a



Yellow-footed Green Pigeon at Jahangirnagar University campus, Savar, Dhaka

variety of fruits, such as *Ficus* species. They have also been discovered in natural remnants in metropolitan areas including Dhaka city. In dense forest, they are frequently observed sunning in the early morning on the tops of emergent trees, notably banyan trees. The bird measures 33 to 35 centimeters in length, and weighs 225 to 260 grams.

07. Pin-tailed Green Pigeon (*Treron apicauda*): This rare and low-risk resident bird of Bangladesh is also known as the Pin-tailed Pigeon. The ‘Horikol’ or ‘Lej Chokha Harial’ is the Bangla name for this species, which is known as ‘Kokhla’ in West Bengal. The species, which is native to South and Southeast Asia, lives in the mixed evergreen forests of Northeast (Sylhet division) and Southeast (Chittagong division) regions of the country. Unfortunately, neither the Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary nor the National Parks of Kaptai, Satchari, or Lawachhara were able to yield the bird for me. The medium-sized green pigeon weighs between 185 and 255 grams and is 32 to 36 centimeters long with a long tail that is pin-pointed.



A pair of Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon at Satchari National Park, Habigonj

08. Wedge-tailed Green Pigeon (*Treron sphenurus*): It is a rare resident pigeon of this country, also known as Kokla Green Pigeon. Its Bangla name is ‘Harial’; in West Bengal, it is known as ‘Keelak Harial’. In addition to Bangladesh, it is found in Southeast Asia and the Indian Subcontinent. The species has a slightly shorter tail with a rounded tip than the comparably simple pin-tailed Green Pigeon, but the two are similar in appearance. Similar to other green-pigeon species, it often flies in pairs or small flocks, although it can sometimes gather in big groups at fruit trees, usually located high in the canopy. The bird measures 30 to 33 centimeters in length and weighs between 205 and 214 grams.



An Imperial Green Pigeon at Kaptai National Park, Rangamati

09. Green Imperial Pigeon (*Ducula aenea*): This species is sometimes known as the Northern Green Imperial Pigeon. It is a rare resident and is distributed in the hill forests of the northeast and southeastern parts of Bangladesh. Although it is known as ‘Dukal’ or ‘Sona Kobotor’ in West Bengal, the Bangla name is ‘Dhumkal’ or ‘Raj Harial’. From Malaysia to the Philippines and Indonesia, its worldwide range passes across South and Southeast Asia, including India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Malaysia. This species ranges in size from large to extremely large, with a medium to long tail. Adult bird weighs between 365 and 645 grams and measures 40 to 47 centimeters in length.

10. Mountain Imperial Pigeon (*Ducula badia*): This rare resident pigeon of Bangladesh is also known as the Maroon-backed Imperial Pigeon or Hodgson’s Imperial Pigeon. Its Bangla name is ‘Pahari Dhumkal’, or ‘Ducol’. It is restricted to the mixed evergreen forests of the Southeast (Chattogram division) regions of this country. The hills of South Asia, encompassing India, Nepal, Bhutan, southern China, Southeast Asia, and Indonesia, are its global range. An adult pigeon’s length and weight ranges from 40 to 47 centimeters and 580 to 665 grams, respectively.

With the exception of the Blue Rock Pigeon, all other wild pigeons inhabit in mixed evergreen, deciduous or mangrove forests, as well as in rural grooves or fruit orchards. They are frugivore and typically eat figs, and other small juicy



Yellow-footed Green Pigeon

fruits while strolling in small to medium-sized groups on the upper canopies of fruit trees. Can also eat grains and seeds. With the exception of drinking water and salty soil, they are primarily arboreal and rarely descend to the ground. On the other hand, Blue Rock Pigeons forages on the ground for grains and seeds.

The Blue Rock Pigeon breeds all year round, constructs its nests in groups in abandoned buildings, crevices in doors, and other places using sticks and twigs. On the other hand, depending on the species, green pigeons breed from March to August. They use sticks or twigs on tree branches to build nests that are deeper and less flimsy than those made by doves. Usually, two white eggs are laid, although some species only lay a single egg. Eggs hatch after 12 to 21 days of incubation, depending on the species, and both male and female incubate the eggs. Depending on the species, squabs can acquire the ability to fly in 10 to 13 days or 21 to 28 days. Life expectancy is 4 to 7 years, depending on the species.

The writer and photographer of this article is a Wildlife Veterinary Biologist and Professor of Gazipur Agricultural University, Gazipur-1706

A child with curly hair, wearing a light blue hoodie and dark pants, is walking away from the viewer down a path. The path is composed of vibrant, overlapping paint strokes in shades of blue, yellow, orange, and red, creating a dreamlike, artistic atmosphere. The child's shadow is cast on the path ahead of them.

Every Threat is an Opportunity

Ahnaf Siddique

The light slipped away.
The mercury dropped
below zero, yet hope
tried to resurface. The frost drove its
teeth into happiness. The bone-chilling gusts
smothered my soul. The tundra appeared endless.

In March 2022, when my family returned to our motherland Bangladesh after four years on South African soil, I thought life would be blissful. Man, was I wrong!

Leaving behind my friends, especially the two closest ones Thomas and Alex, was utterly crushing. When we laughed on remote voice-chat now, the level of amusement simply was not satisfactory. At the school in Dhaka, I could not speak properly in Bengali, as my accent was foreign-like. The classmates seemed to be ignoring me, and I gained no companion. I therefore seldom spoke.

Moreover, as my parents were too preoccupied with their jobs, it was me all alone inside an Uber going to the school. It was daunting, because if the car broke down, I would have to deal with the situation all alone.

Academic discourses were my life; but now, with a numb soul, the sight of pen, paper and books irritated me. As a result, I received a C in my first class-test. This severely mowed down my interest in studies.

One night, I watched a YouTube Short by Noel Deyzel, where he outlined his comeback from low self-esteem. His concluding words – “It all starts with something uncomfortable, and it’s just a matter of time” – soothed my soul. I thought, certain events could lift me up from this hellish situation. Just the right propellant had to be found.

Thereafter, I began to watch the 30-minute-long Youtube videos on pronunciation and vocabulary. In class, I started to talk more for practicing speech.

Although smirks and weird looks occasionally doused my spirit, they actually energised me to eagerly wait for the videos. The courage to open my mouth then solidified at each instance of mockery. Moreover, apart from classmates, I began conversing with Uber drivers, mostly about the market and petrol prices. In essence, I suddenly discovered that hurdles actually bolstered my determination to accomplish goals.

The videos rekindled my love for education. In addition, my self-written study-notes evolved from mere scribbles to broader and colourful summaries. Once in a physics class, I noticed that the concepts of stationary waves and diffraction grating were wearing down my classmates; so I decided to share these notes with them. When I was announcing this to classmates, even though my Bengali had not exited the gutter, not a single face bore any comical expression. These were fewer and fewer from that day onward.

From the Uber drivers, I got glimpses of grown-up life. The discussions about their 12-hour shifts made me appreciate how laborious it can be to earn a living. I finally realised that my parents did not get their salaries by merely sitting in front of a desk. Hence, when my mom told me recently that I would have to wait 3 months before getting a MacBook, I did not resort to complaining!

Furthermore, these chats melted my fear of travelling alone. While laughing, I felt as if Thomas and Alex were next to me.

Surely, I somewhat regained my satisfaction with life. But now, I aim to capitalize on the lessons learnt. I hope to initiate and cultivate relationships by helping academically weak individuals through gratuitous tutorial sessions. I also plan to kick-off donation drives to financially support the homeless, and the overworked taxi drivers.

The light may slip away again, the cold may be back, but my skin will be thicker. ‘Every threat is an opportunity’ – as the saying goes.

Writer of this write-up is a Student of University of Long Island, New York

Focus from Dailies...

Major National Events

January – March



Chief Adviser Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus speaks at the inaugural ceremony of the 29th Dhaka International Trade Fair-2025 at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre at Purbachal township on January 1

1 January, 2025

Strengthen export base with investment

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on January 1 urged the country's business community and entrepreneurs to come forward to strengthen its export base with more investment in the services sector to boost overall exports on the competitive global market.

‘We need to enhance our exports. I urge all business people to come forward to invest more in the services sector in addition to products to boost our exports,’ he said while inaugurating the 29th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF)-2025 at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre at Purbachal.

The Chief Adviser said, every year there is an initiative to announce a “Product of the Year” and this year furniture product is the product of the year.

The Chief Adviser highlighted the government's initiative to promote Bangladesh's products in the global market with its diversified presence.

He said, Bangladesh's Ready Made Garment (RMG) has already secured a leading position in the global apparel market.

Dr Yunus said, the export trade is playing a significant role in cutting poverty and unemployment in addition to earning foreign currencies. ‘It's playing an important role in strengthening Bangladesh's economy.’ He formally inaugurated the month-long fair.

Commerce Adviser Sk Bashir Uddin was among others present.

Like the previous years, the Ministry of Commerce and the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) jointly organised the fair. *Source: The Financial Express*

1 January, 2025

Health cards for victims launched

The Bangladesh interim government Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus, on January 1 launched health card distribution programme for the victims of the student-led mass uprising that ousted the longest-serving Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5, 2024.

The injured victims will get free of cost treatment at any public hospital across the country by showing this health card.

The CA at an event held at State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka handed over the card to two victims—Ifat Hossain, a student of Narshingdi United College and Israt Jahan Emu, a Dhaka University student. Both were injured in July protests.

Professor Yunus said that it was the state's responsibility to ensure healthcare for July victims and the state would do that.

Among others, Health Adviser Nurunnahar Begum and her special assistant Sayedur Rahman were present.



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus and victims of the student-led mass uprising pose for a photo after the launch of the health card distribution programme for the victims at the state guest house Jamuna on January 1

Meanwhile, the Mass Uprising Special Cell urged the families of deceased and injured individuals in the July-August student-led mass uprising who have not yet been included in the government's list to apply by January 31.

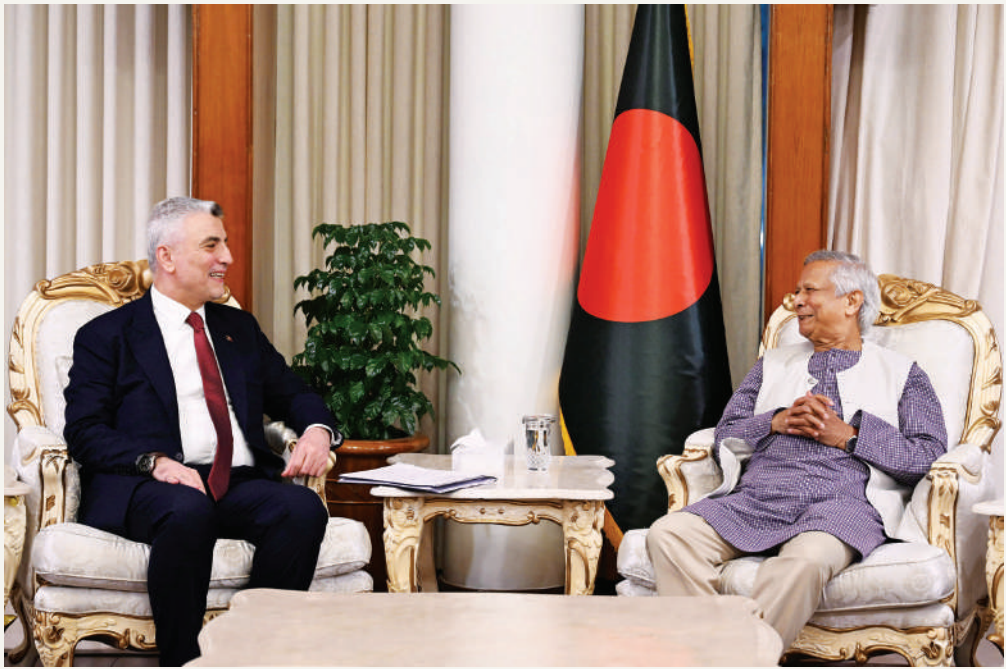
The cell, established under the Health Services Division in October, has already published the first draft, listing 858 martyrs and 11,551 injured individuals, available at <https://medical-info.dghs.gov.bd/public>, said the cell in a press release.

Source: The New Age

9 January, 2025

Build defence industry to utilise our youth forces

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on January 9 urged Turkiye to bring their technologies to Bangladesh, invest more, relocate factories and use Bangladesh's youth forces.



Turkiye Trade Minister Prof Dr Omer Bolat calls on Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the state guest house Jamuna on January 9

‘You are the leader of the technology; you can build your defence industry here. Let’s make a beginning...we are available for anything that you need,’ he said when a delegation led by Turkiye Trade Minister Prof Dr Omer Bolat called on him at the state guest house Jamuna.

Mentioning Bangladesh as the 8th most populous country in the world, Dr Yunus said that the interim government was working to create work opportunities for the country’s youths and sought Turkey’s help in this regard.

‘We have to give our young people an opportunity, so we want your help; this is

my appeal to your country. Use our young people to run your factories here so that you can supply your products in the region,' he said.

The Chief Adviser said Bangladesh and Turkey have the potential to build a dream relationship through mutual cooperation in various fields. *Source: The Financial Express*

11 January, 2025

23rd Dhaka Int'l Film Festival begins

The 23rd Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) began in the city on January 11. The festival will showcase 220 films from 75 countries with the slogan 'Better Film, Better Audience, Better Society.'

The flagship yearly film festival of Bangladesh, this year's nine-day festival in six venues in Dhaka will become a rendezvous for many local and foreign filmmakers, artists, critics, and film enthusiasts, where Bangladesh will be represented through 44 films.

Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology Adviser Nahid Islam inaugurated the festival as the chief guest at the main auditorium of the city's Bangladesh National Museum.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen and the Chinese Film Administration's International Director Shu Yang joined the inauguration ceremony as the special guests.

Commemorating the martyrs of the July-August uprising, seven short films will be screened at this year's DIFF on January 12, 15, 16 and 17. The venues for these screenings are the Sufia Kamal Auditorium of the National Museum, the Green University of Bangladesh Auditorium, the National Art Gallery Auditorium of the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, and the Auditorium of North South University, respectively.



Information and Broadcasting Adviser Mohammad Nahid Islam inaugurated the 23rd Dhaka International Film Festival 2025, organised by Rainbow Film Society at the Bangladesh National Museum in the capital on January 11

Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostafa Sarwar Farooki will be the chief guest of the 23rd DIFF's concluding ceremony on January 19 at the National Museum. *Source: The Financial Express*

12 January, 2025

Next election will be best ever, historic: CA

Planning is afoot to make the next general election in Bangladesh 'the best ever and historic', Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus tells a western.

He held out assurance when Norwegian Ambassador in Bangladesh Hakon Arald Gulbrandsen called on him on January 12 at his office exchanging views on economic and trade issues.

'We want to make it an example, a historical example,' the head of post-uprising interim government told the ambassador.

He also asked Norway to make Bangladesh a regional distribution hub of their products and invest more in the country to bag the benefits of Bangladesh's youth force, said a spokesperson for the CA office.

'Norway played a big role in peacekeeping. So, we need your help in resolving the Rohingya crisis,' Yunus said.

The Ambassador expressed Norway's eagerness to work closely with Bangladesh in



Norwegian Ambassador in Bangladesh Hakon Arald Gulbrandsen called on Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at CA Office on January 12

international forums on issues including the the Palestinian conflict, international tax regulations, and plastic pollution. *Source: The Financial Express*

13 January, 2025

CA urges Malaysia to issue multiple-entry visa for Bangladeshi workers

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus urged Malaysia on January 13 to issue multiple-entry visas for Bangladeshi workers employed in the country to facilitate their return home when required.



Malaysian High Commissioner Mohd Shuhada Othman called on Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka on January 13

He raised the issue when Malaysian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Mohd Shuhada Othman called on him at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka on January 13.

The Chief Adviser also urged the High Commissioner to facilitate the entry of 18,000 Bangladeshi workers who missed the deadline to join their work in the Southeast Asian country in May last year.

He congratulated Malaysia for taking over as the chair of ASEAN from 1 January 2025 and also sought the country's support for Bangladesh's bid to become a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN and in turn become a full member.

Prof Yunus also conveyed to the high commissioner that Bangladesh seeks support from ASEAN in the upcoming International Conference on the Rohingya Crisis to be convened by the UN in 2025 in line with the UNGA Resolution 79/182. *Source:*

The Financial Express



Kihak Sung, chairman of the Youngone Corporation, and several other top foreign investors met Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka on January 14

14 January, 2025

Dr Yunus urges quick solution to KEPZ land rights issue

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on January 14 asked the authorities to resolve the land rights issue of the Korean Export Processing Zone by early next month and bring all the investment promotion agencies under one umbrella to attract more foreign investment to the country.

The Chief Adviser gave the instruction when Kihak Sung, the chairman of the Youngone Corporation, and several other top foreign investors met him at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka.

Kihak Sung, whose South Korean company is the largest exporter from Bangladesh, raised several issues that he believed were discouraging FDI in Bangladesh and urged the Chief Adviser to improve the conditions for large-scale investment in the country.

The Chief Adviser told Sung that the land issue of the Korean EPZ, which acted as a key deterrent to FDI in the industrial park, would be solved by February 6.

Source: The Financial Express

16 January, 2025

Govt, politicians, students agree on publishing July declaration

All political parties, students and the interim government agreed on publication of 'July Declaration' recognising the contributions of all who participated in the mass uprising that toppled the past regime.

As an all-party dialogue on the uprising documentation finally ended in unison on January, 16 evening, Law Adviser Asif Nazrul told reporters in front of the venue



Prof Dr Muhammad Yunus, Chief Adviser of the interim government, exchanges views with leaders of political parties at the Foreign Service Academy in the capital on January 16

at Foreign Service Academy that a work plan would be drawn soon regarding the formulation of the July Declaration based on consensus.

‘A consensus on the formulation of a declaration for the July mass uprising was reached at the meeting. Everyone agreed that such a declaration is necessary, but many suggestions were given in this regard,’ the Adviser said, and leaders of the delegations also echoed while talking to the media.

The major suggestions include ensuring everyone’s contributions are properly acknowledged and continuity of the spirit of united uprising against what they call ‘fascism’ is appropriately reflected in the declaration. *Source: The Financial Express*

19 January, 2025

Will lead consensus-building commission, CA tells Australian envoy

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus said, he will be leading a consensus-building commission, which would hold dialogue with political parties over the reports submitted by the major reform commissions.

He made the remarks when acting Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Nardia Simpson paid a farewell call on him at the State Guest House Jamuna in the capital on January 19.

Simpson reiterated Australia’s support for the interim government and its reform initiatives.

During the meeting, she recounted the momentous events of July and August and they discussed issues of mutual interests between the two countries.

“It was emotional. We have been on the journey with the people of Bangladesh,” said the acting envoy, describing the Bangladeshi people as ‘very generous and hospitable’ and her four years’ time in the country as wonderful.



Acting Australian High Commissioner Nardia Simpson made a farewell call on Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in the capital on January 19

Prof Yunus invited the ambassador to join the events marking the first anniversary of the July uprising in August this year. *Source: The Financial Express*

21 January, 2025

Dr Yunus begins extensive engagements in Davos

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus began his extensive engagements on January 21 with his first meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz shortly after his arrival from Zurich by road.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the annual



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus shakes hands with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz at the World Economic Forum Summit in Davos, Switzerland on January 21

meeting of the World Economic Forum and they discussed issues of mutual interest. Dr Yunus arrived at Zurich International Airport, Switzerland in the afternoon to attend the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos where he will engage with global leaders on pressing issues in addition to his bilateral meetings. *Source: The Financial Express*

22 January, 2025

Dr Yunus urges global leaders to help bring back stolen money

During his hectic second day at the World Economic Forum (WEF) on January 22, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus called on Bangladesh's international allies to aid in the recovery of substantial amounts of stolen money.

The Chief Adviser met Wolfgang Schmidt, Head of the Federal Chancellery and Federal Minister for Special Tasks, Federal Chancellery of Germany, King Philippe, King of Belgium, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, Prime Minister of Thailand, Ignazio



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus poses for a photo with the participants of the 'Imagine' event at Financial Times House in Davos, Switzerland on January 22

Cassidy, Federal Councilor, Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, Switzerland, Sheikha Latifa Bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairperson, Dubai Culture and Arts Authority, United Arab Emirates, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, Congo President Felix Tshisekedi, former US Secretary of State, John Kerry, and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, among others, on the sidelines of the WEF annual meeting.

The World Economic Forum is being held at the Swiss mountain town of Davos every year in January.

Chief Adviser Prof Yunus came here about a dozen times in the past. In the past

his talks featured mostly on the power of social businesses, the micro finance industry and how it was doing wonders and the Three Zeros, his great idea to fix a self-destructive civilisation.

The social businesses alone now account for ten million enterprises, representing a 2.3 trillion dollar economy. *Source: The Financial Express*

23 January, 2025

Danish, Emirati firms eye big investments in Bangladesh ports

The United Arab Emirates-based DP World and Denmark-based A.P. Moller-Maersk on January 23 expressed interest in making big investments in Bangladesh's shipping industry to help the country build new ports along the coast of the Bay of Bengal and become a major global export hub.

AP Moller - Maersk is a Danish shipping and logistics company while DP World is a leading provider of smart logistics solutions, enabling the flow of trade across the globe. *Source: The Financial Express*

24 January, 2025

WTO to persuade top businesses to shift their supply chains to BD

World Trade Organisation (WTO) Director-General Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala on January 24 said, the global trade body would help Bangladesh graduate smoothly from Least Developed Country (LDC) and persuade top businesses to shift their supply chains to the South Asian nation.

The WTO chief made the comments when she met Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in the Swiss mountain city of Davos.



The meeting was held between Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus and World Trade Organisation (WTO) Director-General Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala on sidelines of the annual meeting of the WEF in Davos in Sweetzerland on January 24

Referring to Bangladesh's impending graduation from the LDC category, Dr Ngozi said that the WTO would make sure that the process is smooth.

'We have established principles. We will be working with you,' Chief Adviser's Deputy Press Secretary quoted her as saying. *Source: The Financial Express*

29 January, 2025

Social media awash with misinfo: CA

Chief Adviser of the post-uprising government Prof Muhammad Yunus said, Bangladesh's media are now enjoying unprecedented freedom, but the social media are awash with misinformation and disinformation.

He made the observations during discussion when a delegation from the Open Society Foundations, headed by its chairman Alex Soros along with its president Binaifer Nowrojee, called on him January 29 and expressed support for reforms



Chairman of the Open Society Foundations Alex Soros met with Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus in Dhaka on January 29

undertaken by the Interim Government.

They discussed Bangladesh's efforts to rebuild the economy, trace siphoned-off assets, combat misinformation, and carry out vital economic reforms, said a spokesperson for the CA. *Source: The Financial Express*

1 February, 2025

Amar Ekushey Book Fair kicks off

On the first day of the February, the curtain has risen on the Amar Ekushey Book



After inaugurating the month-long Amar Ekushey Book Fair-2025, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus poses for photograph with the seven recipients of the Bangla Academy Literary Award on February 1

Fair, ending the long wait for writers, publishers, readers, and book lovers of all stripes.

Prof Muhammad Yunus, Chief Adviser to the interim government, inaugurated the year's landmark cultural event on February 1.

Amid the new winds of political change, the theme of this year's fair is 'July Mass Uprising: Building a New Bangladesh.'

The doors of the event opened to the public six months after the nation's political landscape was irrevocably altered by a mass movement.

Suhrawardy Udyan and the premises of Bangla Academy have been adorned in a striking palette of red, black, and white - a symbolic gesture invoking revolution, mourning, and hope.

Dr Yunus kicked off the event by presenting the Bangla Academy Literary Award to seven recipients.

This year's winners are Masud Khan in poetry, Subhashis Sinha in drama and theatre, Salimullah Khan in essays and prose, GH Habib in translation, Muhammad Shahjahan Mia in research, Rezaur Rahman in science, and Syed Jamil Ahmed in folklore. *Source: The Financial Express*

1 February, 2025

9th Social Business Youth Summit

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus on February 1 said, the young people can change the world as they have immense potential.

'We can change the whole world just for years... with the people who are sitting here in this room. This is very easy task,' he said while speaking at the 9th Social Business Youth Summit at Hotel Intercontinental Dhaka. Representatives from 25 countries are taking part in the summit.



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus goes round the stalls after inaugurating the 9th Social Business Youth Summit at Hotel Intercontinental in Dhaka on February 1

The Chief Adviser said a journey of thousands miles begins with the first step and the question is how to improve in the second step.

Highlighting the sacrifice of students and commoners in the July revolution to topple a fascist regime, he said, over 1,000 young people sacrificed their lives and many of those who were injured lost their limbs in the movement with an aim to build a new Bangladesh.

Terming the July revolution a historical movement, Prof Yunus said, the whole country has now become a museum and the nation is committed to making the dream of young people come true.

He welcomed the representatives of 25 countries, who were participating in the 9th Social Business Youth Summit, to the new Bangladesh achieved with the sacrifice of the young people. *Source: The New Age*

12 February, 2025

‘Horrific’, ‘unbelievable’, says Dr Yunus

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus has described the secret torture cells (known as Aynaghar) as horrific after visiting three of those.

‘If I want to narrate, it can be said that it is a horrific scene! Everything that happened there was dreadful. What I have heard is unbelievable! I think is it our world? Our society?’ he told reporters after visiting three spots in Dhaka that were previously used as ‘torture cells and secret prisons’.

Chief Adviser’s Press Secretary Shafiqul Alam said, thousands of victims of



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus along with other advisers visits one of the secret detention centres, also known as 'Aynaghar' (House of Mirrors), in the capital's Agargaon area on February 12

enforced disappearances were kept-some for eight-nine years-by security forces of the Sheikh Hasina regime in the Aynaghar, the secret prison. The Human Rights Watch has said, that Hasina herself ordered enforced disappearances and extrajudicial murders, Alam conveyed.

Members of the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, victims, local and international media accompanied the Chief Adviser during the visit in the spots located in Dhaka's Agargaon, Kachukhet and Uttara areas.

The Chief Adviser was shown an 'electric chair', used in a torture cell in Agargaon.

Enforced disappearance victims also talked to the Chief Adviser during his visit to torture cells and secret prisons. *Source: The Financial Express*

15 February, 2025

Major parties plead for polls completing minimal reforms

Major political parties want national elections to be conducted soon on completion of necessary reforms relevant to the polls.

However, opinions differ over the sequence of elections-the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) along with some other parties stresses the priority of national elections first while the emergent Jatiya Nagorik Committee and the Bangladesh Gono Odhikar Parishad advocate for local-government elections to precede.

They made their remarks during the National Consensus Commission's opening meeting at the Foreign Service Academy in Dhaka on February 15, which the



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus holds talks with different political parties at the first meeting of the National Consensus Commission at the Foreign Service Academy in the city on February 15

interim government describes as ‘the second phase’ of their reign leading to a ‘new Bangladesh’ based on a new charter to be written in the light of the ‘July revolution’.

During the meeting, all political parties, however, struck a unison that national unity is essential in the current situation of transition after the ouster of the Awami League government.

Presiding over the meeting, Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus said the ultimate goal of the interim government is to make the July Charter by reaching a consensus over reforms with political parties. *Source: The Financial Express*

16 February, 2025

Uphold law, monitor markets, Dr Yunus tells DCs

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on February 16 urged Deputy Commissioners (DCs) to strictly uphold law and order and protect the rights of all people, including minorities, and strengthen market monitoring across the country to keep prices stable and give people comfort.

While inaugurating the three-day DCs Conference at Shapla Hall in his office, the Chief Adviser reaffirmed the government’s commitment to safeguarding minority rights.

‘The responsibility of the government is to ensure protection for all. Also, our responsibility is to protect the rights of minorities,’ he said, encouraging minority communities to exercise their rights with confidence as citizens of the country.

The Chief Adviser said, maintaining law and order is the government’s top priority



Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus speaks to deputy commissioners (DCs) at their conference in his Tejgaon office on February 16

and the DCs must ensure there are no lapses in this regard.

Dr, Yunus announced that citizens will no longer need police verification to get passports. *Source: The Financial Express*

21 February, 2025

Nation pays homage to language martyrs

The nation observes on February 21 the ‘Amar Ekushey’ commemorating the supreme sacrifice of the language heroes for upholding the dignity of mother-tongue Bangla - this time amid a new spirit.

The Language Martyr’s Day is observed around the world as the UNESCO recognised the Ekushey February as the International Mother Language Day on November 17, 1999.



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus stands in solemn silence while paying tributes to Language Movement martyrs at Central Shaheed Minar in the city in the first hour of February 21

On February 21, 1952, students and common people in Dhaka took to streets in protest against the then Pakistani government's denial of Bangla as a national language and imposition of Urdu as the only official language of Pakistan.

Salam, Barkat, Rafiq, Jabbar and a few other brave sons of the soil were killed in police firings this day in 1952 when students came out in a procession from the Dhaka University campus braving section 144 to press home their demand for the recognition of Bangla as a state language. The day is a public holiday.

Chief Adviser of the post-uprising interim government Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus issued a message on the eve of the occasion.

‘On the occasion of Martyrs’ Day and International Mother Language Day, I pay tribute to people of all languages in the world, including Bangla. Since 2000, Bangladesh and UNESCO have been jointly observing this day in a befitting manner. ‘Make Languages Count for Sustainable Development’ as this year’s UNESCO topic is justified,’ says Dr Yunus. *Source: The Financial Express*

21 February, 2025

New language does not weaken mother tongue: Dr Yunus

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has dismissed the notion that learning a new language weakens one’s proficiency in their mother tongue calling it ‘baseless’.

Speaking at the International Mother Language Institute event on February 21 he said: ‘There is no foundation to the belief that learning a new language diminishes one’s grasp of their mother tongue. In many countries, it is common for individuals to be fluent in multiple languages.

‘They are exposed to different languages from childhood. In schools, learning at least one additional language is often mandatory,’ he said.

The event was organised to mark Martyrs’ Day and International Mother Language Day.



Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus poses with the winners of the International Mother Language Award at a programme at the International Mother Language Institute in the capital on February 21

The Chief Adviser presented the International Mother Language Award to three individuals and institutions at the event - linguist and language researcher Abul Mansur Muhammad Abu Musa, British poet Joe Winter, and the Bangladesh mission in Paris. *Source: The Financial Express*

27 February, 2025

UN High Commissioner for Refugees stresses solution to Rohingya crisis

The visiting UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, on February 27 said that though the situation in Myanmar was very difficult, solutions to the Rohingya crisis must be ensured.

‘And we discuss also the importance which I have always agreed with to find solutions in Myanmar. The situation in Myanmar is very difficult. There is a conflict going on, actually many many conflicts going on, but we must insist to



Visiting UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi called on Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain at the latter's office in the capital on February 27

have a solution’, he told reporters after his meeting with Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain at the Ministry.

‘We discussed the situation of Rohingya refugees, we discussed how to continue to manage this very difficult situation’.

He expressed his ‘gratitude to Bangladesh for continuing to host the Rohingya, ‘in spite of its own challenges linked to the transition’. *Source: The Financial Express*

6 March, 2025

Interim govt to effect parts of July charter advice: CA Yunus

The Chief Adviser, Professor Muhammad Yunus said on 6 March that the interim

government would implement part of the July Charter to be signed by the political parties after the dialogue on the reforms recommended by six commissions.

The rest of the reforms will be carried out by the next elected government, he said in a meeting with visiting former US diplomats William B Milam and Jon Danilowicz, also president and executive director of a US-based Right to Freedom.

During the hour-long meeting at the state guest house Jamuna in Dhaka, Yunus told the diplomats that political parties would sign a July charter after the conclusion of the dialogue on the reforms recommended by the six commissions, said a press release issued by the Chief Adviser's press wing.

'The July Charter will guide us,' the Chief Adviser said, adding, 'the interim government will implement parts of the recommendations made in the July Charter and the rest will be implemented by political governments.' *Source: The NewAge*

8 March, 2025

'Indomitable Women's Award-2025 distributed to 5 women and National Women's Cricket Team

Chief Adviser Prof. Muhammad Yunus on March 8 honoured outstanding women with "Indomitable Women's Award-2025" for their significant contributions to various fields as part of a government initiative to pay due respect and inspire them through recognising their contributions.

The award giving ceremony was held at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city, marking the International Women's Day.



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus distributing to one of the recipients at "Indomitable Women's Award-2025" at a programme at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city on March 8 marking International Women's Day.

Women and Children Affairs Adviser Sharmeen S Murshid chaired the event attended by members of the Council of Advisers, diplomats stationed in Dhaka, women leaders and senior government officials.

Sharifa Sultana, Halima Begum, Marina Besra, Lipi Begum, Muhin Mohon and players of Bangladesh National Women Cricket team, are among the recipients of the awards.

UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Gwyn Lewis and Prof of Mass Communication and Journalism Prof Gitiara Nasreen spoke as special guests while Senior Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Mamtaj Ahmed, delivered welcome remarks.

A documentary was screened at the event. A powerful and emotional cultural event was also held highlighting July uprising.

Prof Muhammad Yunus said, the recent reports of heinous attacks on women are “deeply concerning” and this is completely contrary to the dream of a “New Bangladesh” that the people of the country have.

“We are committed to establishing equal rights for all men and women in this ‘New Bangladesh’. We will use all our strength to establish these rights,” he said.

The Chief Adviser was speaking as the chief guest after honouring the outstanding women with “Indomitable Women’s Award-2025” for their significant contributions to various fields as part of government initiative to pay due respect and inspire them through recognising their contributions. *Source: The Financial Express*

9 March, 2025

Explore opportunities in Bangladesh’s SEZs

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus has invited Kuwaiti investors to explore opportunities in Bangladesh’s Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and the upcoming Bangladesh Investment Summit in Dhaka on April 7-9.

‘Bring investors from Kuwait during the summit. It will be a big opportunity for both countries,’ he said when the new ambassador of Kuwait to Bangladesh, Ali



Kuwait’s new ambassador Ali Tunyan Abdul Wahab Hamadah called on Chief Advisor Dr. Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in the capital on March 9

Tunyan Abdul Wahab Hamadah, called on him at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka on March 9.

During the meeting, Bangladesh and Kuwait reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening diplomatic, trade, and economic ties with a focus on investment, energy, food security, and migrant welfare, said a spokesperson for the Chief Adviser's office.

Welcoming the new ambassador, the Chief Adviser reaffirmed the strong historical ties between Bangladesh and Kuwait and encouraged greater collaboration in key sectors. *Source: The Financial Express*

12 March, 2025

We want ICJ case to succeed : CA tells Gambian FM

Gambian Foreign Minister Mamadou Tangara called on Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka on March 12.

The Gambian FM informed the CA about the genocide case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Myanmar that his country instituted and was pursuing to bring justice for the much-persecuted Rohingya Muslims, said a spokesman of the CA Office.

'I can assure you that the president of Gambia is supporting the matter and looking into it. We want to put this issue back on the map. The President of Gambia and the Gambian people are committed to this cause,' Tangara said.

Professor Yunus thanked Gambia for taking up the cause of the Rohingya people



Gambian Foreign Minister Mamadou Tangara called on Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka on March 12

as well as for the African nation's persistent commitment and continued efforts for successful fruition of the case.

'We want this case to succeed. We want your support. It is a big help for us.'

The CA highlighted Dhaka's efforts to mobilise aid for the Rohingya people along with his calls to support humanitarian aid in Rakhine, including food and medical assistance to the displaced people, and to stop more people from fleeing across the border to Bangladesh.

He also called for deeper trade ties and cooperation between the two nations.

Mamadou Tangara praised the leadership of Professor Yunus, saying his diplomatic efforts would help the Rohingya people live a dignified life. 'With your aura, the international community will always be with you.'

The FM also wished the CA's success in his new role as the Head of Bangladesh's interim government. 'We wish you every success in your noble work and challenging mission,' he added.

The two leaders also expressed satisfaction at signing an agreement to work together in the United Nations peacekeeping operations. *Source: The Financial Express*

14 March, 2025

UN chief supports Bangladesh reforms, slates Rohingya aid cuts

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres extended unqualified support to the reform process initiated by Bangladesh's interim government and offered to do whatever they can for the country's real transformation.

He deplored declining humanitarian aid for over a million Rohingya refugees



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres join the 'Ramadan Solidarity Iftar' at Ukhiya refugee camp in Cox's Bazar on March 14

sheltered in the country's southeast frontier area, and pledged efforts for mobilising world assistance until their dignified repatriation to Myanmar.

The visiting UN Chief, who arrived in Dhaka March 14 for a four-day visit, reaffirmed the UN's commitment for Dhaka's reform agenda and voiced his concern for 'one of the most discriminated peoples' in the world during a meeting with Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at his Tejgaon office in Dhaka, said a spokesperson for the CA office. *Source: The Financial Express*

15 March 2025

UN ready to assist national dialogue, peace, healing, says Guterres

Visiting United Nations Secretary- General Antonio Guterres assures that the UN stands ready to assist in fostering peace, national dialogue, trust and healing as Bangladesh is poised for transition after a changeover.

He also expresses the UN's readiness and to be Bangladesh's steadfast partner, and to work alongside 'the government and the people of Bangladesh to help build a sustainable, equitable future for all'. 'I recognise the people's hope for the future of greater democracy, justice and prosperity,' Mr Guterres told a press briefing after his meeting with the political leaders and civil -society members.

'I'm particularly pleased to be in Bangladesh at this important moment in your national journey, as the country is undergoing a significant transition under the leadership of Chief Adviser Dr Muhammad Yunus,' the UN chief said in the light of his firsthand view of the country's current milieus.



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres speaks at a joint press conference at the Hotel Intercontinental in the capital on March 15. Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain was present on the occasion.

‘This is a pivotal moment for Bangladesh and international community must play its part in supporting your efforts towards a just, inclusive and prosperous future as the country undergoes important reforms and transitions,’ said the UN Secretary-General, who arrived in Bangladesh. *Source: The Financial Express*

17 March 2025

CA orders police to strengthen security of citizens

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on March 17 directed the police to strengthen their efforts to maintain law and order so that every citizen of the country, including the minorities, feel safe.

Highlighting the situation on the ground, Dr Yunus warned that defeated forces may “intensify” efforts to provoke unrest as the election approaches, and asked the police to stay vigilant and prevent such activities from causing disruptions.

Speaking at a special meeting with senior police officers on law and order issues,



Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus speaks to senior police officials at his office in Tejgaon, Dhaka on March 17

the Chief Adviser also alerted the police about any propaganda so that the efforts to build a new Bangladesh remain unhindered.

Stressing the importance of police, he said, they cannot build a new Bangladesh ignoring police as they are the frontliners.

Dr Yunus listened to field level police officials and gave necessary directives regarding the law and order and emphasised that the incumbent has limited time before the upcoming election. *Source: The Financial Express*

25 March, 2025

Seven individuals receive Independence Award 2025

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus on March 25 conferred the Independence Award 2025 upon seven individuals, recognising their glorious and outstanding contributions to the nation.

The Chief Adviser handed over the award at Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

Sven distinguished individuals are Prof Jamal Nazrul Islam (posthumously)



The mother of deceased BUET student Abrar Fahad receives the posthumous Independence Award on behalf of her son, a victim of political persecution, from Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital on March 25

in science and technology, Mir Abdus Shukur Al Mahmud (posthumously) in literature, Novera Ahmed (posthumously) in culture, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed (posthumously) in social service, Mohammad Mahbubul Haque Khan alias Azam Khan (posthumously) in Liberation War and culture, Badruddin Mohammad Umar in education and research, and Abrar Fahad (posthumously) for his role as a young protester.

Family members of the awardees received the awards.

Speaking at the function, Dr Yunus said the nation is proud today, but it is very painful that these people were not given this recognition when they were alive.

“We remember them today with gratitude,” he said. Dr Yunus said, the people of the country are delighted to honour them with this award despite it being late.

He said their works would inspire all.

The government also reinstated the posthumous Independence Award earlier bestowed on Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman revoking the unfair decision of the previous government.

The Independence Day Award or Swadhinata Padak is the highest state award, given by the government of Bangladesh.

Introduced in 1977, this award is bestowed upon Bangladeshi citizens or organizations in recognition of their substantial contributions to one of many fields, including the War of Liberation, the Language Movement, education, literature, journalism, public service, science and technology, medical science. *Source: The Financial Express*



Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus paid rich tributes to the Liberation War martyrs by placing floral wreaths at the National Martyrs Memorial, Savar on March 26

26 March, 2025

Nation celebrates Independence Day, salutes war heroes

Bangladesh on March 26 celebrated the 55th Independence and National Day with fresh spirits and rich tributes to the Liberation War heroes whose sacrifices helped the Bengalis wrest freedom from Pakistani occupation in 1971.

A common aspiration for rebuilding Bangladesh as a democratic, equitable and prosperous country reverberated in the air as government high-ups, politicians and people as well as diplomats rallied round the national memorial after dawn to salute the independence martyrs.

Every year, March 26th brings the most tragic reminiscence of history's blackest episode that heralded a nine-month ordeal from the night of March 25th 1971. The freedom fight that ensued was crowned with a long-cherished independence on December 16th the same year.

People from all walks of life paid tributes to the nation's heroic sons by placing floral wreaths at the National Memorial in Savar.

As the day progressed, the Shaheed Bedi or altar of the memorial was filled with flowers. Many were seen wearing red-and-green clothes -- the colours emblazoned in the national flag.

On the occasion, President Shahabuddin and Chief Adviser of the interim government Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus paid rich tributes to the Liberation War martyrs by placing wreaths at the National Memorial.

After placing the wreaths, they stood in solemn silence for some time as a mark of profound respects to the memories of the martyrs of the 1971 Liberation War.

A smartly turned-out contingent drawn from Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force presented state salute at the time while the bugles played the last post.

Later, the family members of Bir Shresthas, war-wounded freedom fighters and other valiant freedom fighters paid their respects. Members of the Advisory Council of the post-uprising government and foreign diplomats also paid their respects. *Source: The Financial Express*

28 March, 2025

Bangladesh welcomes China to participate in Teesta project

Bangladesh in a major development on March 28 welcomed Chinese companies to participate in the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project, in which both China and India had earlier shown interest, as the top leaders of the two friendly countries held a bilateral meeting in Beijing.



Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus shakes hands with Chinese president Xi Jinping before a bilateral meeting at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on March 28

The two countries agreed to strengthen cooperation in areas of hydrological forecasting, flood prevention and water resources development besides economic and technical cooperation, according to a joint press release issued following the talks between Bangladesh's interim government Chief Adviser Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus and Chinese president Xi Jinping.

The meeting was held at the People's Great Wall in Beijing earlier on the day.

Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus arrived in China on March 26 on a four-day bilateral visit at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart, marking the 50 years of the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

'Bangladesh and China on March 28 signed one agreement on economic and technical cooperation and eight MoUs on translation and production of classics, exchanges and cooperation on cultural heritage, news exchange, media, sports and health sectors,' said a press release.

In addition to this, five announcements were made on the launching of formal negotiations on investment, the announcement of the commencement of the China Industrial Economic Zone, the signing of a commercial agreement for the modernisation and expansion of Mongla port, the building of a robot physiotherapy and rehabilitation centre and the donation of a cardiac surgery vehicle, it mentioned.

Source : The New Age

Report Compilation: Mazharul Hoque, Mamun Hossain



‘Sonalu’– Golden shower tree (*Cassia fistula*)



Department of Films and Publications

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Bangladesh